The perception of poverty as a social issue has changed throughout the years. The changes in perception of this phenomenon are possible to trace back from Akvinsky, who considered poverty as a state given by God; then Juan Luis Vives, who argued for a system of communal care for the poor, whereby they were able to live in the poorhouses and work was offered to them (*De subventione pauperum*); to the proposed reforms of social care and theories about population, poverty and food advocated by the British economist Thomas Malthus, who rejected all measures which supported the growth of poverty. Lots of concepts of state social politics were created in 20th century, which are now – in 21st century – again and again developed.

Despite changes over time in its perception and management, poverty is generally understood as a state when an individual is missing the means for fulfilling his or her needs. The consequences of this hardship can be observed both at an individual as well as a societal level. Poverty is often perceived as relative in character, and, while lacking the consistency of an exact definition, is concerned in its subjective nature associated with reflections on what people actually need to lead a full life.

Currently, while we experience the second wave of the Covid pandemic (and we expect a third one) there is still an unanswered concern for what the consequences will be. Already many people have lost their jobs and have acute financial problems. Increasing poverty is bringing an emotional and social toll due to social isolation, particularly for the elderly. Whereas the loss of financial means could lead to higher activity in order to balance financial loss, a reduction in social and civil activity almost always leads to resignation and demoralisation in people. All these circumstances affect us and bring health, social and society-wide changes and consequences.

The first issue of 2021 begins with research on objective and subjective poverty and ends with the crisis associated with COVID-19 concerning Slovak seniors.

Jaroslava Babjáková, Samar Issmailová and Peter Babinčák in the first contribution focus on, *Perceived causes of poverty in the context of objective poverty, subjective poverty and selected sociodemographic variables*. The authors aimed to, firstly, determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the individualistic, structural, and fatalistic perceived causes of poverty between the objectively poor and objectively non-poor, as well as between the subjectively poor and subjectively non-poor. Secondly, they wanted to identify the predictors of the individualistic, structural, and fatalistic perceived causes of poverty. The results of their research showed that there were statistically significant differences found in the structural as well as fatalistic perceived causes of poverty between the objectively poor and
objectively non-poor, as well as between the subjectively poor and subjectively non-poor. The objectively poor and subjectively poor were found to have higher scores in both the structural and fatalistic perceived causes of poverty in comparison with the objectively non-poor and subjectively non-poor.

Bibiána Kováčová Holevová dealt with the issue of Sources of stress and coping strategies during the coronavirus crisis across the Slovak elderly. The aim of her study was to examine specific sources of stress and coping strategies during the first wave of pandemic among a risk group of the population; the elderly. The snowball sampling approach was used. An online survey involved 607 seniors over the age of 62, from all over Slovakia, who responded to the open-ended questions about perceived sources of stress and coping strategies. The author found that the most reported sources of stress were social isolation, restrictions, uncertainty and concern for family/friends. The most commonly reported coping strategies were work, hobbies, (digital) social contact and watching television. The findings of B. Kováčová Holevová emphasize the need to perceive the stress experience of each individual/elderly as unique, and can be useful as for seniors, so for those in intervention activities.

Miroslava Köverová's and Beáta Ráczová's contribution was also devoted to the topic of stress and anxiety in seniors, entitled Psychosocial aspects of perception and emotional experience of older adults during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Slovakia. Their study is a part of research focused on the analysis of the psychosocial aspects of the perception and emotional experience of older Slovak adults as a risk group during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the authors was to examine how older adults in Slovakia perceived and experienced the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify differences in negative emotional experience in older adults according to demographic characteristics. The results of their research prove that older adults experienced low levels of perceived stress, moderate levels of anxiety, and moderate levels of concern during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. They reported moderate satisfaction with health, low levels of powerlessness, and high levels of perceived ability to deal with the situation of the pandemic. According to the findings of the authors, the results of the analyses showed only gender differences in anxiety and concern – women reported higher levels of anxiety and concern than men.

In this issue, as usual, you can find reviews and reports from two conferences which were organized in a virtual space due to the exceptional epidemiological situation.

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