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PROFESSOR WIESŁAW JĘDRYCHOWSKI
15TH JANUARY, 1932 – 19TH MAY, 2015



Professor Wiesław Jędrzychowski graduated from Nicolaus Copernicus Academy of Medicine in Krakow in 1955; he received PhD degree in 1963, associate professor in 1972, professor in 1980, and full professor in 1989. From 1962 he was employed in the Chair of Occupational Medicine and Occupational Diseases Academy of Medicine in Krakow.

He was nominated in 1970 as a head of a new-formed Department of Epidemiology, part of existing at that time Institute of Social Medicine. He was also involved, as a vice-director, in the management of this Institute. Moreover, between 1988 and 1989 he was employed as a visiting professor at Kuwait University in the Department of Community Medicine.

After structural reorganization, Department of Epidemiology was transformed into the Chair of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine of Jagiellonian University Medical College. Then - Professor W. Jędrzychowski had conducted this University unit as a Head of its Chair from 1993 to 2003. After retirement he had been still actively involved - until the last days of his life - in research programme as a director of the project performed in the cooperation with the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, NY, USA, headed by Professor Frederica Perera.

Professor Jędrzychowski's connections with non-specific respiratory disease epidemiology started in the middle sixties of the twentieth century when – using his own words written to professor Jan Kostrzewski on the occasion of his 85th birthday anniversary – “thanks to lucky circumstances for me, I was welcomed by Professor (Kostrzewski) to the research team performing since 1965 pioneering prospective studies on chronic pulmonary diseases. It was a crucial point for my future academic career. From that moment my fascination with epidemiology started and I gave up, with no regrets, my clinician career. I owe my interest in epidemiology

largely to Professor J. Kostrzewski, under his supervision I made the first steps as an epidemiologist and without his help and valuable advice I could not imagine my scientific development”¹. From this time period, it is worth to mention also the cooperation with associate professor Feliks Sawicki from the National Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw.

During the following years he took up epidemiological studies concerning the prevalence of the respiratory tract diseases among the big industrial plant workers, as well as research on environmental factors influencing lung cancer prevalence (1980-1985) and on causes of mortality among Krakow citizens in relation to atmospheric air pollution. Professor Jędrzychowski conducted also one of the first studies in Poland on the health status of older Krakow citizens (1986-1987) which became later the baseline for the longitudinal analysis on the mortality predictors among older people.

Since the eighties of the twentieth century, Professor Jędrzychowski has started the collaboration with significant American research centers to perform the studies on respiratory tract diseases among different groups of children. The last decades resulted in very fruitful cooperation with Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Since then Professor Jędrzychowski was dealing with impact of environmental factors on the health of the most vulnerable populations – children and newborns. The results of prospective observation of schoolchildren, carried out in years 1986-1988 among children exposed on passive smoking at their homes were published in the monograph entitled „Effect of poor air quality on the health of Krakow children”.

In 1992, in cooperation with Professor Frederica Perera from Columbia University, New York, Professor Jędrzychowski started the study on the prenatal exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and the fetus development. The research on the impact of prenatal exposure to high air pollution level and passive smoking on the fetus and newborn development, was the first prospective observation in Poland based on the

¹ Quotation from a book of Piotr Kostrzewski: J.K. Kostrzewski – not only epidemiology. Warszawa 2014 (in Polish J.K. Kostrzewski – nie tylko epidemiologia)

individual assessment of the exposure. The research shown that prenatal exposure to air pollution influenced the anthropometric parameters of newborn as well as the incidence of asthmatic symptoms in early life, the lowered of spirometric parameters in the preschool age, slightly declined intellectual development and behavioral deficits among children.

The other field of research activity of Professor Jędrychowski were, conducting over many years together with I Chair of Surgery of Medical Academy in Krakow, epidemiological studies on the role of environmental factors (mainly life style) on the etiology of digestive tract diseases. Conducting the research on the role of nutritional habits in the etiology of digestive tract diseases, Professor Jędrychowski had cooperated for many years with German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg and Institute of Nutrition in Potsdam and he carried out for the consecutive years extended studies aimed at the assessment of the role of nutritional factors in etiology of colorectal cancer in the view of individual genetic susceptibility. The results of these studies were published in two monographs: „Gastrointestinal cancer in Poland” (2004, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków) and „Dietary prevention of colorectal cancer” (2009, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków).

Additionally, in cooperation with Columbia University, New York, he was a principal investigator of the research on the children nutrition aimed, not only at the description of the nutrition, but also at the assessment of the nutrition impact on the health status of children.

In years 2000-2003 he participated in multicenter study in Poland aimed at the prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* infection among adults and children and environmental factors affecting this infection.

Speaking about professional activity of Professor Jędrychowski, special attention should be put on a new programme of teaching of epidemiology in Polish medical schools. He was a promoter of six doctorates.

Professor W. Jędrychowski was co-organizer of the cycle of epidemiological seminars in Rabka, performed by prof. J. Kostrzewski as the chairman. The topic of these seminars focused on methodological aspects in epidemiology as well as showed the role of epidemiologists in cooperation with other medical professions, for example hygienists. These seminars helped to educate the new generation of epidemiologists, presented competitions necessary to perform epidemiological investigation following the modern methods, as well as introduced some new methods of teaching epidemiology in Polish medical school in the undergraduate curriculum and in the postgraduate training (PHD studies). Professor Jędrychowski was co-author of a new, modern programme of epidemiology, as a part

of curriculum in the medical schools and methods of epidemiological research during PHD studies. This new approach was concluded by separation of epidemiology as an independent subject apart from hygiene, with the stress on independent subject of epidemiological research and specific research methods.

Summarizing the contribution of Professor Jędrychowski in the development of Polish epidemiology, it is necessary to point out his studies and publications focused on methodology of research.

Professor W. Jędrychowski is an author of modern textbooks and manuals concentrated on a new approach in teaching epidemiology to medical students and physicians: „Epidemiological Methods in Industrial Medicine” (in Polish, 1978, PZWL, Warszawa), „Introduction to methods in scientific research in medicine” (in Polish, 1979, Akademia Medyczna w Krakowie, 1st edition and next editions), „Methods of medical interview” (in Polish, 1982, PZWL, Warszawa), „Epidemiology – Introduction and methods” (in Polish, 1986, PZWL, Warszawa), „L’ Importanza Del Questionario Nelle Indagini Di Medicina Del Lavoro e Medicina Preventiva” (1987, La Goliardica Pavese, Pavia), „Foundations of clinical epidemiology” (in Polish, 1988, Akademia Medyczna im. Mikołaja Kopernika w Krakowie), „Research Methods on Occupational Health Hazards - Population Approach” (1993, Editrice Fusi, Pavia), „Foundations of epidemiology” (in Polish, 1986, 1st edition and next editions: 1993, 1995, 2002, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków), „Epidemiology – Introduction and Methods” (in Polish, 1999, PZWL, Warszawa), „Statistical analysis of Results of Scientific Research in Medicine and Biology” (in Polish, 2000, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków), “In Search for Epidemiologic Evidence on Air Quality and Health in Children and Adults” (2000, Luxembourg), „Epidemiologic Methods in Studying Chronic Diseases, Teaching Manual” (2000, Luxembourg), „Patterns of Planning and Performing Scientific Research in Medicine” (in Polish, 2004, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków), „Epidemiology in clinical medicine and in public health” (in Polish, 2010, Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków).

In 1997 Professor Jędrychowski took initiative to form Polish Association of Environmental Epidemiology and Foundation „Health and Environment” (Fundacja „Zdrowie i Środowisko”). As a Chairman of Polish Association of Environmental Epidemiology, he succeeded in integration of epidemiologists interested in the role of environmental determinants in health status. He was initiator and publisher of the international Newsletter „EpiMarker”, edited from 1997 to 2009.

To appreciate his international scientific position Professor W. Jędrychowski was invited in 1997 to become a member of Scientific Committee of Interna-

tional Centre for Studies and Research in Biomedicine in Luxemburg.

He was a member of Committee on Human Ecology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Head of Epidemiological Committee (the Polish Academy of Sciences), a member of International Society for Environmental Epidemiology and Head of the Chapter for Central Europe (1993-1995), and member of International Society for Epidemiology, International Epidemiological Association.

Professor Jędrychowski was many times honored and awarded— in 2003 he received *Tadeusz Browicz Award* (given by Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences), in 2005 - *Jędrzej Śniadecki Medal*, as an expression of his high scientific position in medical science (Polish Academy of Sciences); he was the first person honored with *Epilaur* (2008) as a worthy scientist in epidemiology and promotor of the good epidemiological practices in medical sciences.

In 2009 Professor W. Jędrychowski achieved the position of Corresponding Member of the Medical Faculty of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2014 he received award “In recognition of outstanding research to protect and promote children’s environmental health” from Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Scientific achievements of Professor W. Jędrychowski are outstanding. There are 452 original papers published mostly in the international journals of high quality. Impact Factor (since 1990) IF - 202,527, value of publications pointed by Ministry of Science and High Education (MNiSW) - 1699. Professor W. Jędrychowski contributed significantly to the development of environmental epidemiology, particularly into the improvement of scientific knowledge on the field of chronic respiratory conditions.

Terminal illness and death broken off this active and full of future plans life of Professor Jędrychowski. The last half of a year he spent in Italy with his daughter Iwona and grandson Gabriele, coping with pain and suffering, he tried to find peace in scientific activity, planning the next research. His last will was to be buried on Rakowice Cemetery in Kraków, in the family tomb, next to his wife.

Vice Rector of the Jagiellonian University for Medical College, Professor Piotr Laidler, during the funeral ceremony on 2nd June, 2015 on Rakowice Cemetery mentioned that the death of Professor. Jędrychowski

is the a great loss not only for Polish epidemiology. Professor W. Pawlik, director of Medical Faculty of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, stressed the role of prof. Jędrychowski for Polish science; associate Professor Małgorzata Kowalska in her speech on behalf of Polish Association of Environmental Epidemiology pointed out the achievements of Professor Jędrychowski for environmental epidemiology.

We, co-workers from Chair of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, farewell not only our Head but primarily our Master and Teacher.

Professor Frederica Perera from Columbia University – Doctor Honoris Causa of the Jagiellonian University, in her letter that had been read out during the funeral ceremony wrote: „I have had the great honor of partnering in research with Wiesław Jędrychowski and his colleagues at the Jagiellonian University Medical College for the past 27 years. Together we have shown that early-life exposure to air pollution—even before children were born - is a risk factor for serious respiratory illness and neurodevelopmental problems in childhood. This cutting-edge research has underscored the need for protecting this vulnerable population from the many health effects of air pollution and has been relevant to policy-making with respect to the burning of coal and other fossil fuel in Krakow and elsewhere.

Throughout all these years I came to know and cherish Wiesław for his many qualities. He was not only a committed physician and outstanding scholar, but one of the most deeply thoughtful and kind people I have ever known. He was also courageous, speaking truth to power when it came to protect the health of children. You might think such man would be too serious to have any fun. But he enjoyed his life to the fullest, writing to me about his joy in his family, in the small things, and his pleasure in art and music.

I have been very fortunate to know Wiesław and to be able to help carry on his important work here in Krakow, as he wished”.

We should hope that the next generations of epidemiologists will remember the contribution of Professor Wiesław Jędrychowski to the development of the modern Polish epidemiology.

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