

International Maritime Health

— 60 years of research and practical activity on behalf of the maritime community

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The Polish scientific journal on maritime medicine, established in 1949, was owned and edited by the Institute and published by PZWL (Medical Literature Publishing House in Warsaw) under the title: Bulletin of the State Institute of Marine and Tropical Medicine in Gdańsk with the aim of informing people about the scientific work carried out at this Institute and in collaborating institutions. It was distributed to medical universities, port health centres, scientific institutes, and medical libraries in maritime countries.

The first Editor-in-chief was Prof. Jerzy Morzycki, and from 1956 Prof. Zenon Buczowski, both Directors of the Institute.

At the beginning, the texts were in Polish with extensive summaries in English and Russian, some papers also contained full texts in French. The edition in 1955 had 292 pages and 690 copies were printed. From 1956, the journal started to be published twice a year, and there were articles on maritime occupational health and the health of fishermen, divers, dockers, and shipyard workers. There were also papers on waste disposal from ships and on other hygienic problems in ports, on transmissible diseases imported by ships and international travellers.

As the Polish shipping and ship building industry gradually developed during the 1960s and 1970s, each year more papers and authors, both domestic and foreign, published in the Bulletin, which became a quarterly.

In 1965, the Second International Symposium on Maritime Medicine was held in Gdańsk/Gdynia, and the participants (authors from European countries) published their papers in this special edition of the Bulletin, volume 17/

/1966, which had 456 pages. Subjects on maritime medicine prevailed in the contents of this edition of the journal.

In 1974, the Sixth International Symposium on Maritime Medicine was organized by the Institute and was held there. Again, all papers were published in volume 25/1974 (613 pages) and the Editor-in-chief was Prof. Franciszek Bławat. From that time on, all papers in the journal were in English.

From 1986 to 1989 the Editor in Chief was Prof. Roman Dolmierski, from 1990 to 2006 it was Prof. Stanisław Tomaszunas (now Honorary Editor), and from 2007 onwards Prof. Bogdan Jaremin.

In June 1997, at the time of the Fourth International Symposium on Maritime Health held in Oslo, Norway, a new concept of international cooperation was born. The Polish participants, including members of the Editorial Board of the Bulletin, actively supported the foundation of the International Maritime Health Association (IMHA), the staff member of the Institute in Gdynia being elected the Secretary of the IMHA Board of Directors. This opened new perspectives.

In 1999, the agreement was signed between the Institute and the IMHA to publish the journal jointly under the new title: International Maritime Health, starting from volume 50. IMHA Board Members joined the Editorial Board of IMH, and the journal was financially supported by the Association; in return, printed copies were, since then, distributed free of charge to all IMHA members.

Travel medicine and cruise ship medicine problems were included in the contents, as

well as the Chronicle section, with brief reports on international symposia, national meetings, and materials on the work of WHO Collaborating Centres on Occupational Health.

The Editorial Board counted 31 members from: Belgium, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Singapore, the UK, the USA, and Poland.

In 2003, formal collaboration with the IMHA discontinued, to the detriment of both parties.

Throughout this time, the journal has been indexed in Index Medicus, Medline, ILO-CIS Bulletin, and other foreign and Polish bibliographical data bases.

Continued publication of the IMH is one of the WHO Collaborative Projects of the Work Plan for 2009–2012, one of the tools of the Network of WHO CCs in Occupational Health, as agreed during the meeting in Madrid on 13–15 October 2008.

Throughout the decades, IMH has established a strong position as an English language source of information on the progress of international research in maritime medicine.

The Institute in Gdynia established close cooperation with the Norwegian Centre of Maritime Medicine in Bergen, Zentral Institut fuer Arbeitsmedizin in Hamburg, and other maritime medicine research centres in Esbjerg, Denmark; Kronshagen, Germany; Turku, Finland; Centro Internazionale Radio Medico in Rome; Tarragona in Spain; Brest in France; Swansea and Cardiff in the UK; Athens in Greece; Singapore; and Haifong in Vietnam.

Thanks to an ITF grant, IMH has also been published and is accessible **on the Internet** at www.imh.mug.edu.pl (now: intmarhealth.pl) beginning from volume 54/2003. In 2008, contact between the IMHA, the Institute, and the Editorial Board of the journal was amicably re-established with plans to again publish this journal jointly.

The Memorandum of Understanding was initially prepared and signed by representatives of the IMHA, NCMM-Bergen, and the Institute after meetings in Copenhagen and Gdynia in 2008 and 2009.

Subject to the availability of good quality material/manuscripts, it is planned to publish 2 issues of the IMH, and later 4 issues each year, if the General Assembly supports our financial plan and helps to build the new Editorial Board. We also found a good, internationally experienced publisher, ready to undertake the complex job of editing, publishing, and distributing the journal.

The Editorial Announcement and invitation to join us is published in this issue of IMH.

The past is closed and the future is open to all who have good will, experience, and enthusiasm for hard work.

Editorial note: The subject was presented at the General Assembly of IMHA during Xth Symposium of Maritime Medicine, held on 26 September 2009, Goa, India.