

Doctor Janusz M. Szajewski, MD (1924–2015)

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Former Managing Editor of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*

Doctor Janusz Maciej Szajewski died on May 29, 2015. He was a member of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and a long-term Associate Editor-in-Chief of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (*Pol Arch Med Wewn*).

Doctor Janusz Szajewski was born on May 25, 1924, in Grodzisk Mazowiecki in a family closely tied to a socialist and independence movement of Józef Piłsudski. He was the son of Józef Szajewski, Lt. Col., the member of the Polish Military Organization, during German occupation the creator of the “Osa – Kosa” organization from which the Home Army Directorate for Subversion—KEDYW emerged. Doctor Janusz Szajewski was brought up in the spirit of independence, equality, and liberal attitudes of the Polish intelligentsia. He was associated with the Generation of Columbuses (a name given to the generation of Polish poets and writers who were born soon after Poland regained its independence in 1918, and whose adolescence was marked by the tragic times of World War II [translator’s note]).

The beginning of Doctor Szajewski’s medical studies falls on the years of the German occupation of Poland. He took part in the Warsaw Uprising working as a medical student in a field hospital.

In 1945 he began full-time medical studies in Poznań, which he completed in Warsaw in 1950.

As a young doctor he worked in the Silesia Mine in the region of Silesia, in which he took great pride, although he knew that he was sent to work in the mine because of the political reasons.

During the war in Korea in 1950s, he was the chief of the internal medicine unit of the Red Cross hospital in Hamhung.

After coming back to Poland, he worked in the famous 1st Department of Internal Medicine of Medical Academy of Warsaw run by a distinguished Polish internist, Professor Andrzej Biernacki, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Pol Arch Med Wewn* (1945–1947) and afterwards by Professor Tadeusz Orłowski, an internist and a famous European nephrologist, the Chairman of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and a long-term Editor-in-Chief of the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*.

In the years 1959–1960 Doctor Janusz Szajewski was a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation in the Cleveland Hospital where he cooperated closely with one of the most prominent American internists, Professor Irving H. Page.

In 1970 he became the chief of the 3rd Department of Internal Medicine in the Praski Hospital in Warsaw. There he developed the budding Warsaw Center for Acute Poisoning (SOOZ) with the Toxicology Information and Dialysis Unit Office. He became the member of the European Society of Centers for Acute Poisoning and Clinical Toxicology. For many years he was the member of the Society’s Presidium and the member of the Clinical Toxicology Editorial Committee, which is the Society’s official publication. He took an active part in the annual Society Congress. He was a prominent persona in the Society, and he was widely valued for his vast general knowledge of medicine, especially in the field of internal medicine. He was regarded as an expert in the European clinical toxicology circles. In 2014 he received the title of the Honorary Member of the European Society of Centers for Acute Poisoning and Clinical Toxicology. He was really proud of this exquisite distinction.

In the years 1970s – 1990s Doctor Szajewski held the position of an Associate Editor-in-Chief of the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*. Whilst cooperating with Professor Tadeusz Orłowski and Professor Alfred Siciński, he contributed largely to maintaining a very high academic level of the *Pol Arch Med Wewn*. Doctor Szajewski was awarded the Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine, in which he took great pride.

Doctor Szajewski was the coauthor of the clinical toxicology manuals, including the chapter regarding this field of medicine in a fundamental internal medicine manual, edited by Professor Andrzej Szczeklik. He introduced necessary amendments to the manual on a yearly basis.

As the chief of the 3rd Department of Internal Medicine in the Praski Hospital in Warsaw he trained numerous doctors who have worked knowing that it was thanks to him that they received thorough internal medicine training and

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Received: June 8, 2015.

Accepted: June 8, 2015.

Pol Arch Med Wewn. 2015;
121 (6): 396-397

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Kraków 2015

that they learnt a remarkable, but unfortunately rare these days, highly humanist attitude towards the patient.

Doctor Szajewski continued to work almost till the end of his days, his final years in a Veterans' Clinic. He considered this work as highly important and complementing his long life rich in experiences. The Office for War Veterans assisted him with the publication of the Medication for Persons of Respectable Age Guide, which was largely popular and not only with the veterans.

The passing of Doctor Janusz Szajewski is a sad and painful loss to the entire medical community in Poland.