Dear Professor Kaftandziev,

We would like to express, once again, our gratitude for your consultative assistance during the preparation of the article on "Contributions of Doctors from Croatia to the Establishment and Initial Development of the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia" and for your letter with remarks and additional more precise information about certain doctors in the field of surgery. It is our mutual obligation and common goal to search for the scientific truth and to aim to increase the level of scientific ethics and integrity in our academic environments and scientific community.

In relation to your remark that Professor Branko Oberhofer did not performed open heart operations in Skopje we would inform you that, in general, all data and information which has been included in the teachers' biographies in the article, including Branko Oberhofer, were taken from the archival materials and jubilee publications of the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje, as well as from the Macedonian and the Croatian encyclopedias. All references from the available sources of data are properly cited in the reference list at the end of the article and appropriately related to and quoted in the text. There is a statement in the Macedonian encyclopedia concerning Branko Oberhofer that he was "the founder of thoracic and cardio-surgery" (1954), and that he "performed the first heart operations in R. Macedonia". The information that Oberhofer later on (neither the year nor the location is specified) had performed the open heart operations with extracorporeal circulation has been taken from the Croatian encyclopedia, which is available at the Lexicographic Centre of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

In fact, the authors do not claim in the article that Oberhofer performed those operations in Skopje since the formulation is taken from the Croatian encyclopedia which is also not quite clear exactly when and where Oberhofer performed open heart operations, whether in Skopje and in Zagreb or only in Zagreb, after he left Skopje, which is somehow implied in the formulation "later on".
We are especially grateful to you for your efforts to provide recently new additional information obtained through telephone conversations with a surgeon from Zagreb (Miroslav Hromatko), who confirmed the information taken from the Croatian encyclopedia and, in addition, pointed out the accurate term, that Oberhofer did perform the first open heart surgery in 1957, when he returned to Zagreb after a two-year stay and work in Skopje, 1954–56.

In relation to your remarks that the contribution of As. Dr. Ruger Novak, who introduced new operative methods for surgical treatment of the prostate, was not sufficiently emphasized in the article on the development of contemporary urology in R. Macedonia, and on the development of his further career as professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Osijek and his cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje, as well as the contribution of As. Dr. Djurdja Klaić to the establishment and development of the Department of Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation within the Surgical Clinic in Skopje, we would inform you that our approach to writing the article was based on the previous decision to give greater emphasis to teachers who were heads of the chairs/departments and directors of the institutes or clinics established by them. Those teachers are listed in Table 1, and the photo and short biography of each of them is placed in a separate box in the text of the article. The assistant lecturers and other auxiliary doctors and doctors on specialization who came from Croatia in the period 1947–60 we decided to mention by name, specialty, clinic or institute where the doctor was employed, as well as the year when the doctor began work at the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje.

We look forward to our further cooperation,

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