

Comment

Public health is a theoretical and practical activity undertaken in order to prevent diseases, prolong life and improve its quality population-wide. In the past these tasks used to be carried out by doctors, however their activities were scattered and not contained in organization structures. In the beginning of the 20th century the period of structuring and consolidating of the public health started, it was also the time when a new occupation was created – public health specialist. In time, a clear distinction between medicine (so-called curative medicine) and public health was made. However, already in the 1970s, as a result of numerous circumstances, it was decided that the scopes of both of the areas were becoming closer and that it was necessary to cooperate and communicate. As a result the areas and occupations were tried to be integrated.

At present in the world a matter of improving the education of the doctors in the area of public health is frequently addressed, including the issue of the rules of health care system operation. Each doctor in their daily practice performs activities directly connected with the area of public health, e.g., when educating a patient, diagnosing taking into consideration the occupation of the patient, carrying out a qualification medical examination in terms of vaccination, preventing healthcare-associated infections, reporting the suspicion of infectious disease or issuing a death certificate.

This issue of “Progress in Medicine” journal was prepared by the employees of Szkoła Zdrowia Publicznego CMKP (School of Public Health). Showing the full range of interest and activities of public health is an impossible task, therefore the presented papers concern five areas:

1. Systemic background: doctors, dentists and nurses staffing in Poland, financing the tasks in the area of public health, the significance of obligatory courses in the field of public health (4 original papers).
2. Social and health needs: health and demographical situation of the people in Poland (2 review papers).
3. The rules of public health operation: the public health functions, legal regulations in the EU and selected countries, Polish act on public health (5 review papers).
4. Risk factors for diseases: proper nutrition in obesity prevention (1 review paper).
5. Methods of operation: vaccination and health promotion (2 review papers).

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