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Kornelija Rakic: A Woman Doctor for Women and Children in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

This short biography focuses on the life and medical activities of Kornelija Rakić (1879–1952), a Serbian female pioneer of medicine from the then Hungarian province of Vojvodina, who acquired an MD from the University of Budapest in 1905. Rakić came from a humble background, and a Vojvodina Serbian women's organization enabled her to become a physician and pursue her social medicine mission. After a futile attempt to open a private practice as a "woman doctor for women" in Novi Sad in 1906, she successfully applied to the Austro-Hungarian provincial government in Sarajevo for the position of an official female physician in occupied Bosnia. Rakić began her career as an Austro-Hungarian (AH) official female physician in Bihać (1908–1912) and was transferred to Banja Luka in 1912 and to Mostar in 1917–1918. Kornelija Rakić stayed in Mostar after the monarchy collapsed in 1918 and continued to work as a public health officer in the service of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, founded in 1918. Subsequently, she served as the head of the "dispensary for mothers and children" at the Public Health Centre in Mostar, founded in 1929, where she practiced until her retirement in 1949. After World War II, Rakić served as Vice President of the Red Cross Society in Mostar. She received numerous awards and medals from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Kornelija Rakić died in Mostar in 1952 and was buried at the local Orthodox cemetery of Bjelušine. Conclusion. Kornelija Rakić (1879–1952) was the first Serbian female physician in Novi Sad, Vojvodina, and she was employed as an AH official female physician in Bihać (1908–1912), Banja Luka (1912–1917) and Mostar (1917–1918). After World War I, she participated in the establishment and expansion of public health institutions in Mostar and Herzegovina from 1918–1949 against the backdrop of the devastation of the two World Wars.

Author Keywords

(AH) Official Female Doctor, Kornelija Rakic, Novi Sad, Bihac, Banja Luka, Mostar, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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