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## ***The Population Protection System against Infectious Diseases and Covid Crisis***

The purpose of this topic is to clarify the assumptions, elements, and consequences of the system of protection against infectious diseases concerning the healthcare services in the Republic of Serbia. The topic is analysed by systematic comparison, as well as by perceptions of past and new issues related to the protection system. The short analysis will focus on essential constitutional rights and the national Act on the Protection of Population from Infectious Diseases, whose first version originates from 2004 and has been revised several times. It also includes changes during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been shown, although the national legislation of Serbia has taken over and implemented the International Health Regulation (IHR), that there are still shortcomings in the regulations, including laws, by-laws, and clinical protocols. Health procedures are often changed because appropriate standards of practice are still being sought. The reason is insufficient knowledge on the outcome of the pandemic and the characteristics of different patient groups (confirmed patients, high-risk group, intermediated risk group, low-risk group, and no risk group depending on the risk criteria for infection). Is there a gap between regulations and the need to combat the pandemic? In this sense, it is necessary to consider improving the law concerning the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Basic rights are a universal and essential value, so they should be guaranteed during the pursuit of any compulsory measures. The concluding remarks point to the need for consistent application of the law, but also to further work towards redefining new legal and ethical issues and raising the standards of health services in terms of governance, emergency medical countermeasures, and human rights aspects.

**Keywords:** public health, infectious diseases, individual rights, Serbian legislation, system of protection