

## Dr. Anna Bayerova: Female Pioneer of Medicine in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>

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Dear Dr. Tahirović,

I read the article written by Fuchs and Tahirović in the first issue of *Acta Medica Academica* in 2019 with great attention (1). This excellent article about the history of medicine evaluates the life and enormous, but brief work of Dr. Anna Bayerova in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The interesting fact is that for a quite long time it was not known precisely who was the first to start working in Tuzla and Bosnia and Herzegovina – a Czech or Polish female doctor? A few written documents show that Polish doctors were the first to start. According to Azabagić and Prašek-Calczyńska, they were Dr. Teodora Krajewska and Dr. Jadwiga Olszewska (2, 3). According to Karahasanović, there was no female doctor in Bosnia and Herzegovina before Dr. Krajewska arrived in Tuzla (4). Dr. Anna Bayerova's time in Bosnia

and Herzegovina was slightly longer than a year. This is probably the prime reason why she is not known so well.

In contrast, Fuchs and Tahirović, as well as Nečas, state that Anna Bayerova was in fact the first female doctor in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1, 5). According to Nečas, she was born in Vojtjehovo, near Prague, so perhaps not in Melnik. She ended her medical education due to her unfavorable material situation. Finally, she received her diploma after submitting her dissertation entitled: "Über die Zahlenverhältnisse der rothen und weissen Zellen im Blute vom Neugeborenen und Säuglingen" (*About the ratio of red and white cells in the blood of newborns and infants*) (5).

After careful analysis of the historical documents, it is clear that Teodora Krajewska was not the first official female doctor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without any doubt, Dr. Anna Bayerova was the female pioneer of medicine in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Dr. Bayerova had to promise not to get involved in any sort of political work in Bosnia and Herzegovina (6). Her medical work was not solely based in Tuzla, in fact, it was in Brčko, Gračanica and Derventa (7). Her success was even a surprise to the finance minister, Benjamin Kallay. After Dr. Bayerova heard that her work had been spoken of positively, she

<sup>1</sup> Comment on Article: Dr. Anna Bayerova: The First Official Female Doctor in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

wrote: “The news that the administrators in Vienna are satisfied by my work caught my attention – I can’t say I was ecstatic. I am so pleased by the grateful looks of my Muslim women and by their pleasure at being treated fairly and honestly, to the point where I lose interest in everything else” (8).

**Key Words:** Anna Bayerova ■ Tuzla ■ Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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