

The 5th Nation-wide Scientific Conference will be held on 21st –22nd of April in Białystok

The 5th Nation-wide Scientific Conference will be held on 21st –22nd of April in Białystok. It will be dedicated to infectious diseases of the central nervous system, hospital infections, prophylactics of infectious and tick – borne diseases. The conference is organised by the Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfections of the Medical University of Białystok.

The conference programme includes:

1. Molecular Biology in the contemporary diagnostics of infectious diseases
2. Immunology of central nervous system infections
3. Hepatic encephalopathy
4. Neurological aspects of HIV infection
5. Parasite diseases of the central nervous system as contemporary threat
6. Patient with neuroinfection in the Intensive Care Unit
7. Medicine of the 21st century and hospital infections
8. Monitoring of hospital infections
9. Human and bird flue – threat and prophylactics
10. Creutzfeld – Jacob's disease – past or future
11. The change of environmental conditions in Poland and tick – borne disease (preliminary results of EDEN studies)
12. West Nile virus fever
13. Mumps – related encephalitis
14. Tick- borne encephalitis complications in 15-year-observation of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfections of the Medical University of Białystok
15. Neuroborreliosis and multiple sclerosis

ROUND – TABLE CONFERENCE on Lyme disease

1. A tick and a man
2. Epidemiology of tick – borne diseases with special interest in Lyme borreliosis
3. New pathogenic aspects of Lyme borreliosis
4. Contemporary diagnostics of Lyme borreliosis
5. Difference in Lyme disease in children
6. Borreliosis arthritis and rheumatic arthritis
7. Radiological diagnostics in Lyme disease
8. Psychic changes in Lyme borreliosis
9. Can infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi* spirochete be cured?

The Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfections in its present form was founded in 1990 year on the basis of the Department of Zoonotic and Parasitic Diseases. Prof. Teresa Hermanowska – Szpakowicz, who had worked in the Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfections under supervision of unforgettable Prof. Piotr

Probationary and infectious Department under supervision of unforgettable Prof. Piotr Boroń - a pioneer of infectious medicine, became its head. After renovation of its premises thanks to numerous sponsors from Białystok, the didactic and research staff was chosen and diagnostic equipment was installed. Computerisation of the Department was carried out thanks to sponsors, above all, the District Authority of State Forests and Forest District Offices (Director, Mr.Z. Godlewski, to whom we are especially grateful).

In 1992 year, epidemic of tick – borne encephalitis broke out mainly among forestry workers and farmers living near the forests. The department started scientific research related to this problem. The prophylactic vaccinations against the virus of tick – borne encephalitis conducted among forestry workers (later as booster vaccination every 3 years) eliminated this serious disease in this employment sector. We have proved that the disease and its serious complications, such as paresis, paraparesis mainly of the upper extremities, facial nerve paralysis and psychic disorders can be avoided by introducing vaccinations at the basic health care level. You should be vaccinated in the late autumn or early spring if you want to wander safely in beautiful Polish forests during summer holidays.

Another disease, which develops together with tick – borne encephalitis is borreliosis, known as Lyme disease (its name comes from the name of the town in the USA – Old Lyme), which was difficult to diagnose due to lack of diagnostic tools. The factors which contribute to development of borreliosis are: reservoirs of *Borrelia .b. spirochete* - rodents, of *Ixodes* ticks and a man in the sites their presence. Ticks can develop faster thanks to activities protecting wild life (restoration of wild hoofed animals), and tourist and recreation development. Every year the number of borreliosis cases grows significantly in Poland. Unfortunately, this disease is not recognised in all regions of our country because of closing down the infectious departments and therefore difficulties in proper diagnostics.

The workers of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfection of the Medical University of Białystok conduct very intensive scientific research into these diseases, their pathogenesis, clinics, diagnostics difficulties, complications and treatment. We present our findings and results of the studies during conventions in Poland and abroad. In 15 years of our activity, we published 174 papers – including 123 related to tick – borne diseases (26 papers in English language), 227 abstracts (128 abstracts in English) including 179 referring to tick – borne disease (105 abstracts in English) on conventions, conferences organised in Poland and abroad.

The scientific subjects our workers deal with are also in the focus of attention of European countries and the USA. Our Department as only one in Poland has received an offer from the European Union to co-operate with European countries in the project of EDEN: 'The threat of diseases in a changing European environment", which will enable to widen our knowledge on the issues connected with tick – borne diseases.

Zoonotic and parasitic diseases, above all toxoplasmosis, rabies prophylactic, hepatic

diseases and brucellosis also play an important role in the examinations and studies of our Department.

During this time the head of the Department was a promoter of 20 doctoral theses. Anna Nowicka – Cieluszecka representing the Probationary and Infectious Department from Hajnówka SPOZOZ defended a doctoral thesis titled, 'The study of tick – borne diseases: Lyme borreliosis and tick – borne encephalitis in the area of the Białowieża Forest', which won the first prize of the Marshal of the Regional Council for a significant contribution to the Podlasie Region/ the Podlaskie Voivodship. Two assistants received post – doctoral degrees; another two are preparing their post – doctoral theses conducting intensive scientific research. Two employees have specialities in infectious diseases, epidemiology and family medicine. Apart from these, our workers conduct classes in infectious and parasitic diseases for the students of the 5th year of the Medical Faculty and in medical parasitology for the 2nd year students of Nursing and Health Care Faculty of the Medical University of Białystok.

Nation- wide Conferences are organised every 3 years presenting the latest findings on infectious diseases with main interest in diseases related to the central nervous system.

The latest 5th Conference will be held on 21 – 22 of April 2006 in the venue of the Gołębiewski Hotel. All guests will be warmly welcome.

Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Neuroinfection of the Medical University.

Prof. Teresa Hermanowska – Szpakowicz, MD.

and the staff:

Senior Researcher Joanna Zajkowska, MD

Senior Researcher Sławomir Pancewicz, MD

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