

## LYMPHEDEMA THERAPY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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### **Abstract**

Lymphedema is a chronic inflammatory disease of the interstitium, which results from primary or secondary damage to the lymphatic drainage system. The most effective form of lymphedema treatment is complex decongestive therapy (CDT), which is considered the "golden standard" in treating lymphedema.

The purpose of this lecture is to show the possibilities of treatment of patients with lymphedema in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to present a treatment algorithm and components of complex decongestive therapy that are carried out at the Institute for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation "Dr. Miroslav Zotović" Banja Luka. On the other hand, I will try to give you the answers about the controversies and dilemmas related to the treatment of lymphedema through the presentation of several cases.

The complex decongestive therapy of lymphedema has been carried in our Institute since 2004, and from then until this year, the number of patients gradually increased each year. According to the cause of lymphedema, the largest number of patients had secondary arm lymphedema after breast cancer surgery (63.8%). The increase in the number of patients during the observed period is a consequence of the rise in the number of lymphedema patients and the facilitation of their healthcare providers for the problem of lymphedema and the referral of a more significant number of patients.

Although lymphology is not presently recognized as a separate medical subspecialty, our results indicate positive outcomes of lymphedema management in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A future priority for lymphedema management is to provide patients with free flat knitted compression garments for maximum adherence to treatment during the maintenance phase. We need to improve national health policies for the research, prevention, diagnosis, and lymphatic surgery intervention of this suffering condition.