

ORIGINAL PAPER

Gastroenterology of Lodz – then and now

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In the year 2009, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Polish gastroenterology. Therefore, it is the time to sum up the achievements of the past and to evaluate the present state. This important jubilee is also an occasion to evaluate the activity of the Lodz medical society in the field of gastroenterology.

The scientific activity of the physicians from Lodz had already begun in the 19th century. In 1889, the Physicians' Society was founded and the first works were published in the Warsaw journals. With the industrial development, new workshops both for scientific and practical medical activity appeared in Lodz. During these days numerous palaces of the industrialists of Lodz were built, but near those, schools and well-equipped hospitals were established. There was much merit of the physicians of Lodz put in it who heartily loved their profession and, at the same time, were full of passion for knowledge, so they undertook difficult scientific and social tasks. The first twenty years of the 20th century they devoted to fight with the workers' poverty, children's malnutrition and the diseases of so called "dirty hands". On their initiative a number of valued social actions were undertaken such as "School Hygiene" or "A Drop of Milk". With the huge effort of physicians of those days, the picture of the former Lodz, full of smoke, dusk, factory din, rich manufacturers and haggard workers, slowly started to fade away, and Lodz appeared as a city of intelligent people, fighting with illiteracy, alcoholism, diseases and the high mortality of children. A number of these actions were based on the scientific knowledge, and the experiences achieved were then transformed into the medical papers. In 1908, Seweryn Sterling and Władysław Biegański started to publish the weekly paper titled "The Lodz Medical Journal". About 20 of the works published in this journal concerned bacterial infections and intestinal flora. Their author was Józef Brudziński who encouraged using bacterial culture of *Lactis aerogenes* and sour milk in the treatment of diarrhoea. Professor Józef Brudziński was a founder of the Paediatric Society and the Polish Paediatric Review. In 1925, he was nominated a professor and became a Vice-Chancellor of the University of Warsaw. Unfortunately, his sudden and early death ended his prolific life.

Another remarkable person working in Lodz was Seweryn Sterling. Admittedly, he devoted his whole life to fight with tuberculosis but his contributions as an organizer and wide scientific horizons are also worth acknowledgement. He was an organizer of the Polish Physicians' Convention in 1912 in Lodz, a co-editor of the Cracow Medical Review, an expert in numerous medical problems, among them also alcoholic "desolation" of the brain and the alimentary system.

In the interwar era, such eminent professors as Jerzy Rutkowski and Wincenty Tomaszewski were concerned with gastroenterological problems. It is their huge effort, made during the Second World War, which led to the formation of the Medical University in Lodz. On the 24th of May 1945, based on the decree of the Cabinet, the University of Lodz was formed, and Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński was appointed the Vice-Chancellor. On the 27th of August 1945, according to the Minister of Education regulation, three departments of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy were formed at the University of Lodz. Based on the municipal hospitals, two surgery departments were organized. One of them was headed in turn by professors: Wincenty Tomaszewicz, Marian Stefanowski, Konstanty Załoga, and the other one by professors: Jerzy Rutkowski, Andrzej Alichniewicz and Adam Sołtysiak. The medical teams of both surgery departments were concerned with gastrointestinal surgery; in particular, the parenteral and enteral nutrition was introduced to the treatment (on the initiative of prof. Leszek Ciesielski) and selective vagotomy (by prof. Andrzej Alichniewicz – the head of the Department of Gastrointestinal Surgery since 1974).

Since 2002, there have been six surgery departments at the Medical University of Lodz, among them three specialized in the gastrointestinal diseases. The Department of Oncological and General Surgery (the head: Prof. Bogdan Modzelewski) and the Department of General and Transplant Surgery (the head: Prof. Janusz Strzelczyk) are specialized, among others, in the pancreas and liver surgery. Whereas, the Department of General and Colorectal Surgery (formerly: The Second Surgery Department of the Military Medical Academy) has become a leading centre in Poland of the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease and intestinal tumours.

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This department cooperates with the numerous centres abroad and its head prof. Adam Dziki performs multiple duties in seven international societies, among which he is the General Secretary of the European Colorectal Society. As the first doctor in Poland he became the Honourable Member of both the American Surgery Association and The Royal College of Surgeons of England. Since 2007, he has been designated the chairman-elect, and since 2009, the chairman of the Polish Surgery Society.

The originators of the post-war conservative gastroenterology were also notable clinicians and scientists. To them belonged: prof. Waław Grot (the Honourable Member of the Belgian Gastroenterological Society and the French Diabetological Society), prof. Kazimierz Bojanowicz (the member of the International Society of Parenteral Nutrition and the Mediterranean Society of Coloproctology), prof. Wiesław Torzecka (the head of the Department of Gastrointestinal and Metabolic Diseases in the years 1983-1998) and prof. Józef Drzewoski (the head of this department in the years 1998-2001, a specialist in clinical pharmacology and diabetology).

At the time of the Military Medical Academy, gastroenterology mainly evolved at the Second Department of Internal Diseases (the head: prof. Józef Chojnowski) and at the Third Department of Internal Diseases (the head: prof. Władysław Tkaczewski) of this academy. On the 19th of September 1969, at the Department headed by prof. Józef Chojnowski, two doctors: Lucjan Żydowicz and Jan Chojnacki performed the first panendoscopy in Lodz with the Storz fiberoscope, and then they developed further diagnostic activity in this field.

Since 2002, at the Medical University of Lodz there have been two departments: the Department of Gastrointestinal and Diseases (the head: prof. Ewa Małeczka-Panas, the member of the board of the European Pancreatic Club and the member of the American Pancreatologic Association), the team of the department in its scientific work specializes in the diseases of the pancreas and the early diagnosis of neoplastic diseases.

Department of Gastroenterology and Internal Diseases (the head: prof. Jan Chojnacki, the member of the International Association of Surgeons, Gastroenterologists and Oncologists, the member of the Clinical Pathophysiology Committee and the Nutrition Committee of the Polish Academy of Science. The department, among others, conducts the researches on the pathogenesis of inflammatory and functional gastrointestinal diseases, somatisation of depression and nutrition.

Paediatric gastroenterology owes its academic and scientific development to the professors: Franciszek Redlich, Kazimierz Sroczyński, Barbara Dębiec, Jerzy Bodalski, and particularly to prof. Izabela Płaneta-Małeczka, who has created from the bases a very modern Department of Paediatric Gastroenterology on measure of the 20th and the 21st centuries.

Since 2002, in Lodz there have been two paediatric departments of this profile: the Department of Gastroenterology, Allergology and Children's Nutrition (the head: prof. Krystyna Wąsowska-Królikowska) and the Department of Gastroenterology (the acting head: as-

sociate professor Elżbieta Czkwianianc). The last mentioned department had been headed by prof. Izabela Płaneta-Małeczka in the years 1983-2005 and currently it remains in the structures of the Institute – Polish Mother Health Centre.

Both adult and paediatric departments have an accreditation for the post-diploma education in gastroenterology. In the region of Lodz there are 23 gastroenterologists and this number successively rises. There are 16 self-dependent academic teachers and 49 with the doctorate degree employed at the gastroenterology departments of Medical University of Lodz. These departments, apart from the statutory activity, organize numerous courses for physicians of other specialisations, especially internists, surgeons and general practitioners (family physicians). The example of this can be "The School of Practical Gastroenterology" headed by prof. Jan Chojnacki and prof. Adam Dziki.

The current activity of the Lodz Division of the Polish Society of Gastroenterology had formally begun since the organizational meeting of the members on the 29th of May, 1985. At this meeting the first board was elected and composed of the following members: the chairman – associate professor Jan Chojnacki, the vice-chairman – associate professor Leszek Ciesielski, secretary – associate professor Ryszard Dancewicz, the treasurer – prof. Izabela Płaneta-Małeczka and other members of the board: prof. Adam Dziki, associate professor Wiesław Torzecka, D.M. Ireneusz Manicki. The Auditing Committee composed of: the chairman – associate professor Stanisław Laskowski and the members: associate professor Helena Niedzielska and associate professor Jerzy Korzycki.

Among numerous activities conducted by the Board of the Lodz Division of the Polish Society of Gastroenterology the following events can be listed: the 56th Congress of the Polish Society of Gastroenterology in 1998 (the chairman: prof. Władysław Tkaczewski); the 1st Congress of the Polish Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Children's Nutrition in 2000 (the chairman: prof. Izabela Płaneta-Małeczka); the 12th Congress of the Polish Society of Gastroenterology in 2006 (the chairman: prof. Jan Chojnacki); the 29th Congress of the Polish Paediatric Society in 2007 (the chairman: prof. Krystyna Wąsowska-Królikowska); The Joint Meeting of the European Pancreatic Club (EPC) and the International Association of Pancreatology (IAP) in 2008 (the chairman: prof. Ewa Małeczka-Panas). Moreover, on the initiative of prof. Adam Dziki the International Proctologic Symposia are organized in Lodz every 2 years. Similarly, prof. Jan Chojnacki recurrently organizes "The Lodz Gastroenterological Weekends".

Summarizing this uneasy but rich past of the Lodz Gastroenterology, we express our hopes for its successful future. We base our reliance on the strategic plans of the Medical University of Lodz. Our present Medical University was formed in 2002 after the connection of Medical Academy and Military Medical Academy, and it combined the large intellectual potential ensuring its further dynamic development.