

From the Editors

The 47th Congress of Polish Psychiatrists was held June 8–11 in Lodz, Poland. It was a long-awaited event – the first opportunity after the restrictions related to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic to meet directly with over a thousand of specialists in the treatment of mental health disorders. Organizational and scientific committees chaired by the National Consultant for Psychiatry, prof. Piotr Gałeczki prepared an unusual event – in the rooms of the Teaching Center of the Medical University of Lodz, scientific discussions and exchanges of views lasted until the last hours of the congress, with the attendance often exceeding the capacity of spacious lecture rooms.

The multidimensionality and scientific richness of the conference program reflected the diversity of Polish psychiatry. One of the most important thematic areas of the congress was the implementation status and the further shape of the reform implemented under the National Mental Health Program. The current situation of the Mental Health Centers network was discussed and views on the second and third reference levels – specialist treatment, were exchanged. Work related to the implementation of this part of the reform will be carried out in the near future in cooperation with regional centers – branches of the Polish Psychiatric Association, clinics and multidisciplinary hospitals. Much attention was also paid to the reform of child and adolescent psychiatry. The challenges related to this area are significant and require extensive cooperation aimed at extending the availability and further increase in the quality of provided services. The establishment of two new specializations by the Postgraduate Medical Education Center – child and adolescent psychotherapy and psychotherapy of addictions, was also noted. Considerations regarding the development of a community model of treating mental disorders were continued.

The meeting with the Minister of Health, Mr. Adam Niedzielski, was an opportunity to directly address difficult questions and doubts regarding the shaping of health policy in Poland. The discussion highlighted specific challenges of psychiatric treatment. Conference participants expressed their expectations of giving psychiatry reform the priority it deserves – it was emphasized that mental health is one of the most important values, especially in the face of contemporary challenges. The increasing prevalence of mental disorders is another argument that justifies the need to significantly increase the expenditure allocated to financing treatment and prevention in the area of mental health. The substantive cooperation of the Ministry of Health and the Polish Psychiatric Association is necessary to ensure the wide availability and high quality of the offered health services and to provide people struggling with mental disorders with the most effective treatment possible.

Reflection on the impact of extreme, traumatic experiences on the shaping of personality and functioning of patients in the short, medium and long-term perspective was also the key thematic area of the conference. The specific diagnostic and therapeutic needs of these people were indicated, as well as the need for proper training of specialists, which would contribute to the dissemination of the use of competent, targeted therapeutic interventions. The discussion was conducted with reference to the current situation in Ukraine.

The topics discussed during the congress also included issues related to the advancement of knowledge in the field of psychiatry, which is reflected, among others, in the update of the classification of diseases and health problems (ICD-11). In particular, far-reaching changes concern sexual and personality disorders, although significant differences from ICD-10 and DSM-5 can be found in most areas of mental disorders. Researchers presented reports on the use of modern methods of therapy, which give hope of achieving effective treatment effects in a wider group of patients. The latest results of scientific research on the effectiveness and safety of the use of new neuroleptics, antidepressants and mood stabilizers in the treatment of schizophrenia and affective disorders were also presented.

The phenomenon of drug resistance elicited great interest. Attention was also paid to the special needs in the treatment of mental disorders in patients with disabilities. Examples of the therapeutic application of transcranial magnetic stimulation and virtual reality were presented. During the congress, researchers also presented significant number of interesting reports on the psychotherapy of mental disorders. There was also a panel dedicated to the memories of two leading representatives of psychotherapy in Poland – prof. Andrzej Leder and prof. Jerzy Aleksandrowicz. Hypnosis – one of the best scientifically researched, non-pharmacological methods of therapy with recognized efficacy was also not forgotten. The scientific program of the conference was also enriched by reports related to art therapy.

The General Meeting of Delegates of the Polish Psychiatric Association was also held during the Congress. The outgoing Management Board chaired by the President Jerzy Samochowiec was granted a vote of acceptance and ended the difficult, but at the same time very fruitful term of office 2019–2022. The duties of the President were taken over by prof. Dominika Dudek, who will lead the work of the Association for the next three years. Prof. Agata Szulc was elected President Elect. Her opponent, prof. Małgorzata Janas-Kozik, who will participate in the further work of the Association as a member of the Management Board, also obtained a very good election result. Continuation of work and conceptual continuity will be ensured by prof. Jerzy Samochowiec (Vice President) and prof. Janusz Heitzman (Vice President). The operation of the Management Board will also be more efficient owing to the involvement of the National Consultant for Psychiatry – prof. Piotr Gałecki. Prof. Adam Wichniak will be responsible for finances. Prof. Przemysław Bienkowski will be in charge of the further development of the Schools for Young Psychiatrists. The function of the Secretary of the Management Board will be performed by dr med. Michał Mielimąka. The Association's Press Officer – dr hab. med. Sławomir Murawiec and dr med. Maciej Matuszczyk – will be responsible for media coverage and the Association's online presence. Prof. Bogdan de Barbaro accepted the invitation to represent the Managing Board in the area of legislative changes concerning psychotherapy in Poland.

The tasks facing the Management Board in the 2022–2025 term can only be implemented with the involvement of all colleagues who care for the good of Polish psychiatry. We cordially invite you to cooperate.

Dominika Dudek – President of the Polish Psychiatric Association, Editor-in-Chief

Michał Mielimąka – Secretary of the Polish Psychiatric Association

Jerzy A. Sobański – Vice Editor-in-Chief

Katarzyna Klasa – Managing Editor