

Władysław Antoni Gluziński, an eminent Polish internist, the founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine

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Abstract: Władysław Antoni Gluziński is one of the greatest physicians in history of Polish medicine. He was born on May 18, 1856 in Włocławek. Studied medicine at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (1874–1880). He was working in Krakow, Lvov and Warsaw. He died on April 10, 1935 in Warsaw. Władysław Antoni Gluziński was one of the pioneers of Polish gastroenterology. He introduced the functional test for detection of the stomach cancer (the Gluziński's test), and was the author of the first clinical description of plasmocytic leukemia. He was a founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and the first editor-in-chief of the *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine* as well as he initiated meetings of Slavic physicians.

Key words: biography, history of medicine, Władysław Antoni Gluziński

Władysław Antoni Gluziński, the most famous Polish internist at the turn of the 20th century, was a professor at the three at that time biggest Polish universities: in Cracow, Lviv and Warsaw. He had significant academic achievements in gastrology and other subspecialties of internal medicine, was the founder of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and initiated meetings of Slavic physicians [1].

Władysław Antoni Gluziński was descended from the family with medical traditions. His father, Franciszek Maciej Gluziński (1823–1899), fought for Poland and Hungary's independence in the years 1846–1848, and was imprisoned in Kufstein fortress. Later, he studied medicine in Cracow in 1848–1854, after graduation underwent the training in Vienna, and then moved to Polish territories under Russian occupation. He was a well-known physician in the city of Sompolno in the Kujawy Lake District. During the January Insurrection (1863–1864) Franciszek Gluziński organized the hospital for insurgents. In 1880 he settled in Cracow with his son [2]. The mother of Władysław Antoni Gluziński, Waleria née Charlais, was a daughter of a French surgeon who had stayed in Poland after Napoleonic Wars. Władysław Antoni Gluziński's brother, Lesław, (1858–1932) was a laryngologist, balneologist, and a concerting pianist and chess player as well. Władysław and Lesław's sister, Zofia, was married to a physician, Władysław Węgrzynowski.

Władysław Antoni Gluziński was born on May 18, 1856 in Włocławek on the Vistula. He attended school in Konin and Cracow, where he graduated from the famous St. Ann's High School (1869–1874). Then he studied medicine at the Medical Division of the Jagiellonian University (1874–1880). After graduation Gluziński continued education in Dorpat (now Tartu, Estonia) and Vienna. Upon return to Cracow, he became an assistant in the Department of Physiology under Professor Gustaw Piotrowski (1823–1884). Like most of the eminent internists, Gluziński combined his interest in basic medical sciences with clinical practice. He worked as a volunteer in the Department of Internal Medicine chaired by Professor Edward Sas-Korczyński (1844–1905) and since 1882 held a post of an assistant of this Department. His training received abroad included practice in Leipzig (under Professor Carl Friedrich Ludwig), in Berlin (under Professor Robert Koch) and in Paris (under Professor Jean Martin Charcot). In 1885 he obtained the title of associate professor and in 1890 was nominated to the post of professor. In 1893 Władysław Antoni Gluziński became head of the Department of General and Experimental Pathology at the Jagiellonian University. He held this post until 1897 when he was given the position of head of the Department of Pathology and Therapy of Individual Disorders (i.e. the Department of Internal Medicine) in the that year founded Division of Medicine at the Lviv University. Władysław Antoni Gluziński occupied the chair of this department for 22 years and reorganized it in a great research and educational centre. He was elected to the post of dean of the College of Medicine in 1898–1899, and rector of the university in 1905–1906. In the years 1906–1908 he was a deputy rector. During the Polish-Ukrainian war, in 1918, he was imprisoned. In May 1919 the Warsaw University was

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Received: May 14, 2007. Accepted in final form: July 11, 2007.

Conflict of interest: none declared.

Pol Arch Med Wewn. 2007; 117 (5-6): 270-273

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Fig. 1. Władysław Antoni Gluziński about 1898. A photograph from the collection of the grandson, Dr. Przemysław Gluziński

re-established and Władysław Antoni Gluziński was nominated to the post of head of the Second Department of Internal Medicine. He moved to Warsaw, and was succeeded in Lviv by his disciple, Professor Roman Rencki (1867–1941). Despite the Polish-Bolshevik war being in progress at that time, Gluziński managed to organize in Warsaw from the beginning the strong scientific research, educational and medical centre. In the years 1920–1921 he was a dean of the Division of Medicine at the Warsaw University. Władysław Antoni Gluziński retired at the age of 70, that is at the end of the academic year 1926/1927. He lived in Warsaw and died on April 10, 1935 [3].

Władysław Antoni Gluziński carried out research works in several fields of internal medicine. As the assistant to Professor Edward Sas-Korczyński, he cooperated with Walery Jaworski (1849–1924), one of the founders of Polish gastrology. They worked on the functional diagnostics of stomach disorders. The significant achievements of Władysław Antoni Gluziński include the introduction of so-called egg-white breakfast

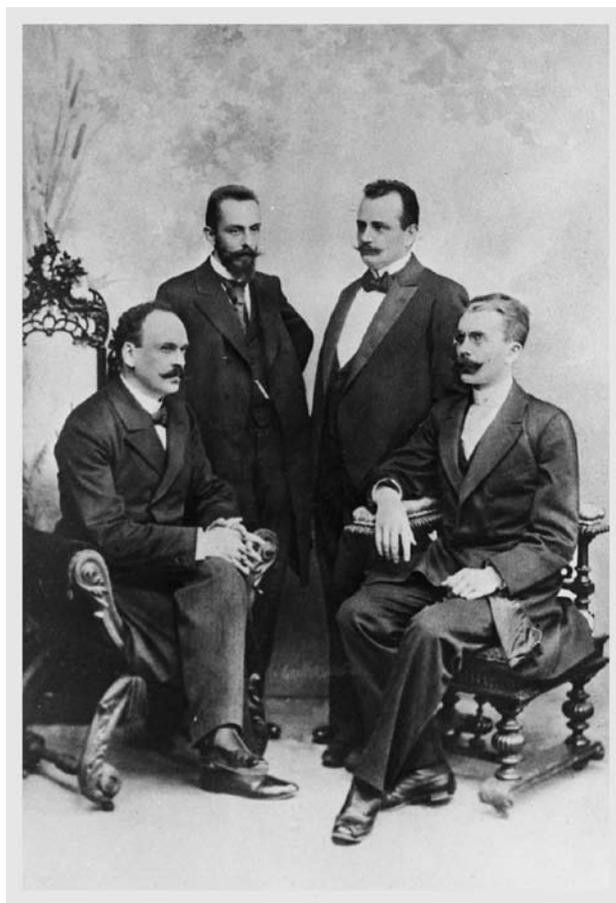


Fig. 2. Władysław Antoni Gluziński and the faculty of his department at the Lviv University in 1897. From the left: Władysław Antoni Gluziński, Julius Marischler, Roman Rencki, Stanisław Eljasz-Radzikowski. From the collection of the Central Medical Library in Warsaw (reprinted from the book: „Zbiór prac Kliniki Chorób Wewnętrznych Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie, wydany w trzydziestą rocznicę istnienia kliniki ku czci jej założyciela i pierwszego dyrektora Profesora Antoniego Gluzińskiego” [The collection of works of the Internal Diseases Clinic at the Lviv University], Lwów 1927

as a stimulus for gastric secretion. The meal consisted of the chicken egg white and substituted introduced in 1884 so-called Ewald and Boas' breakfast [4,5]. Gluziński and Jaworski discovered that the digestion of proteins takes place in the intestine instead of in the stomach, as it had been believed earlier. They debunked the view that hydrochloric acid of the stomach derives from lactic acid action on chlorides [6,7,8]. The best known discovery of Władysław Antoni Gluziński is the description of a functional test for the early detection of stomach cancer, so-called Gluziński's test. The test, described in 1902 [9], consisted of three examinations of gastric contents: after fasting, after the standardized breakfast and after the standardized lunch. The diagnosis of stomach cancer was suggested if the acidity of gastric contents decreased (mucous catarrh accompanying cancer). Increasing acidity suggested the diagnosis of stomach ulcers. In 1907 Gluziński together with M. Reichenstein [10] published the first in the world me-



Fig. 3. Władysław Antoni Gluziński about 1930. A photograph from the collection of the grandson, Dr. Przemysław Gluziński.

dical literature clinical description of plasmocytic leukemia. This paper is cited even today in medical publications [11].

In 1896 Władysław Antoni Gluziński published the monograph titled “A general outline of pathology and therapy of fever”. The work was the first in Poland and then one of few in the world monographs comprehensively covering the problem of fever. It is too bad that the book was not translated to German, at that time the leading language of medical sciences. It is almost sure that the work would have contributed to the development of medicine.

The work of Władysław Antoni Gluziński on cardiology is also counted among his academic achievements. He authored the chapter on heart and vessels diseases in the first Polish textbook on internal medicine. He studied syphilis of the liver, described the first known case of hookworm infection in Galicia, conducted experimental research on the effect of thyroidectomy on protein metabolism and published papers on pneumonia and pulmonary tuberculosis.

Władysław Antoni Gluziński joined scientific societies after graduation. In 1891 he was elected to the post of president of the Cracow Medical Society. He was the co-founder (together with Tomasz Janiszewski) of the Society for Construction of People’s Tuberculosis Sanatoriums. Thanks to his



Fig. 4. The gravestone of Władysław Antoni Gluziński at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw with flowers placed on behalf of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine on the 150th anniversary of his birthday. Photo by Anna Kotulska

efforts, the first in Poland clinic for patients with tuberculosis was open in 1908. He was the initiator and chairman of the Session of Internal Medicine Preparatory Committee at the 10th Congress of Polish Physicians and Naturalists held in Lviv on July 22–25, 1907. The Committee’s foundation in 1906 is considered as the establishment of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine. Gluziński was the chairman of the Society from its early days. After the First World War and the Polish-Bolshevik war, the 5th Congress of the Society took place in Vilnius on July 8–11, 1923. The former name of the Society (The Society of Internists of the Polish Lands) was changed to the Polish Society of Internal Medicine and the new statute was adopted. Władysław Antoni Gluziński was re-elected the Society’s president.

Władysław Antoni Gluziński was the founder and president of the All-Slavonic Congresses of Physicians, a chairman of the Warsaw Medical Society (1922–1923) and the founder and the first editor-in-chief of the journal *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*.

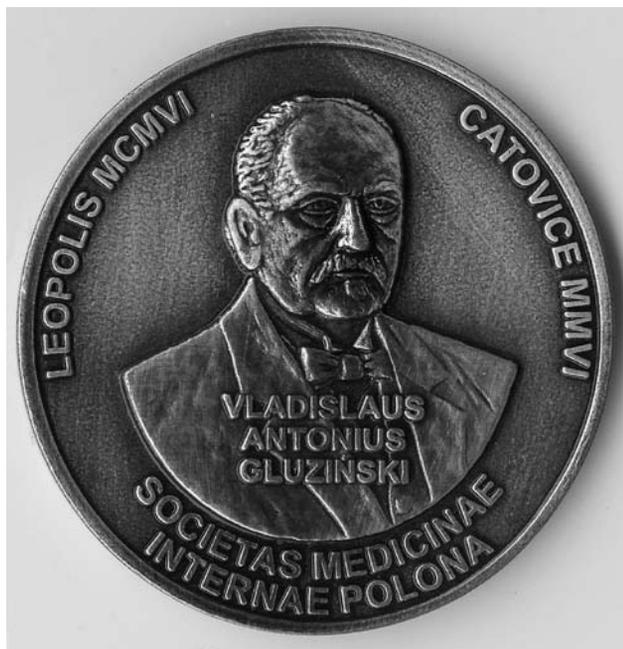


Fig. 5. Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine with the portrait of Władysław Antoni Gluziński (from the collection of the author)

The Polish Society of Internal Medicine has since 2004 organized the Gluziński Memorial Lectures and his image is to be found on the Centenary Medal of the Polish Society of Internal Medicine minted in 2006. In the same year the Polish Mail issued the stamp with the portrait of Władysław Antoni Gluziński.

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