

IN MEMORIAM

Prof. dr med. Janusz Jeljaszewicz (1930–2001) at the 5th anniversary of his death

Professor Janusz Jeljaszewicz was born in Wilno, Poland, in 1930, as the son of a family of Polish Tatars with strong patriotic traditions. He has graduated from pharmaceutical studies in Poznań, 1954. He worked at the Medical Microbiology of the Medical School in Poznań, receiving his PhD degree in 1959. In 1963 he began to work in the Microbiology Department of the National Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw. This became the centre of his working life, and it was here that he gained the title of Docent, and subsequently Professor. He was Chief of the Laboratory, Departmental Head, Deputy Scientific Director, and finally Director from 1996 to 2000.

During his years in Warsaw he went overseas to study and work, frequently. He was awarded a Fellowship at the National Institute for Medical Research in London (1959–1960). Later, he worked at the Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta (1965–1966), and studied at the University of Cologne (1971–1972). These stays resulted in numerous contacts and fruitful cooperation. A particularly long-term cooperation was established with the Centre at the University of Cologne, headed by Professor G. Pulverer, with whom he also had a lasting friendship.

The Professor's scientific activities were prolific – he had almost 500 publications in important Polish and foreign journals. Amongst these were *Nature*, *J. Bacteriology*, *J. Clin. Microbiology*, *Zentralblatt Bakteriologie*, *J. Infect. Dis.*, and many books. The list of his publications can be found in the Main Medical Library and in the National Institute of Hygiene. The books edited by him, on “Staphylococci and Staphylococcal Infections” and others, showed his great theoretical knowledge, but also summarised his scientific research with internationally-renowned groups.

His talents included also organising scientific circles of common interests, some with a substantial reputation. He took the initiative in supporting a number of grants in Poland and abroad from the Polish Committee for Scientific Research. As an example, studies on the biological properties of staphylococci, financed by the Center for Disease Control in the USA. These studies have been described in 170 publications.

There were several Polish centres with which the Professor actively cooperated. He also undertook educational activities – besides many lectures in his own country, he gave about 200 abroad, in the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, USA, and other countries. He took part in over 100 congresses, mostly international, and was active as the organiser, or as chairman of a section. He had the ability to share his knowledge with others, and enjoyed doing so; eg. he was a visiting professor at the Department of Medicine in the University of Cologne from 1971 to 1972.



The main subjects of his scientific research were staphylococci: toxins and enzymes, *eg.* investigation of the coagulation cascade and fibrinolytic systems during staphylococcal infections. His name obviously features in the list of 138 Polish biomedical scientists most frequently quoted in the scientific bibliography (2003). He was quoted 1734 times out of 245 of his publications.

Professor Janusz Jeljaszewicz was a very social person, active in scientific circles. One of his most significant tasks was to chair the Coordinating Group for the Polish-American Scientific Commission. He was also an adviser and expert for the World Health Organisation in the field of bacterial infections. Finally, in Poland he was Vice-Chairman of the Central Commission for Scientific Degrees and Titles. Professor was a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and a member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His interest in the problems of health promotion made him an excellent populariser of science. The “Diagnosis” series, with his participation, of TV and Polish Radio 2 programmes, were very well-known. This aspect of his social activity was valuable to many scientists. The Commission for Polish-American Co-operation allowed Polish scientific workers to obtain US fellowships. Again, this created a valuable opportunity for scientific development for those persons in difficult times. In this way the Professor became a creator of personal careers. Thus, he contributed to the rising level of Polish science.

“He was a man full of charm, and many people liked him a lot”, wrote Professor Danuta Naruszewicz-Lesiuk, a colleague from the *Epidemiological Review*.

The Professor showed himself to the world as a high-class scientist. In this way, he was also showing Poland, as a place where such a man can be born, live, and be an equal partner in the effort to advance science and to improve the world.

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