

President of Hungary

Esteemed Conference

Ladies and Gentlemen

Until quite recently, conferences of the Hungarian Society for the Study of Obesity followed a set pattern. Professional discourse had its own rhythm. Subjects and goals were determined by the generally downward trend in statistics, the internal principles of the scientific field and experiences of practical remedies.

However, in the course of the global pandemic, all healthcare forums and all work conducted in the field of healthcare were invested with a new interpretation. It was not only the conditions of treatment that changed due to COVID-19, but the virus situation became one of the leading topics of obesity studies. Whereas we were already aware of the fact that as regards many disease types, it is far harder to recover from them when the patient is obese, over the past more than a year and a half it has become evident that obesity dramatically reduces the chances of recovering from coronavirus, too.

Furthermore, quarantines, restrictions, general confinement, the narrowing of opportunities for exercise all contributed to further increasing the number of those in danger.

Today, in Hungary alone, there are approximately 250,000 people who are rated as extremely overweight, and every fourth or fifth Hungarian child is affected by obesity, which science looks on as a chronic disease in itself. Research is identifying – in addition to excessive consumption and a sedentary lifestyle – a growing number of, and ever more nuanced causes (for example, genetics, environmental factors) behind the increasingly poor outcomes. As a consequence, potential ways out of this situation are similarly ever more complex.

In other words, there is plenty to debate, and certainly more this year than usual. I am confident that in this rapidly changing field demanding a high degree of collaboration, flexible, good strategies will be developed and put into practice as quickly as possible. Thus, to achieve this objective, I wish you effective debates and fruitful discussions!

Budapest, 6 October 2021

János Áder

[Seal of the President of Hungary]