

Dear Readers of 'Palliative Medicine in Practice',



We are delighted to introduce the first issue of *Palliative Medicine in Practice* for 2018. This issue includes one original research article, four reviews and a case report.

The first article is an original research study carried out by Urszula Kościuczuk M.D., Piotr Jakubów M.D., Andrzej Siemiątkowski M.D., Agnieszka Mijalska M.D., Dominik Andrzej Panasiuk M.D., Gregorz Juszczak M.D. and Tomasz Hirnle M.D. entitled "Hospitalization of Patients with Non-Cancer Diseases in the Stationary Hospice — Experiences of the Centre in Białystok". This study confirmed that in the Stationary Hospice, in Białystok, as in other palliative care units in Poland, the dominating group of patients are those who suffer from cancer. The authors focussed on to the need for enduring equal access to palliative care for cancer patients and other diagnoses with unfavorable prognosis, including those with circulatory disorders.

In the last issue we reminded our readers of the 1st International Conference "Winter Summit in Palliative Medicine, Heart and Spirit in Palliative Care", which took place in Bydgoszcz on 1–2 December 2017. This was an important event, attended largely by many foreign guests by many distinguished foreign guests: Prof. Christina Puchalsky and Prof. Sara Goodlin from the U.S.A. and Prof. Phil Larkin from Ireland — President of the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC). During this Conference a document entitled "Declaration of a Medical Cardiological, Palliative and Internal Medicine Environment Indicating the Importance of Palliative Care in the Comprehensive Care of Patients with Heart Failure" was elaborated. This declaration emphasized the need to provide patients, suffering from circulatory system failure, with proper access to palliative care. It is worth noting that in Poland about 700,000 patients suffer from heart failure, and adequate palliative care is provided to only a small number of patients in this group. Readers can familiarize themselves with the full content of this declaration along with the authors' commentary which can be found at the end of the current issue, and is recommended by the editors.

In the current issue, the first review entitled "Relieving Chronic Breathlessness is a Human Right" addresses an extremely important problem — the treatment of patients with breathlessness, who, in the course of chronic disease have an unfavorable prognosis. In many ways shortness of breath resembles chronic pain, since both can be described as a multi-dimensional experience, which often dramatically worsens the quality of life, in all the dimensions — physical, psychological, social and spiritual. The concept of Prof. Claudia Bausewein, according to whom, chronic breathlessness includes both the experience of constant shortness of breath as well as exacerbation attacks of breathlessness. In both cases, they require an accurate diagnosis of the cause and implementation of optimal treatment. Prof. David Currow and Prof. Małgorzata Krajnik, world experts in the field of shortness of breath, in their article present a humanistic approach, which requires both personnel and health systems to recognize the right of patients to the most effective treatment for breathlessness.

The second review article "Diabetes Patients in Palliative Care" by Aleksandra Modlińska M.D. provides a comprehensive analysis of the problems of diabetes treatments, especially those who have been diagnosed with a chronic disease and an unfavorable prognosis. Based on a review of the current literature, her extensive knowledge and clinical experience, Dr Modlińska not only provides the theoretical foundations for the proper treatment of diabetes, but also sets out some very important goals for patients, carers and personnel that should be tailored to the specific clinical situation of patients and their prognosis.

This issue also includes the review entitled "Patients' Rights for the Treatment of Pain" by Associate Prof. Agnieszka Zimmermann, Associate Prof. Wioletta Mędrzycka-Dąbrowska and Miłostawa Zagłoba M.A. which addresses the legal grounds for providing patients with proper pain management procedures. This article is extremely important because it shows the perspective of the formal recognition, the need to provide patients with the most effective treatment of breathlessness, which is also the result of many years of efforts by palliative and hospice care and pain medicine environments. Understandably, legal provisions alone are not sufficient for the pain treatment to be effective, but nevertheless it constitutes a sort of guarantee for patients (under the civil liability of medical personnel) that health care workers are required to apply the most effective analgesic and clinical treatment in everyday clinical and symptomatic practice, based on current knowledge, always taking into account the dignity of patients, their families and caregivers. We are extremely grateful to the Authors of the article that for the first time in Polish scientific literature, they have expanded on such an important issue.

The next final article is the Polish and English version (the latter published in open access) of the article "Recommendations for the Diagnosis and Management of Cancer Patients with Pain", which appeared in the first issue of the 2018 journal "Oncology in Clinical Practice – Education", as the primary publication "Oncology in Clinical Practice". These recommendations are a continuation of the chapter devoted to the issue of treatment of pain in cancer patients, which was undertaken in previous years, as a part of the recommendations of the Polish Society of Clinical Oncology regarding the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients. The co-authors of the work, who we thank very much for making the effort to prepare the manuscript, and who operate in the fields of palliative medicine, pain medicine and oncology, includes basic information on pathomechanism, as well as clinical evaluation and principles of pain treatment in cancer patients. Further discussion of this issue can be found in the recommendations of Scientific Societies, developed at the initiative of the Polish Society for Pain Research, which have been recently published in the Polish journal "Ból" ("Pain").

The manuscript "Decompensation of Liver Cirrhosis in a Patient Diagnosed with Primary Liver Cancer — case report" by Michał Chojnicki M.D., Maciej Bura M.D., Anna Średniawa M.D., Anna Suska M.D., Mikołaj Bartoszkiewicz M.D. and the undersigned, describes a patient suffering from liver cirrhosis and the issue of appropriate choice of symptomatic treatment, together with related difficulties resulting from liver dysfunction.

This issue of the journal, like the previous issue, can be described as an important landmark since it is the first to be published under the name "Palliative Medicine in Practice". As we have already informed our Readers in the last issue of 2017, the new name means a greater openness to English-language publications, contributed by both Polish and foreign authors. Among the members of the Scientific Council of the journal, we would like to warmly welcome Leszek Pawłowski Ph.D, and wish him every success in his further academic development, and his work for the journal.

We would like to continue the current thematic diversity of the journal with a simultaneous constant increase in the level of published articles, while maintaining the current main educational direction of the quarterly. In order for our journal to become a forum for the presentation of modern knowledge in the field of broadly understood palliative, hospice and supportive care, the Authors activity is essential. Therefore, we invite Authors to publish the results of their own research (original articles), literature reviews (review articles), interesting clinical observations (case studies), commentaries, books reviews and reports from scientific and educational conferences. We especially encourage Authors from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which is naturally close to us due to its geographical location, but also owing to the difficult past, connected to the previous system, and the desire to compensate for deficiencies in the development of science in our countries. We definitely do not limit the reach of our journal and we still very much count on the activity of Authors from our native and other countries.

We would like to invite all the readers to participate in the 11th Conference of the journal "Palliative Medicine in Practice", which will have an international character. As usual, the conference is held in Gdańsk, on 8–9 June 2018. The conference theme will be along the same lines as the 10th World Scientific Congress of the European Society for Palliative Care (EAPC). The patronage over the Conference will be overseen Polish Association for the Study of Pain by Prof. Marcin Gruchała M.D, Ph.D, Rector of the Medical University of Gdansk together with the Polish Society for Pain Research and the Polish Association of Palliative Medicine. In particular, we encourage our Readers to actively participate in the conference and send abstracts of original work and case reports in an electronic form, via the website, where you will find further information about the conference: www.paliatywna.viamedica.pl

We wish you enjoyable reading and send our warmest wishes,
Wojciech Leppert, Leszek Pawłowski