

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HYGIENE IN POLAND

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The Central Institute of Epidemiology was created in Warsaw in 1918 at the close of World War I, and was renamed the National Institute of Hygiene in 1923.

1918-1939

The first Statutes of the Institute defined its functions as follows: "Diagnosis and study of infectious diseases, their sources and mode of dissemination; production and experimental research on antisera and vaccines including smallpox vaccine and other biologicals".

In 1927 the activities of the Institute were expanded and directed more toward the broad area of hygiene. In order to assist the public health services in combating infectious and non-infectious diseases, in monitoring and supervising the hygienic quality of water, food and consumer articles as well as to assist in sanitary engineering and public health administration, the National Institute of Hygiene organized 13 branches throughout the country affiliated with the Central Institute in Warsaw. The Central Institute was made responsible for research in the field of epidemiology and hygiene, for supervising activities of all filial institutions and for teaching professional personnel. In 1926, with the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation, the National School of Hygiene was opened in Warsaw which undertook postgraduate training of physicians and auxiliary personnel.

1940-1944

During the Second World War (1940-1944) only the headquarter institution in Warsaw and three regional branches in Cracow, Kielce and Lublin continued their activities in the so-called "General Government". The occupying German authorities, fearing a spread of infectious diseases, permitted limited and strictly supervised antiepidemic and sani-

tary activities. However, under the cover of official functions, underground conspiratory activities were carried out at the Institute, the most important of these were: first, secret production of typhus vaccine for the Polish community and for prisoners in concentration camps; second, secret teaching of students of the Medical Faculty, which was officially closed by the occupant.

1945-1984

The end of World War II was followed by a period of reconstruction and reorganization of the Institute. A number of new departments of dynamically developing disciplines were established, such as Department of Epidemiology, Virology, Serum and Vaccine Research, Industrial Health, Food and Nutrition, School Hygiene and Health Education. National Reference Centres for poliomyelitis, influenza, Shigella, streptococci and staphylococci were set up at the Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw.

In 1950-1952 a major reorganization of the Institute took place. Serum and vaccine production laboratories were separated from the Institute remaining under its scientific and professional supervision. The regional branches of the Institute were incorporated into a network of provincial Sanitary-Epidemiologic Stations, over which the Institute continued to exercise scientific and professional supervision. Departments of the National Institute of Hygiene whose development had outgrown their organizational framework were separated and converted into independent research institutes, e.g. the Institute of Drugs, Institute of Occupational Medicine in Łódź, Food and Nutrition Institute and Institute of Antibiotics. About 150 scientific workers of the National Institute of Hygiene were transferred to the newly created institutes and about 280 professional workers with academic degrees were transferred from the Institute's headquarters and regional branches to the network of the Sanitary-Epidemiologic Stations.

In 1967 postgraduate teaching and training activities of professional personnel of the Sanitary-Epidemiologic Stations were expanded. The Postgraduate Training Centre was established for all workers of the National Sanitary Inspectorate co-operating with all the departments of the National Institute of Hygiene and other institutions, e.g. the Institutes of Food and Nutrition, Occupational Medicine and Rural Hygiene. In one decade only, during the years 1967-1977, the Section of Public Health Training set up 346 courses, which were attended by 8,481 trainees. Since 1969 the National Institute of Hygiene, organizes doctoral studies in microbiology, virology, epidemiology, immunopathology, communal hygiene and food science. The organization of the Institute is shown in Table 1.

Three scientific journals are published by the Institute: *Przegląd Epidemiologiczny* (Epidemiological review), *Medycyna Doświadczalna i Mikrobiologia* (Experimental medicine and microbiology), *Roczniki Państwowego Zakładu Higieny* (Annals of the National Institute of Hygiene).

Since 1976 the Institute coordinates research on "The influence of environmental pollution on human life and health". For many years the Institute has been conducting studies on the influence of environmental factors on the health of the population. These studies have been markedly intensified in recent years and the Institute became chief coordinator of environmental research in cooperation with other institutions under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and with subordinate institutes.

Table 1. - *Scheme of organization of the National Institute of Hygiene*

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL		DIRECTOR		ADVISORY BOARD
SCIENTIFIC SECRETARY	VICE-DIRECTOR for MICROBIOLOGY and EPIDEMIOLOGY	VICE-DIRECTOR for HYGIENE	VICE-DIRECTOR for ADMINISTRATIVE and ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	
Section of Planning of the Scientific Program and Specialistic Supervision	Department of Serum and Vac- cine Research	Department of Food and Consumer Articles Research	Fiscal Section	
Section of Public Health Training/Postgraduate Teaching Centre	Department of Bacteriology	Department of Communal Hygiene	Section of Supplies	
	Department of Epidemiology		Section of Technical Matters	
Section of Scientific Inform- ation, Documentation and Library	Department of Immunopa- thology	Department of School Hygiene	Section of Administration and Management	
	Department of Radiologic Protection and Radiobiology	Department of Health Educ- ation	Inspectorate of Working Safety	
Secretariat of the Scientific Council	Department of Medical Parasi- tology	Department of Sanitary	Legal Adviser	
	Department of Medical Stat- istics	Toxicology	Section of Employment Affairs	
Section of Statistical Tech- niques	Department of Medical Stat- istics		Scientific Instruments Section	
	Department of Virology			
	Electron Microscope Laborat- ory			