

Marian Zierski (1906–1998): world-famous Polish phtysiatrist

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Abstract: Marian Zierski was born in Lviv on May 1, 1906. He studied medicine at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv and the Charles University in Prague, where he received his medical degree. Before and during Second World War (until 1942) he worked in Lviv and then he moved to Warsaw. He experienced the tragedy of the Warsaw Uprising (1944) and the total destruction of the city. After the war he settled in Łódź. He held numerous managerial posts in medical care institutions in Łódź. There he also established a tuberculosis outpatient clinic for students. At the same time, Zierski carried out phtysiatric research publishing numerous works (approx. 300) and participating in conventions and scientific conferences both in the country and abroad. Apart from many awards and offices, Prof. Marian Zierski was a holder of an honorary doctorate of universities in Great Britain, Brazil, Germany, France, the USA and Hungary.

Key words: history of medicine, Marian Zierski, phtysiatric

Marian Zierski (Fig.) was born on May 1, 1906 in Lviv, into the family of a railroad worker. At the age of 12, he lost his father, who died of tuberculosis, which influenced the subject of his medical interests. In 1924, he completed his secondary education and became a student at the Medical Department of the Jan Kazimierz University (UJK) in Lviv [1]. Then he continued his studies at the Charles University in Prague, where, in 1930, he got his diploma of all-medical sciences, which was recognized by the UJK in 1933. Since the beginning of his professional and scientific career, he showed interest in tuberculosis issues. He started to work as a physician in a tuberculosis sanitarium in Ruppertsheim. In the years 1932–1933, he ceased his activity as a phtysiatrist for a short time, while working in Lviv in the Lazarus Hospital, the Common Hospital and the Internal Medicine University Hospital. He returned to tuberculosis control as an assistant and then a department head in the Sanitarium and Outpatient Clinic of the Tuberculosis Control Association in Lviv [2]. In 1938, Zierski received his PhD with doctoral thesis entitled *Role of Outpatient Clinics in Tuberculosis Control*. Before the outbreak of World War II, he was in charge of the Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Hołosk near Lviv, and during the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland (1939–1941), he worked in the Lviv Phtysiatry Hospital of the Kiev Tuberculosis Institute. After moving to Warsaw in 1942,

Zierski found a job as a laborer (a factory worker, then a night attendant in a contagious disease hospital in the district of Grochów). During the Warsaw Uprising he served as a physician in the insurgent hospital of “Żywiciel” military group in the district of Żoliborz. After the fall of the Uprising, he was locked up by the Germans in the Tworki mental hospital. He managed to escape and took refuge in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, where he stayed until the end of the war [3]. After the war, sent by the Ministry of Health to Łódź, Zierski took active part in organizing tuberculosis control institutions in the city. He performed managerial functions in the Tuberculosis Control Department of the Municipality and in the Central Tuberculosis Outpatient Clinic in Łódź. In 1946, Zierski established a tuberculosis outpatient clinic for students and became its head, and a year later he was appointed the director and the head of a ward in the Alfred Sokołowski Hospital. In 1954, he took the management of the Phtysiatry Unit of the Institute of Training and Specialization of Medical Personnel and in 1967, along with his whole team, Zierski was transferred to the Lung Disease Hospital in Łagiewniki [4].

In 1951, in the Medical Academy in Wrocław, he was appointed a university professor, following his thesis entitled “Tuberculosis and Pregnancy” and ten years later, in 1961, he was made professor [5].

Throughout his entire professional career, Zierski participated in works of numerous scientific research organizations, among others in the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, the Scientific Council of Tuberculosis Institute in Warsaw and in the Polish Phtysiatry Association, where in the years 1951–1953 he acted as the Deputy Chairman of the Board. Since the beginning of the 1950s, he performed phtysiatric consultant's duties in Łódź province and was a member

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Fig. Marian Zierski (reproduced from: Archiwum Szpitala Chorób Płuc w Łagiewnikach)

of editorial committee and a deputy editor-in-chief of the journal *Gruźlica*. As an outstanding expert, Zierski participated in scientific congresses both in the country and abroad. In 1948, while granted a scholarship from the Ministry of Health, he underwent a 3-month course in tuberculosis in Copenhagen. In 1955, the Ministry of Health awarded him with a scientific prize for teaching activity. His academic achievements include approx. 300 publications, including several monographs, textbooks and scientific publications for general public [6].

Zierski was an honorary member of the Polish Phthysiatry and Pneumology Association and numerous foreign scientific associations, as well as a holder of an honorary doctorate of universities in Great Britain, Brazil, Hungary, Germany, France and the USA.

He died on April 24, 1998 in Stahnsdorf near Berlin, Germany, a week before his 92nd birthday [7].

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