

Professors of internal diseases at Polish universities in 1918–1939

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ABSTRACT

The article outlines the achievements of Polish professors who specialized in the treatment of internal diseases. The analysis concerns the scientists who held professorial chairs between 1918 and 1939. The findings were presented in the context of university medical departments. In Poland, in the interwar period, a total of 13 professors held chairs of internal medicine: Zdzisław Gorecki, Władysław Antoni Gluziński, Aleksander Januszkiewicz, Walery Jaworski, Wincenty Jezierski, Jerzy Latkowski, Jan Henryk Lubieniecki, Witold Orłowski, Zenon Orłowski, Roman Rencki, Kazimierz Rzętkowski, Tadeusz Tempka, and Edward Żebrowski. Some of them had been awarded their chairs before 1918. Most of them were successful researchers. Professors Antoni Gluziński and Witold Orłowski were particularly recognized in the scientific world. Gluziński held chairs at Jagiellonian University and then at the University of Warsaw. Orłowski worked at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv and then moved to the University of Warsaw. In the interwar period, Polish departments of medicine were one of the largest when compared with other departments. Consequently, internal medicine units (assigned to such chairs) were the largest within the departments of medicine in terms of the staff employed. For this reason, most universities decided to divide such units into 2 independent ones. In the years 1918–1939, the field of internal medicine had flourished in Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Lviv, and Vilnius; however, the outbreak of World War II would change this forever. After 1945, Lviv and Vilnius were no longer within the territory of Poland, and Polish professors based in those cities moved to join professorial staff at Polish universities.

In interwar Poland, medical universities did not function as separate and medicine was taught only at 5 state universities that existed at the time in Kraków, Warsaw, Lviv, Poznań, and Vilnius. All of them had departments of medicine.

The history of the departments of medicine and their scientific staff at interwar Polish universities have not been studied in depth. The source material for such a study is rich but very dispersed; the archives are mostly located in Poland (Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań), Ukraine (Lviv), and Lithuania (Vilnius). The main aim of this article was to outline some basic facts about the professors who specialized in internal medicine at that time. The analysis concerns the scientists who occupied professorial chairs in the period from 1918 to 1939. The findings were presented against a broader background of interwar higher education and, especially, departments of medicine. Apart from the general

findings related to professors of internal diseases, attention was paid to the most prominent representatives of this group.

Most Polish universities have a long tradition, but some operated intermittently. For Jagiellonian University in Kraków and Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, the interwar period was just another stage of uninterrupted activity. The University of Warsaw and Stefan Batory University in Vilnius were reactivated (in 1915 and 1919, respectively). The University of Poznań was a new university, which had been operating since 1919. Departments of medicine were usually the largest units at Polish universities in terms of the number of academic staff and students.¹

Within university departments, professors were awarded chairs of 2 types: full (more prestigious) and associate. The chairs were created by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education. Some of those awarded to university by the Ministry

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remained vacant. Sometimes, it was a temporary situation while the right candidates were being searched for; however, often deputy professors were hired for a longer period or the chairs remained vacant and lectures were conducted by professors who held other chairs. At the departments of medicine, the chairs were usually taken quickly. For example, in the academic years 1931/1932 and 1932/1933, the Department of Medicine at Stefan Batory University had 14 full chairs (Pathological Anatomy, Bacteriology and Serology, Physiological Chemistry, Surgery, Internal Diseases [2 chairs], Pharmacology, Physiology, Hygiene, Neurology, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Psychiatry) and 9 associate chairs (Descriptive Anatomy, Biology, Dermatology and Venereology, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmacognosy and Cultivation of Medical Plants, Histology and Embryology, Forensic Medicine, General Pathology, and Pediatrics). All of them were occupied and 2 associate professors temporarily held full professorial chairs. At that time, the Department of Medicine at the University of Warsaw had 23 chairs and employed 20 professors; in addition, there were 5 chairs and 4 professors at the Department of Pharmacy. The Department of Medicine at Jagiellonian University had 26 chairs and 23 professors; the Department of Medicine at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv—20 chairs and 19 professors; and the Department of Medicine at the University of Poznań—25 chairs and 24 professors.²

The universities developed their internal organizational structure in accordance with educational laws and divided departments into institutes. A professor held a particular position, awarded by the Ministry, and was in charge of a respective institute. Since institutes were mostly responsible for the organization of teaching, they were assigned to specific classes. Therefore, at departments of medicine, the professors who were responsible for clinical classes headed medical units instead of institutes. Institutes were also assigned specific premises for both employees and teaching purposes. Some of them were housed in university buildings, some outside. Those were mainly medical units that not only were the counterparts of institutes but were also the actual medical units with hospital beds and were located in hospitals.

The majority of professors at departments of medicine were physicians; however, there were also a few representatives of other disciplines—pharmacy, chemistry, biology, and anthropology. Specific names of chairs held by professors changed. Sometimes a professor was awarded a different, vacant chair, as it was more in line with the mainstream of his scientific interests. In the interwar period, if there were 2 chairs of internal diseases at a department, there were also 2 variants of their names: a) Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases and b) Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases or a) 1st Chair of Internal Diseases and b) 2nd

Chair of Internal Diseases. Sometimes a modification of the nomenclature was applied. At Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, in the 1930s, it was only possible for one internal chair to operate; therefore, it was called the Chair of Internal Diseases. Regardless of the official name at a university, the Ministry usually referred to those structures as “chairs of internal diseases”.

In interwar Poland, there were 13 professors who held chairs of internal medicine (TABLE 1). Some of them had been awarded their chairs before 1918. Most of them did not leave their workplace until retirement, death, or liquidation of the chair, but there were 2 professors who took offers from the University of Warsaw (since at the time the university had greater financial resources, for example, to provide equipment for university hospitals). This was the case with the former professor of Jagiellonian University, Witold Orłowski, and professor of Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, Władysław Antoni Gluziński (he preferred to use the second name). For Gluziński, it was already the third university in which he held a professorial chair. His career as a professor began in 1890 at his home university, Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

Sometimes professors interested in internal medicine held other chairs. For example, professor of Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, Marian Franke, held the Chair of General and Experimental Pathology.¹⁵

Apart from professors who held chairs, universities also employed other staff who were referred to as professors. They included titular professors (they had the right to be referred to as professors, but their status was lower than that of chair professors), honorary professors (usually former chair professors who had to retire at the age of 65), and deputy professors (who were temporarily allowed to hold a professorial chair).

Other research and teaching staff were counted as auxiliary scientific force or *docents*. The employment of the auxiliary scientific force, as well as professors, was at the discretion of the Ministry. Those were assistant professors (and equivalent to them specialists—custodians, constructors, and prosecutors), senior assistants, assistants, junior assistants, and deputy assistants.

Quite a large number of university staff were *docents*. The title of *docent* was received by academics with habilitation. Due to the nature of the habilitation at the time, which only gave the right to lecture, only those who were officially allowed to teach applied for the title. The procedure was conducted at the department level, on the basis of one monograph—a habilitation thesis. No other academic achievements were required, though the reviewers could take them into consideration. Since habilitation only gave the right to lecture, *docents* could take full-time jobs as deputy professors, associate professors (also prosecutors at departments of medicine), or senior assistants, or only conduct commissioned classes. However, the academic with the title of

TABLE 1 Professors employed at departments of medicine at Polish universities and holding chairs of internal diseases in the years 1918–1939^{3–14}

Full name	Professorial chair	Period of work as a professor ^a	
		Associate	Full
Jagiellonian University in Kraków			
Walery Jaworski	Chair of Internal Diseases (Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases)		Before 1918–1919
Jerzy Latkowski	Chair of Internal Diseases		1925–1928
	2nd Chair of Internal Diseases ^b		1928–1939
Witold Orłowski	Chair of Internal Diseases		1920 ^c –1925
Tadeusz Tempka	1st Chair of Internal Diseases	1928–1939	
University of Warsaw			
Władysław Antoni Gluziński	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases		1919–1927
Zdzisław Gorecki	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases	1935–1939	
Witold Orłowski	Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases		1925–1927
	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases		1927–1939
Kazimierz Rzętkowski	Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases		1919 ^d –1924
Edward Żebrowski	Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases	1928–1930 ^e	
Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv			
Władysław Antoni Gluziński	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases		Before 1918–1919
Roman Rencki	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases		1920–1937
University of Poznań			
Wincenty Jezierski	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases	1920–1922	1922–1939
Jan Henryk Lubieniecki	Chair of Diagnosis and Therapy of Internal Diseases	1923–1924	1924–1939
Stefan Batory University in Vilnius			
Aleksander Januszkiewicz	Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases		1921–1933
	(2nd Chair of Internal Diseases)		1933–1939
	Chair of Internal Diseases		
Zenon Orłowski	Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases (1st Chair of Internal Diseases)		1922–1933 ^f

a Date of professorial nomination

b Usually, the first chair was more prestigious than the second one (this rule applied to most university disciplines). In that case, however, Latkowski decided to take the second chair because the Internal Diseases Unit, which he had previously been in charge of, was assigned to the 2nd chair. In addition, its unit was larger and better staffed than the one assigned to the 1st chair.

c Formally awarded the chair already in 1919

d Date of nomination as full professor, previously employed as “lecturing professor” (until 1919 such employment rules were applied in the entire University of Warsaw).

e After Żebrowski’s death in 1930, the chair remained vacant until 1935. Vacant chairs, even for a few years, were quite common (sometimes another department employee was temporarily awarded a chair).

f Removed from the chair under the new law on academic schools, retired in 1934

docent had higher status as a lecturer and more chances to receive the professorial chair.

Employment in units which dealt with internal medicine can be exemplified by 3 selected universities: University of Warsaw, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, and Stefan Batory University in Vilnius. The staff assigned to particular internal medicine units is presented in TABLES 2–4. It should be added that such units also employed other staff such as nurses, laboratory technicians, administrative workers, caretakers, and cleaners.

As far as scientific activity is concerned, a large number of staff at the departments of medicine were successful in their research work. A few professors of internal medicine were well known in the scientific world, above all, Władysław

Antoni Gluziński and Witold Orłowski (see APPENDICES 1 and 2 for biographical notes). Others were known for their nonscientific activity. For example, Aleksander Januszkiewicz, Professor of Internal Diseases at Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, was a personal physician of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the most important figure of the Second Polish Republic.¹⁹

Teaching was an important aspect of the university work. The time spent by scholars on conducting classes varied greatly. The nomination act obligated a professor to at least 5 hours of lectures and 2 hours of classes. Professors were also allowed to conduct overtime classes, but would not receive a salary unless the classes were approved by the Ministry. For *docents*, the number of teaching hours depended on their terms of

TABLE 2 Medical staff of the Internal Diseases Unit at the Department of Medicine at the University of Warsaw in the academic year 1923/1924¹⁶

Full name	Position
Staff of the medical unit assigned to the Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases	
Professor Władysław Antoni Gluziński	Supervisor
Zdzisław Szczepański, PhD	Assistant Professor
Stefan Czarnota-Bojarski, PhD	Senior Assistants
Adam Elektorowicz, PhD	
Włodzimierz Filiński, PhD	
Witold Gawirski, PhD	
Witold Moczarski, PhD	
Zdzisław Gorecki, PhD	Junior Assistants
Zygmunt Grodzicki, PhD	
Wiktor Proszowski, PhD	
Eleonora Reicher, PhD	
Jakub Węgierko, PhD	
Staff of the medical unit assigned to the Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases	
Professor Kazimierz Rzętkowski	Supervisor
Mściwój Semerau-Siemianowski, PhD	Assistant Professor
Antoni Stefanowski, PhD	Senior Assistants
Marceli Landsberg, PhD	
Tadeusz Milewski, PhD	
Zdzisław Michalski, PhD	Junior Assistants
Janina Misiewicz, PhD	
Klementyna Rachoń, PhD	
Józef Grott, PhD	
Marian Petrynowski, PhD	

TABLE 3 Medical staff of the Internal Diseases Unit at the Department of Medicine at Jagiellonian University in the academic year 1931/1932¹⁷

Full name	Position
Staff of the medical unit assigned to the 1st Chair of Internal Diseases	
Associate Professor Tadeusz Tempka	Supervisor
Leon Tochowicz, PhD	Senior Assistants
Adam Sokołowski, PhD	
Staff of the medical unit assigned to the 2nd Chair of Internal Diseases	
Professor Józef Latkowski	Supervisor
Wiktor Bincer, PhD	Senior Assistants
Stanisław Karasiński, PhD	
Stefan Ryglicki, PhD	
Jan Walkowski, PhD	
Czesław Laszczka, PhD	

TABLE 4 Medical staff of the Internal Diseases Unit at the Department of Medicine at Stefan Batory University in Vilnius in the academic year 1937/1938¹⁸

Full name	Position
Staff of the medical unit assigned to the Chair of Internal Diseases	
Professor Aleksander Januszkiewicz	Supervisor
Jan Klukowski, PhD	Assistant Professor
Stanisław Januszkiewicz, PhD	
Zenon Golczyński, PhD	Senior Assistant
Władysław Łobza, PhD	
Adolf Makower, PhD	
Zofia Waśniewska, PhD	
Emilia Salit, PhD	
Zbigniew Marynowski, PhD	Assistant
Jerzy Śmigieński, MSM	Deputy Junior Assistant
Wacława Wróbel, MSM	

employment. As already mentioned, since habilitation only gave the right to lecture, *docents* could take full-time jobs as deputy professors (number of working hours the same as that of a professor), associate professors, senior assistants, or only conduct commissioned classes. As for the auxiliary scientific force, their working week was 30 hours. The weekly schedule depended on the custom at a particular department. At departments of medicine, professors and deputy professors lectured at least half a week (Monday to Saturday) and auxiliary scholars worked for a few hours every day.

In the interwar period, Polish departments of medicine were one of the largest when compared with other departments. Consequently, internal medicine units were the largest within the departments of medicine, particularly in terms of the staff employed. For this reason, most universities decided to divide such institutes into 2 independent chairs (the creation of a new chair required the approval of the Ministry). Professors employed at departments of medicine usually took their research and teaching duties very seriously and devoted a fair amount of time to them. Sometimes they also engaged in other university responsibilities and held important offices, including the post of rector. Some of the professors who held chairs of internal diseases were researchers recognized both in Poland and abroad. There is no doubt that in the rapidly developing world of interwar internal medicine, Polish experts were equal partners in terms of innovation and application of modern methods; yet, due to the financial difficulties of the newly independent state, it was sometimes impossible to implement modern methods on a larger scale.

During the World War II, some of the scholars to whom this article is devoted, engaged in the organization of underground education. One of the Jan Kazimierz University professors, Roman Rencki (a graduate of Jagiellonian University, where he had initially worked as an assistant, then moved to Lviv with his promoter Professor Gluziński), was executed by the Germans in 1941, together with a group of other Lviv scientists.²⁰⁻²² Only 6 of the 13 professors who held chairs of internal diseases in the interwar period survived World War II (some died before 1939). Four of them continued to work in higher education after 1945.

Appendix 1 Short biography of Władysław Antoni Gluziński Władysław Antoni Gluziński (1856–1935; [FIGURE 1](#)) was born in Włocławek; his father was a physician. Władysław studied at the Department of Medicine of Jagiellonian University in Kraków and received PhD at that university in 1880. In 1885, he habilitated at Jagiellonian University, and his habilitation thesis concerned the pathology and specific therapy of internal diseases. He began his professional career at home university, where he was an assistant since 1881. In 1890, he became associate professor at the

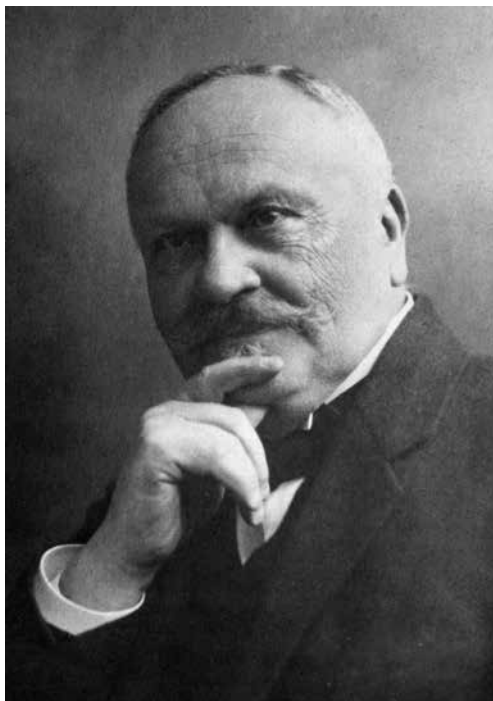


FIGURE 1 Władysław Antoni Gluziński (photograph courtesy of the National Digital Archives in Warsaw, Poland)

university (Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases), and in 1893, full professor (Chair of General and Experimental Pathology of Internal Diseases). In 1897, Gluziński moved to the University of Lviv, where he was awarded the Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases. Another change of workplace came in 1919 when Gluziński accepted the invitation to take the Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases at the University of Warsaw. He held the position until 1927, and then he retired and was appointed honorary professor. He took active part in university life; he was rector and dean of the Department of Medicine at the University of Lviv, and dean at the University of Warsaw. He was also an activist of the social-scientific movement, founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine (in Polish, *Towarzystwo Internistów Polskich*), which was established in 1906 as the Society of Internists of Polish Lands (in Polish, *Towarzystwo Internistów Ziemi Polskich*). He was president of the Cracow Doctors' Association (in Polish, *Towarzystwo Lekarskie Krakowskie*) and the Warsaw Doctors' Association (in Polish, *Warszawskie Towarzystwo Lekarskie*), and a cofounder and honorary president of the Slavic Medical Association, which was established in 1927. Gluziński also founded and was editor-in-chief of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* (in Polish, *Polskie Archiwum Medycyny Wewnętrznej*), the first Polish journal devoted to internal medicine, which has been published since 1923 by the Polish Society of Internal Medicine.

His selected publications include the monograph *An Outline of General Pathology and Therapy of Fever* (in Polish, *Zarys ogólnej patologii i terapii gorączki*), 1896; *A Handbook of Cardiovascular*

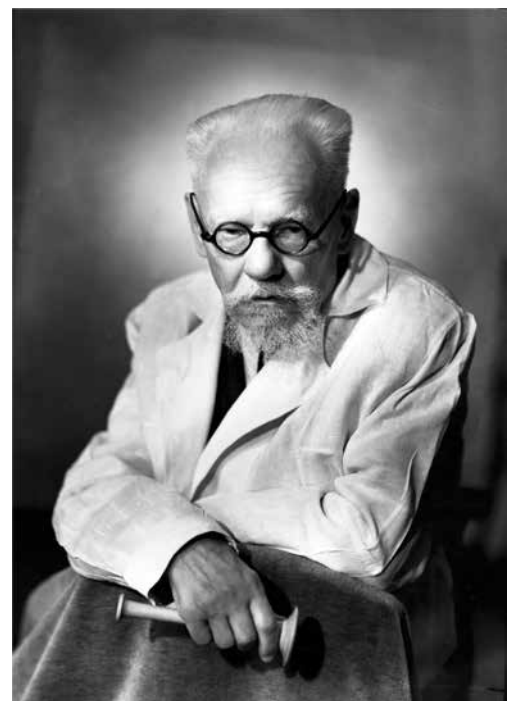


FIGURE 2 Witold Orłowski (photograph courtesy of the National Digital Archives in Warsaw, Poland)

Diseases (in Polish, *Podręcznik chorób narządu krążenia*), a part of the collective work *Knowledge of Internal Diseases* (in Polish, *Nauka o chorobach wewnętrznych*), 1905; numerous publications on gastric diseases, such as "Early Diagnosis of Gastric Cancer" (in Polish, "O wczesnym rozpoznaniu raka żołądka"), 1902. This work gave rise to the so called "Gluziński's test" (which brought him fame in Europe and was in use almost until the mid-20th century). At the beginning of the Second Republic, he was considered the best internist in Poland, which prompted the University of Warsaw authorities to offer him a chair in 1919. As a chair professor in Warsaw, Gluziński published several valuable works on syphilis in internal diseases. While working in Kraków, Lviv, and Warsaw, he gathered around himself a number of students and associates, some of whom later became professors. He was recognized and respected abroad, as evidenced by the numerous texts by foreign authors submitted to the occasional issue of the *Polish Medical Journal* (in Polish, *Polska Gazeta Lekarska*), on the occasion of his 70th birthday (1927). Gluziński ran a very successful private practice. He was interested in history and occasionally gave lectures on this subject.²³⁻³⁰

Appendix 2 Short biography of Witold Orłowski Witold Orłowski (1874–1966; **FIGURE 2**) was born in Norwidpol in the Mińsk province; his father was an estate administrator. He attended a secondary school in Vilnius and then graduated from the Military Medical Academy in St. Petersburg as a physician (1896). There he received a PhD degree (1900) and habilitation in internal medicine (1903). At the beginning, he worked at his home academy as a volunteer doctor, and during

PHOTO 1 Department of Medicine at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv, 1934 (photograph courtesy of the National Digital Archives in Warsaw, Poland)



PHOTO 2 National Medical University in Lviv, 2017 (photograph by the authors)



the summer months, in the health resort of Yes-sentuki in the Caucasus. At the time, he also ran a private practice. Orłowski then became associate professor (1907–1913) and full professor (1913–1918) of general medical diagnosis at the University of Kazan, and from 1918 to 1919, he worked at the University of Tomsk.

Upon his return to Poland in 1920, he took the Chair of Internal Diseases at the Department of Medicine at Jagiellonian University (the nomination in 1919). In 1925, he moved to the University of Warsaw where he took the Chair of Diagnosis and General Therapy of Internal Diseases, which he converted into the Chair of Pathology and Specific Therapy of Internal Diseases in 1927. He stayed there until 1939. During World War II, Orłowski supervised the medical unit (previously assigned to the Chair), was involved in

underground education, and in 1944, was elected dean of the Underground Department of Medicine at the University of Warsaw. After the war, he worked as a professor at the Department of Medicine at the University of Warsaw, and after retirement in 1948, as an honorary professor at the University of Warsaw.

Orłowski dealt with the full scope of internal medicine and focused most of his attention on cardiovascular diseases, metabolism, digestive system, and tuberculosis. The medical unit which he supervised in the interwar period at the University of Warsaw (which was housed in the Hospital of Infant Jesus) was furnished with modern equipment. Numerous scientific and diagnostic laboratories were set up (including biochemistry laboratories, serological and bacteriological laboratories, a urology polyclinic, a physical education

clinic, and a research institute for the impact of ionized mountain air on the human body), some of which were pioneering in Poland.

In addition to research papers, Orłowski also published educational articles. His most important works in the interwar period were on stomach secretory activity, influence of vegetable juices on gastric secretion (he proved that patients with peptic ulcer should refrain from drinking vegetable juice as it is a strong secretory agent of hydrochloric acid), treatment of lung tuberculosis with sanocrisin, research into the pathogenesis and pathophysiology of chronic circulatory insufficiency (the studies suggested a new theory that chronic circulatory insufficiency is a systemic disease and the treatment should cover the whole body, not just the heart), and treatment of rheumatic diseases in health resorts.

Orłowski's modern approach to medicine allowed him to go beyond the static understanding of illnesses and treat disease as a dynamic process within the system. He used statistical methods in medical research and organized work in large teams to study complex and multidimensional problems. He was able to create such teams because he possessed good organizational skills. He cooperated with a large circle of students (including future professors) and collaborators.

He was awarded honorary doctorates of several Polish universities and was a member of the New York Academy of Sciences (since 1959). In the years 1928–1948, he was the editor of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*. Orłowski was involved in the activity of several large social-scientific organizations. In the years 1925–1929, he was president of the Main Board of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. He also provided assistance for the needy, particularly during World Wars I and II. During his stay in Russia (until 1920), Orłowski sought to initiate and support the Polish cause and the Poles (especially prisoners of war and refugees).^{31–35}

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