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**SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF PREVENTION OF ALCOHOLISM IN NORTHEAST BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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Introduction: Although the harmful effects of alcohol have long been observed, organized social measures for the prevention of excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages were taken relatively late.

Aim: To present an historical overview of development of social, cultural aspects of alcoholism prevention in northeast Bosnia.

Methodology: The authors provide a historical overview of societal and professional institutions that fight against alcoholism in the area of northeast Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) following the definition of the World Health Organization, that alcoholism is illness and alcoholic is a patient.

Results: Teetotaler societies in BH began with the establishment and work at the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth century. Through the period before World War II, between the two world wars, the national liberation struggle period from 1941 to 1945, and the post-war socialist enthusiasm to the last war from 1992 to 1995 there were different levels of organizing struggle against alcoholism with different impact on the development of mental health protection of alcoholics and their families. During the 1992-95 war, due to high trauma of veteran and civilian population, a number of posttraumatic effects appeared, which lead to people seeking release in self-medication by alcohol abuse, worsening the issues of alcoholism and its aftermaths.

Conclusion: After the tragic war 1992-95, many of the socio-political relations and the issue of functional organization of health is redefined, this resulted in search for new formulas of successful dealing with very serious drinking problem in the postwar situation in the region of Tuzla Canton (northeast Bosnia).