

## Dear Readers,

The Polish Study Group of Head and Neck Cancer came into existence by the decision of the Founder Committee in the spring of 2003.

For a few years there has been felt in Poland a lack of an interdisciplinary learned society that would constitute a mutual platform of exchange of scientific ideas, own experience concerning aetiopathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment and the creation of new scientific and research programmes within head and neck cancer.

Participating in the founding meeting were specialists in various medical areas, first of all laryngologists, maxillofacial surgeons, neurosurgeons, radiologists, oculists, pathologists, radiotherapists and clinical oncologists – in other words all who take part in the interdisciplinary treatment of patients with head and neck cancer.

Head and neck cancers are counted among the group of cancers whose treatment is very difficult. This is connected first of all with the anatomical location and biology of the tumour.

Each treatment – and particularly surgical treatment of this anatomical area – is associated with a risk of dysfunction of vital organs and dramatic decrease of life quality. That is why there must always be both individual and group cooperation in establishing the treatment programme.

Every year in Poland approximately 8000 new cases of head and neck cancers are noted. The number increases each year by a few dozen new cases. Despite the development of all areas of medicine the treatment results in this group of cancers are very unsatisfactory, with an approximately 50% 5-year survival rate. Only recently has a small improvement been noted.

The main purposes of the Society are: to promote interdisciplinary treatment teams, to improve the quality of treatment, postgraduate education, to establish subspecialties within the treatment of head and neck cancers, and to conduct own and mutual multicentre scientific domestic and European research.



The Society currently has 250 members representing various areas of medicine and has been constantly increasing.

For the first time in many years the Polish learned society (the Polish Study Group of Head and Neck Cancer) became a member of the *International Federation of Head and Neck Oncologic Societies* (IFHNOS) with its headquarters in New York.

We have been trying to participate in all courses and conferences taking place under the auspices of this organisation. The Society awards fellowships to the most active members of the Society and young doctors.

We became actively involved in the creation of the *European Head and Neck Society* (EHNS), which was registered by the decision of the European Commission in Brussels in autumn 2006.

During the last 4 years we have organized 5 domestic meetings in which eminent specialists dealing with the treatment of head and neck cancers took part. Particularly worth stressing is the presence of the President of the European Head and Neck Society, Prof. Jean Louis Lefebvre, the President of the European Federation of Otolaryngological Societies, Prof. Jan Olofsson, Prof. Reidar Grenman, who is responsible within the European Laryngological Society for the new unified specialty programme within otolaryngology of head and neck surgery, Prof. Jochen Werner – one of the top head and neck surgeons in Europe – and Prof. Rene Leemans, director of the Department of Otolaryngology, VU University Medical Centre in Amsterdam – pioneer of head and neck cancer reconstructive surgery in Europe.

The meetings were organised in big cities in Poland, which enabled young doctors specialising in head and neck cancer treatment from various areas of medicine to participate and to become familiar with current trends in diagnosis and head and neck cancer treatment. Full lyceums, lively discussions and excellent factual preparation of lecturers contributed to the complete success of these meetings.

In 2006 the Polish Study Group of Head and Neck Cancer organised in Poznań the 5<sup>th</sup> *European Workshop on Basic Biology of Head and Neck Cancer*. In the two-day conference there participated 150 persons from all over

the world. The best laboratories dealing with molecular biology of head and neck cancers presented the most important achievements and expectations within biology. Significant progress in the basic sciences is connected with notable results of treatment.

As a Society we showed great interest in the *Global Continuing Education Program for Head and Neck Cancer* organised by Prof. Jatin Shah. The intention of this programme is not only to impart knowledge of the most modern achievements of medicine in this area, but also to implement the standards. Due to the increasing costs of travel and stay of the doctors in the top conferences, Prof. Shah decided to organise an educational world tour.

The Polish Study Group of Head and Neck Cancer became a coordinator of Region 5, which includes the following countries: Hungary, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Romania and Poland. In Europe the conference will also take place in London, Barcelona, Rome and Athens. The other places on the map of the *Global Continuing Education Program* are: Moscow, Mumbai, Bangkok, Beijing, Buenos Aires and Bogota.

The eminent experts Prof. Jatin Shah, Prof. William Wei, Prof. Jean-Louis Lefebvre, Prof. Kie-Kian Ang, Prof. Patrick Gullane, Prof. Christopher O'Brien, Prof. Jochen Werner, Prof. Arlene Forastiere, and Prof. Randal Weber will hold lectures introducing a given subject, and doctors from individual countries will present cases which will be discussed with the experts and conference participants. It seems that the logistic undertaking is perfectly prepared.

Our activity was appreciated by the Editor-in-Chief of the *“Reports of Practical Oncology and Radiotherapy”* journal. We were invited to co-edit this dynamically developing journal which surely has a chance to gain a significant publishing position within oncology in Europe (blue journal).

By the decision of the European Head and Neck Society we were chosen to be the main organiser of the European Congress in 2012.

I think that this is proof of confidence in our work and this encourages us in further activity.

Professor Wojciech Golusiński  
Co-Editor