

Landmarks on Iuliu Moldovan's contribution in the development of Transylvanian's health care at the beginning of the interwar period

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Abstract. Iuliu Moldovan (1882-1966) was one of the founders of the Cluj School of Medicine. He is considered as the main pillar of the beginning of modern public health in Romania. His activity in this domain began in Transylvania, during the first years of the interwar period, and then was generalized to the Great Romania. Moldovan's aim was to create favourable conditions of life for the people of his time and also for the next generations. In our paper, we present rather neglected landmarks on his activity done to complete the curative sanitary organization from Transylvania with hygienic and socio-hygienic orders. We also mention some rather neglected institutions created by Moldovan between 1919 and 1921.

Key Words: health care system, sanitary legislation, Iuliu Moldovan, Transylvania, interwar period.

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Introduction

The history of the Cluj School of Medicine was marked by prestigious professors during the interwar period, most of them being the founders of this School. One of the most active was Iuliu Moldovan (1882-1966). He had an extensive and complex contribution in the modernization of the health care system from Romania, at that time. Taking into account his achievements in this domain, he is regarded as the main pillar of the beginning of modern public health in Romania.

The aim of this paper is to present landmarks on the achievements done by Iuliu Moldovan in 1919 and in 1920 in the development of Transylvanian's health care system. At that time took place the transition between the former Austro-Hungarian legislative system to the Romanian legislative system.

Short overview on Iuliu Moldovan's career

Iuliu Moldovan was one of the prestigious figures of Romanian medicine in the twentieth century.

In the field of public health, he reorganized and amplified the health system from Transylvania, between 1919 and 1921, in the context of the positive changing occurred after the Great Union of this province with Romania. Meantime, he initiated innovative organizational measures with territorial applications. His achievements in this domain were based on his experience in organizing the antiepidemic fight during the First World War (Bârsu 2015).

The summit of his contribution in the field of public health care was the very progressive health and social care law, elaborated in 1930.

Regarding his teaching activity, he founded and directed the Department of Hygiene and Social Hygiene at the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj (1919-1947). Here he created a strong School of Hygiene and Social Hygiene, in which he promoted preventive medicine.

Among his scientific achievements, it would be necessary to mention his invention of an anti-inflammatory and anti-anaphylactic substance, named Reticuline M. Iuliu Moldovan added the letter „M” as homage to the memory of the immunologist Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov (1845-1916).

Professor Moldovan was the first author of the monumental “Public Health Treaty”. Unfortunately, only the first volume was edited (1946), the others not being published due to political reasons.

These accomplishments, like many others, gave him a great prestige in Romanian medicine.

It would have been normal that at least at the end of his career, his accomplishments to be appreciated. On the contrary, in 1948 he was punished by the Romanian Communist regime for political reasons. The persecution culminated with a sentence to prison (in Sighet) for more than five years (1950-1955). In the same time, it was a strange situation: part of the Romanian communist health authorities used different sanitary rules elaborated by Moldovan, totally ignoring his name (Marin 2001).

Posthumously, his place in the history of Romanian medicine won an extra significance, because in 1996 his memoirs were printed. The manuscript of the memoirs remained, unfortunately, unfinished, due to Moldovan's death. It was published in 1996, after three decades since his death.

Landmarks on Iuliu Moldovan's achievements in hygiene and public health, done in Transylvania in 1919 and 1920

Iuliu Moldovan's first achievements in hygiene and public health began in 1919 in Transylvania, immediately after the Great Union of this province with the Kingdom of Romania. It is useful to mention the historical context of his achievements in this medical field. There were "disparities between Romanian Old Kingdom and Serbia, which developed their health system as independent nation-state, and Transylvania, Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia, which had been part of the Habsburg Empire prior to November 1918. In these circumstances, leading health reformers like the Croat Andrija Stampar (1888-1958), the Hungarian Béla Johan (1889-1983) and the Romanians Gheorghe Banu (1889-1957) and Iuliu Moldovan (1882-1966) played decisive roles in creating centralized systems for health and hygiene", as it was shown by M. Turda (2011).

Moldovan's interwar career in Romania started on the 15th December 1918. At that time, the Provisional Government of Transylvania and Banat, entitled the Ruling Council and led by Iuliu Maniu (1873-1953) appointed Moldovan as general secretary of the Social Affairs Department (which equals the position of minister of health and social care system in this government). In 1919, on the initiative and under the leadership of Moldovan, significant medical and medico-social units were established in different towns Transylvania. Thus, were created 18 centers for fighting tuberculosis, venereal diseases and infant mortality in: Cluj, Hida, Dej, Bistrița, Năsăud, Baia Mare, Satu Mare, Sighet, Zalău, Oradea, Timișoara, Alba Iuliu, Târgu Mureș, Blaj, Sibiu, Brașov, Sfântu Gheorghe and Zlatna. There were also founded 7 regional centers of hygiene at: Cluj, Oradea, Satu Mare, Târgu Mureș, Timișoara, Sibiu și Brașov. In this list of Moldovan's achievement should be mentioned the town hospitals created at that time: Abrud, Reghin, Aiud and Beiuș (Straus 1980; Moldovan 1996).

In the same year 1919, he established urgent priorities in the development of the following activities in Transylvania: training courses for physicians, especially for hygienists, the establishment of the institution of charitable sisters, the organization of institutions and services for preventing illnesses and having a social-hygienic role, creating an auxiliary organization for health prevention and health education, and many others. One of the first courses was intended for the charitable sisters. It was held in Sibiu, Cluj and Târgu-Mureș, in October 1919. The immediate aim of this didactic activity was to give the charitable sisters the abilities to care for: pregnant women, confined women, new born and abandoned orphans. It is useful to mention that Moldovan did not limit the aim of this activity to these categories of the population, but he imposed on the charitable sisters to also take care of the youth. This requirement of Moldovan demonstrated that he intended to encourage the implementation

of hygienic and moral habits in the young people. Moldovan wanted to support the future development of mental and somatic youth health (Lupu 1996).

Taking into account that in 1919 and 1920 in Transylvania's medico-sanitary sector numerous problems had to be resolved quickly, Moldovan found the solution of drafting directives. An example of a sanitary ordinance elaborated in 1920 was the act about the police force physician. This category of physicians had the role to examine the health status of population and to supervise the psychic and somatic development of minors. Another role of the police physician was to detect public and clandestine prostitution. Through this activity, Moldovan wanted to limit sexually transmitted illnesses. He also had a moral command, for families not to fall apart due to marital infidelity. Moldovan insisted that the police physician's remuneration should not include any share from private individuals or from societies or from various medico-sanitary units. This principle put the police physician at a distance from foreign influences, which could corrupt his professional authority (Moldovan 1920 b).

Another important ordinance initiated by Iuliu Moldovan in 1920 was the one relating to the compulsory notification of abortions. The ordinance was entitled "Order regarding the mandatory notification of abortions". Moldovan's aim was to prevent the decrease of birth rate and thus take a prophylactic measure against the risk of declining population. The ordinance was drastic. This fact was put into evidence regarding the punishments for offender physicians: to be imprisoned from 5 to 10 years, or to be fined with large sums of money, from 500 to 1000 lei. In case of recidivism, offender physicians temporarily lost their right to practice (Moldovan 1920 c).

Moldovan initiated a special decision applied on March 15, 1919, by the Department of Social Affairs. By this act, Moldovan established with clarity some special tasks for the Woman's Hospital in Cluj. It's useful to mention that this hospital was newly founded by the Ruling Council. This institution had the role to offer free treatment for ill persons, as well as to participate in medical and social activities through its outpatient polyclinic. It was intended to offer free ambulatory treatment for venereal diseases, tuberculosis, gynecological pathology and dermatological diseases. Moldovan also mentioned that the members of the outpatient polyclinic should study social diseases, should do gynecological activities in the region of this Hospital (where there were no specialists in this domain) and should do sanitary propaganda for fighting social diseases in Cluj and the surrounding areas (Stanca et al 1976).

In March 1919, Moldovan issued the circular notification by which he urged that all physicians from Transylvania and Banat be taken in the evidence of the central leading forum from Bucharest, in order to receive their certificates of free medical practice available throughout Romania (Marin 2000).

After one month – in 16th April 1919 - Moldovan elaborated the circular notification indicating to the administrative organs to require patrons to pay on time the insurance contributions to worker's insurance houses. Otherwise it was supposed the legal proceedings to be introduced against bad payer employers (Marin 2000).

A remarkable achievement done by Moldovan in 1919 was the foundation of the Institute of Charitable Sisters from Cluj. This institution was initiated, organized and directed by himself

between 1919 and 1940. This institution was a premiere in Romania. The Institute's activity was based on his concept that the family and not the individual is the nucleus of the nation. In a pedagogic way, he pointed out the fact that the activity of this Institute was supposed to take place "in the family, through education and persuasion in a natural way, not only by orders, strength and required measures" (Moldovan 1996). For the selection of charitable sisters Iuliu Moldovan established the following ethical criteria: "initiative, devotion, sensitivity to the suffering people, patience and perseverance, love of children, understanding of the hard and sublime mother's role, ability to educate and work in detail, in addition to the technical skills required in this service" (Moldovan 1996).

Analysing Iuliu Moldovan's activity in the organization of the health and social protection system in Transylvania during 1919-1921, it is obvious that he constantly had in mind two moral principles: justice and rightfulness. He showed ideological and political disengagement, which is exemplified by his statement made in 1921 and mentioned once again in his memoirs: "I did not know [at that time] what were liberalism, socialism, communism, democracy, I knew that I was Romanian, I wanted in the first place the good of my people, but also the good for all and justice for all" (Moldovan 1996). This quotation is a significant proof of the ethical conception of Moldovan, who knew that goodness for all is reflected into individual goodness.

In 1922 Moldovan wrote a report about his activity held in the Ruling Council. In this act he mentioned the ethical foundation that guided him between 1919 and 1921. He specified that "it was a deeply felt duty when the Social Sector of the Ruling Council was established to complete the curative sanitary organization with hygienic and socio-hygienic orders and institutions in order to initiate a systematic work to prevent, relieve and save the vigour of population from environmental influences and to vouch for it and for the generations that will follow the favourable conditions of life and work" (Moldovan 1922).

It was only one initiative that Moldovan was not able to put into practice in the period when the Ruling Council existed: the founding of a cancer institute. Then, at the middle of the interwar period, in 1929, he founded in Cluj the "Institute for the Study and the Prevention of Cancer". It is important to remark that this institution was the first one in Romania and the third in Europe.

Besides the activity carried out in the Ruling Council, Moldovan fulfilled a didactic career. He was professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj. Here he created and directed the Chair (called Institute) of Hygiene and Social Hygiene. In the didactic field, his goal was to train physicians to get involved thoroughly and effectively in solving social problems, in order to fulfil the necessary conditions for the favourable evolution of the Romanian population. In 1919, on the occasion of some medical and social surveys, he personally put into evidence the existence of many social diseases in Transylvania. Consequently, he campaigned for the annihilation of social afflictions, as well as for their prevention. In this regard, in 1920 he stated the following: "it was an imperative necessity to extend the activity of our Institute to the domain of social hygiene. It was necessary to grow the new generation of physicians not only in the direction of classical medical art, but also to develop the social obligation [...] for the prevention and combating of the social afflictions" (Moldovan

1920a). In subsequent years, these conceptions were put into practice by the Cluj School of Hygiene and Social Hygiene, founded and directed by Iuliu Moldovan himself. From a medico-historical point of view, Prof. Valeriu Bologa (1892-1971) concluded in 1969 that this school was the most important in this field in Romania during the interwar period (Bologa 1969). The results achieved over time by the members of this school were notable and this school was appreciated as „the main pillar of the beginning of modern public health in Romania” – as Dan Enăchescu mentioned (Enăchescu 1996).

Conclusions

1. At the beginning of the interwar period, between 1919 and 1921, Iuliu Moldovan had a complex medical and social activity, as director of the Social Sector of the Ruling Council for Transylvania and Banat.
2. Moldovan's achievements were done for completing the curative sanitary organization from Transylvania with hygienic and socio-hygienic orders and institutions.
3. His aim was to create favourable conditions for the life and work of the whole population from Transylvania and Banat during the interwar period, but also for the next generations.
4. He drafted significant sanitary and medico-social ordinances to solve different problems from the health system in Transylvania and Banat. Moldovan proved to be a skilful organizer of the health system.

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