



# Professor Henryk Chmielewski and other pioneers of manual therapy in Poland

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## Abstract

The beginnings of manual therapy in Poland, historically speaking, date back to the 1920s and 1930s and are associated with the names of Olgierd Krukowski and Michał Pawłowski, who published their textbooks related to the subject of chiropractic in 1926. The term 'manual therapy' appeared in Poland in the period after World War II. Professor Henryk Chmielewski, MD, PhD, bound with the academic centre in Lodz, is commonly regarded as the father of manual therapy in Poland. The aim of the article is to show the biography of Professor Henryk Chmielewski as a pioneer of contemporary manual therapy in Poland, as well as of several other figures who, through their scientific and journalistic achievements, made a significant contribution to the development of this field of medicine in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The paper also presents the figure of Professor Karel Lewit from Prague, who played a very important role in the advancement of manual therapy throughout Europe. The article also includes a brief history of founding manual therapy societies and the quarterly *Manual Medicine* in Poland.

**Key words:** manual medicine, manual therapy, chiropractic

## Introduction

Manual therapy deals with removing the factors which disturb the functioning of the body owing to disorders in the joints, in particular the spine joints. These disorders concern both locomotor and internal organs. Joint pathology in manual therapy is most often referred to as 'blockage' or 'somatic dysfunction'.

The problem scope of manual therapy includes the following elements: (1) blockage recognition through functional tests; (2) preparation of soft tissues for mobilization; (3) therapeutic measures (mobilizations, manipulations); (4) procedure strategy; (5) indications and contraindications [1].

The term 'manual therapy' has a relatively short history, but as a field of medicine (treatment) it was already known in the dawn of time – it was used by such prominent doctors as Hippocrates (460–377 BC), Galen (130–200 AD), and many others.

Its official origin can be associated with America and the appearance of osteopathy thanks to Andrew Taylor Still (1828–1917) and chiropractic, introduced almost at the same time by the Palmer family: father (1845–1913) and son (1882–1961) [2–4].

A little later both methods were moved to Europe and thus to Poland. Doctor Olgierd Krukowski (1893–1945) wrote in a publication issued in Warsaw in 1930: 'It should be noted that I constantly correspond with many chiropractors and that my work *Chiropractic as a new method of treatment* of 1926 was the first work written by a doctor in Europe. To be more specific, one should mention that a book by priest Michał Pawłowski *Chiropractic, i.e. the art of setting subluxated vertebrae as the main cause of diseases* was also pub-

lished in 1926, and *The art of chiropractic* in 1929' [5, p. 6, own translation; 6–8].

In Poland, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the field of chiropractic had a different name, which could be translated as 'vertebral manipulation'. In the area of chiropractic, there are two trends: folk and medical [9]. There were many talented chiropractors in the folk trend, who were often self-taught, but possessed an extraordinary ability to 'set the bones' and enjoyed recognition in their communities. Today, chiropractors are already going down in history because manual therapy has been recognized by the medical community, especially by physiotherapists, as an essential form of therapy in modern medicine, particularly in the locomotor system rehabilitation.

## Aim of the paper

The aim of the article was to present the biography of Professor Henryk Mikołaj Chmielewski, MD, PhD, a pioneer of manual therapy in Poland, and of several other physicians and physiotherapists who made a significant contribution to its development in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The figure of Professor Karel Lewit was presented, as well as a brief history of manual therapy societies, i.e. the Polish Society of Manual Medicine (in Polish: Polskie Towarzystwo Medycyny Manualnej), the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine (in Polish: Polskie Towarzystwo Lekarskie Medycyny Manualnej), and the Polish Society of Manual Holistic Therapy (in Polish: Polskie Towarzystwo Terapii Manualnej Holistycznej).

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## Professor Henryk Mikołaj Chmielewski

### Years of education and work

Henryk M. Chmielewski was born on September 10, 1934 in Myszyniec in a patriotic railway family. He attended the Jan Długosz Primary School in Włocławek. In 1952, after graduating from the Bolesław Chrobry High School in Gniezno, he began medical studies at the Medical Department of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz. In 1958, after completing a post-graduate internship, he was appointed to the position of senior doctor of a military unit in Mirosławiec. After 2 years of service (by way of distinction), he was assigned to the Military Institute of Aviation Medicine in Warsaw, where he began to specialize in aviation medicine and neurology. He obtained the first degree of specialization in aviation medicine in 1962 and in neurology a year later. Between 1962 and 1964, he performed military service as the head of health service of the Tactical Association in Świdwin. In June 1964, he was transferred to the Central Military Sanatorium Complex in Łądek Zdrój. Here, he founded the Clinical Centre for Nervous Diseases, in which he carried out research on the influence of radon-sulphide waters on the human body. In October 1966, he obtained the second degree specialization in neurology, and less than 2 months later he received a PhD degree in medical sciences on the basis of the dissertation *Behaviour of choline esterase and electrophoretic spectrum of blood serum proteins in patients with sciatica under the influence of treatment with radon waters* [10].

In 1967, he was invited to a 3-month international course of manual therapy in Prague led by Professor Karel Lewit. The participation in this training contributed to the creation by Professor Chmielewski of the first school of manual therapy focused on spine joints in Poland. Professor Chmielewski prepared and conducted a number of 2-week courses in manual therapy, which were completed by 68 doctors in total. He included his observations in this area of knowledge in over a dozen publications and book chapters, and in the illustrated magazine *Health*. In June 1970, he started working at the Clinic of Military Neurology at the Medical University of Lodz, initially as an assistant professor, and since 1973 as the head of the Clinic. For his lifetime scientific achievements and the habilitation dissertation on *Electromyography of the Marinescu-Radovici palmomental reflex*, the Council of the Medical Faculty of the Medical University of Lodz awarded Dr Chmielewski a habilitation degree in neuroscience in 1974.

### Work at the Military Medical Academy of Lodz

Between 1977 and 1985, Professor Chmielewski was deputy dean of the Medical Faculty of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz. In 1982, the State Council of Poland awarded Henryk Chmielewski, MD, PhD, the title of Associate Professor for his lifetime scientific activity. In years 1985–1987, he was appointed Vice-Rector for Teaching of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz. At the same time, the Head of the Health Service of the Polish Army appointed Colonel Chmielewski a consultant for the Military Health Resort Hospital in Busko Zdrój. In this institution, he carried out his scientific research on the influence of hydrogen sulphide waters on the healthy and ill person's body.

In the following years (1987–1991), by the order of the Minister of National Defence, Professor Chmielewski performed the function of Commandant of the Central Clinical Hospital of the Military Academy in Warsaw. As the chairman of the Scientific Council of the Central Clinical Hospital, he

paid close attention to the development of scientific staff, especially young employees.

From 1989 to 1991, he exercised the mandate of deputy to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland of the first term and of a Sejm Health Committee member [10]. In 1990, from the hands of the President of the Republic of Poland Wojciech Jaruzelski, he was appointed Full Professor, and in November 1991, he was appointed Brigadier General. On February 7, 1991, he assumed the position of Commandant-Rector of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz. After becoming the rector of the Military Medical Academy, he had to face restructuring changes in the Polish Army. These changes also forced restructuring at the Academy by reorganizing and reducing the employment levels of academic teachers and the number of students. General Chmielewski established inter-university contacts with medical military universities in the USA, Germany, France, and the Czech Republic.

### Scientific achievements

Professor Chmielewski had valuable scientific achievements, including 276 domestic and foreign publications. In this number, the vast majority were research works concerning back pain syndromes pathogenesis and treatment methods. A large group were publications in the field of electromyography. Professor used electromyography testing in reflexological research; the results made a significant contribution in the field of semiology and neurological diagnostics. His research in biochemistry and immunology in nervous system diseases requires special emphasis. Professor and his colleagues dealt with several issues in this medical area, mainly with sclerosis multiplex. The results of this research were published in Poland and they were also presented at foreign congresses. As the head of the clinic, he, together with his colleagues, organized over a dozen conferences, both on a local and national scale, devoted mainly to neurological issues of the time.

Professor Chmielewski educated several generations of doctors, manual therapists, and research workers. He was a supervisor of 24 completed doctoral dissertations and 4 habilitation dissertations. He was a reviewer in 5 proceedings for the title of professor, 6 habilitation dissertations, and 57 doctoral dissertations. He wrote reviews of 4 scientific books. Professor Chmielewski was a supervisor of 24 doctoral students: Leszek Berkan, Sławomir Borowiecki, Wiesław Bujalski, Wiesław Chudzik, Jarosław Dębiec, Elżbieta Germanowska, Beata Kaczorowska, Beata Kasprzak, Elżbieta Król-Zdziebło, Zdzisław Legwan, Janusz Lisiewicz, Mirosław Mazurek, Tadeusz Mazur, Anna Niezgodzińska-Maciejek, Jacek Pawlak, Monika Przybyła, Zofia Rebeś, Jerzy Sankowski, Jerzy Stodolny, Jerzy Szafranek, Zbigniew Urbański, Beata Wrodycka, Jacek Ziąber, Andrzej Żytkowski.

Professor was a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and he took active part in the Pain Pathophysiology Committee and Multiple Sclerosis Neurochemistry Committee. Moreover, he was Chairman of the Committee on the History of Neurology and the Committee on Neurological Sciences, Secretary and Vice-President of the Main Board of the Polish Neurological Society, member of the Editorial Committees of the following journals: *Military Physician*, *Military Medical Academy of Lodz Bulletin*, and *Military-Medical Review*.

Professor Chmielewski received many awards for his lifetime activity, including the Gold Cross of Merit (1973), the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (1981), the Medal of the Commission of National Education (1982), the

Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (1984), Vatican Award 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' (1996), the Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (1997), the Order of the Smile (1997), the Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2003) [10].

On January 6, 1998, Professor Chmielewski, because of his age, assigned the duties of the Commandant-Rector to Colonel Professor Jan Chojnacki. On January 27, 1998, he settled accounts with the army, leaving the service. After Professor Chmielewski's transition into civilian life, Rector of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz employed him on a full-time basis, entrusting him with the duties of the head of the clinic. After the establishment of the Medical University of Lodz, its Rector, Professor Andrzej Lewiński, PhD, assigned Professor Chmielewski the position of the head of the clinic.

Professor's greatest hobby was photography, tourism, and sport. What went down in history was the Chronicle of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz Neurological Clinic, very thoroughly and reliably kept personally by Professor. His interest in tourism is evidenced by the fact that Professor visited almost all the continents of our globe. Especially worth mentioning are his visits to the Vatican and the audiences with Holy Father John Paul II, which had a great impact on Professor's both professional and personal life [10]. In the eyes of his colleagues, he was an outstanding physician for whom the welfare of the patient was always the most important. He achieved what many can only dream of: great authority, great respect, as well as fondness and gratitude of patients, VIPs, and ordinary people. He died on March 22, 2018; he was buried at the Doły Military Cemetery in Lodz.

On June 22, 2018, there was a ceremony of naming the Assembly Hall of the University Clinical Hospital at Haller Square 1 in honour of Brigadier General Professor Henryk Chmielewski, MD, PhD [11]. The unveiling of the picture was conducted by his wife, Henryka Chmielewska, in the company of daughter Elżbieta Świdowska-Chmielewska, son Janusz Chmielewski, and Dean of the Military-Medical Faculty of Medical University of Lodz, Professor Jerzy Olszewski, PhD.

The figure of Professor Chmielewski is closely related with that of Professor Karel Lewit from Prague, as it was from the contact with him that Professor Chmielewski's 'adventure' with manual therapy began.

## Professor Karel Lewit

Professor Karel Lewit was born on April 25, 1916 in Ljubljana, and died in Prague on October 2, 2014. In 1934, Karel Lewit graduated from high school and enrolled in the Medical Faculty of Charles University in Prague.

The outbreak of World War II forced the Lewit family to emigrate to France, where Karel joined the Czech military troops that were being formed at that time. After the Nazi troops took over France, Lewit, together with the French army, found himself in the United Kingdom. In September 1944, serving in the armoured forces, he took part in the invasion of France, at the Battle of Dunkirk. For participating in the fights he was awarded the Golden Cross of Czechoslovakia. After the war, in 1945, he returned to the Czech Republic and in 1946, he finished the interrupted medical studies. After graduating, he began his work at the Neurological Clinic in Prague, headed by Professor Hanner [12].

He cooperated, among others, with Professor Václav Vojta and Assistant Professor František Velé. In 1948, he carried out research on the impact of manual and mechanical traction on the ailments associated with back pain, and in 1951, he began implementing mobilization from the chiropractic

area for the treatment of back pain. In 1954, together with Assistant Professor Karl Obrda, he founded the Society for Rehabilitation and the Society of Manual Medicine. Since then, he taught manual therapy techniques in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, the former Soviet Union, and the German Democratic Republic. In 1956, he received a PhD degree in medical sciences. In 1964, Karel Lewit started working at the Neurology Clinic at the Institute of Medical Education under Professor Maček (Vinohrady). In 1967, he received his habilitation degree on the basis of the monograph *Manipulační Léčba*.

Professor Lewit's main field of interest was neurological and spinal diseases. However, what became his life passion was manual therapy. Lewit's achievements in this area resulted in his being called the father of manual medicine. Emphasizing the accomplishments of the great Czech therapist, Dr Jerzy Stodolny wrote: 'In modern medicine there are few scientific personalities who can be said to be co-creators of an entire branch of knowledge. The knowledge which they themselves partly researched, whose theoretical foundations they developed, of which they convinced the medical community, and which they were able to introduce to the treatment practice. There are even fewer scientists who not only created a therapeutic system, but also introduced the world's leading training system and built their own school, and, in addition, did it during their lifetime, being able to enjoy their success. Such a figure is Professor Karel Lewit, a fascinating man with an unusual personality and Renaissance interests, scientist, great doctor, polyglot, music expert, and traveller. A man of extraordinary intelligence, knowledge, and memory, able to address his foreign students by name after years, and at the same time extremely friendly, cheerful, sociable, immediately breaking all distances' [13, p. 7, own translation].

On December 18, 2006, a ceremonial meeting of the Senate of the Medical University of Lodz was held at the Poznański Palace, during which Professor Karel Lewit, as the creator of the European school of manual therapy, was conferred the honorary degree of that University. The honorary degree diploma was presented by His Magnificence Rector of the Medical University of Lodz, Professor Andrzej Lewiński, MD, PhD. The degree supervisor was Professor Henryk Chmielewski, MD, PhD. The reviewers of Professor Lewit's achievements were: Professor Antoni Prusiński, MD, PhD, Professor Krzysztof Spodaryk, MD, PhD, and Professor Krystian Żołyński, MD, PhD. Selected fragments from their reviews are as follows:

Professor Antoni Prusiński, PhD: 'The honorary degree is conferred on the occasion of various merits – most often upon creative scholars for their cognitive achievements, but also outstanding teachers whose activities have improved education, as well as excellent artists. In the person of Professor Lewit, all these merits are intertwined: he is an outstanding teacher of the difficult art of manual therapy, and at the same time he was investigating the essence of the disorders he was treating – he is therefore a scholar and teacher, and a talented adept of medical art. The honorary degree will be conferred upon the right person' [12, p. 226, own translation].

Professor Krzysztof Spodaryk, PhD: 'I am convinced that Professor Karel Lewit is an outstanding scientist known worldwide, and the merits of education and promotion of the method enriching diagnostics and treatment, as well as his cooperation with doctors and physiotherapists fully deserve the honouring of Professor with the honorary degree' [12, p. 226, own translation].



Professor Krystian Żołyński, PhD: 'The size and rank of the scientific, research, didactic, and organizational achievements of Professor Karel Lewit, as well as his accomplishments in the field of creating the scientific basis of manual therapy and practical education and promotion of this method in many clinical disciplines around the world, including many years of comprehensive cooperation with Polish doctors, authorize me to state that Professor Karel Lewit, MD, PhD fully deserves the dignity of the honorary degree of the Medical University of Lodz' [12, p. 226, own translation].

Conferring the honorary degree upon Karel Lewit was the recognition of his merits for the Polish medicine and support for the development of new methods of treatment [12].

Karel Lewit's life passion, as well as the source of creative achievements, was manual therapy. It is exactly in this area that he is known in Europe and the world as one of its contemporary creators and a meritorious didactician, teacher, and educator of several generations of specialists.

The habilitation thesis, *Manipulační Léčeba*, became the most recognized publication of Professor Lewit. The next edition, *Manipulační Léčeba w ramči reflexní terapie*, is considered the best manual medicine textbook in the world (it was published in 10 languages, and it has 3 editions in Poland). The Polish version of the book was translated by Dr Jerzy Stodolny.

Another figure associated with the history of manual therapy and its pioneers is Dr Eugeniusz Rudczyk.

### Eugeniusz Rudczyk, MD, PhD

The propagator of manual therapy in Lodz, but also throughout Poland, was Dr Eugeniusz Rudczyk. In 1971, he graduated from the Military Medical Academy of Lodz and obtained a medical diploma. A year later, while working as an intern at the Poznan Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation Clinic, he met Professor Wiktor Dega, the creator of the Polish school of orthopaedics and rehabilitation. Soon, he became his greatest student, and after Professor's death, he continued his work.

From 1976, he worked in the Health Service Management Board of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in Lodz, where he co-created the Therapeutic Rehabilitation Centre and was its manager for many years. As part of post-graduate training, he underwent a series of courses under the scientific supervision of Professor Karel Lewit at the Medical Centre of Postgraduate Education. The scope of the training included manual therapy techniques used in the treatment of back pain syndromes. In 1996, Eugeniusz Rudczyk received a doctoral degree in medical sciences on the basis of the dissertation entitled *Evaluation of the effectiveness of manual therapy, kinesiotherapy, and magnetotherapy in the comprehensive rehabilitation of patients with back pain syndromes*. He is a member of the Polish Society of Rehabilitation and the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine.

There is an interesting exchange of views (letters) between the creator of the Polish model of rehabilitation, Professor Wiktor Dega, PhD, and Dr Eugeniusz Rudczyk on the subject of manual therapy as an element of rehabilitation. Dega wrote to Rudczyk: 'It is too late to learn it, but I hope it will be recognized by science' [private correspondence, own translation]. Professor Dega was a guest of honour of the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine (Katowice 1987). In 1990, Professor Dega was invited to the Honorary Committee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine (Lodz). Professor wrote to Dr Rudczyk: 'My health [Dega was already 94 years old] does not allow me to participate personally, but thank you

for inviting me and I wish the Congress good luck' [private correspondence, own translation].

Dr Eugeniusz Rudczyk was the initiator of conferring the honorary degree upon Professor Karel Lewit by the Medical University of Lodz.

### Jerzy Stodolny, MD, PhD

One of the students and close associates of Professor Chmielewski was Dr Jerzy Stodolny, a graduate of the Military Medical Academy of Lodz (1970). He received his doctoral degree in medical sciences in 1984 on the basis of his dissertation: *Comparative evaluation of the results of kinesiotherapy used according to different models of exercises of patients with lumbar spine pain syndromes in the course of discopathy*. The doctoral supervisor was Professor Henryk Chmielewski, MD, PhD.

Dr Jerzy Stodolny specializes in broadly understood pain syndromes in the musculoskeletal system, in particular the spine. Between 1978 and 1980, he underwent a training at the Neurological Clinic of the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice conducted by Professor Musiał in cooperation with Professor Lewit. He paid a study visit to Professor Lewit in Prague (together with Dr W. Krzonkalla from Łądek Zdrój and Dr A. Gostkowski from Bytom).

In years 1999–2013, Dr Jerzy Stodolny was the President of the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine. He was a lecturer at courses organized by Professor Chmielewski at the Neurological Clinic of Military Medical Academy of Lodz. He was an academic lecturer of the subject 'manual therapy'. He published textbooks which were highly recognized by specialists: *Spinal overload syndrome* (1999), *How to protect your spine* (in cooperation with his daughter Dr Joanna Stodolna-Tukendorf), *Dictionary of orthopaedic podology terms* (2017). Moreover, he wrote the chapter *Manual medicine* in the book *Medical rehabilitation*, edited by Professor Andrzej Kwolek, and the chapter entitled *Karel Lewit and the Prague school of musculoskeletal medicine* in the book *Great physiotherapy*, edited by Professors Zbigniew Śliwiński and Aleksander Sieroń. He published many scientific articles in professional journals related to manual medicine and rehabilitation.

### From the memories of Dr Jerzy Stodolny

Over time, the relationship between Professor Chmielewski and Dr Stodolny turned from official into social and friendly. Professor organized big name-day parties in which a large group of colleagues and friends took part. Dr Stodolny reminisces: 'I especially remember the atmosphere that accompanied the festive celebration of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It can be evidenced by a fragment of a song lyrics; it was a ballad that the artists of the Lodz opera and the author of the text sang to the jubilee. The title is *A Beggar's Ballad about a Certain Neurologist*, and its selected verses are as follows: "He went to Prague in the Czech Republic, / Where, as recorded by counterintelligence, / Professor Lewit with the touch of his hand / Removed pain from people's lumbi". [...] During the funeral, I had the honour to say goodbye to him in the church of St. George in Lodz; here is an excerpt from the statement: "Henryk Mikołaj Chmielewski was a man of many passions, he was a great scientist and specialist. His special passion was manual medicine, which he brought to the pedestal of academic medicine. Professor Henryk Chmielewski deserves to be called the father of the Polish manual medicine"' [private correspondence, own translation].

## Manual therapy societies in Poland

There are 3 scientific societies in Poland that gather manual therapists: the Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine, the Polish Society of Manual Medicine, and the Polish Society of Manual Holistic Therapy (Table 1).

Table 1. Years of foundation and Presidents of the societies of manual medicine in Poland

The Polish Medical Society of Manual Medicine	The Polish Society of Manual Medicine	The Polish Society of Manual Holistic Therapy
Year of foundation		
1997 <sup>1</sup>	1993	2007
President		
1980 <sup>2</sup> –1984: Antoni Musioł, MD, PhD	1994–2002: Dr Andrzej Rakowski	Since 2007: Dr Andrzej Rakowski
1984–1999: Zbigniew Arkuszewski, MD, PhD	2002–2010: Dr Andrzej Permoda	
1999–2013: Jerzy Stodolny, MD, PhD	2010–2018 Dr Jarosław Jasięga	
2013: Bartosz Chudzik, MD, PhD	2018: Dr Tomasz Ridan	

<sup>1</sup> date of registration, <sup>2</sup> foundation of the Society of Manual Therapy Course Graduates

### Manual Medicine quarterly

The quarterly *Manual Medicine* has been an organ of the Polish Society of Manual Medicine since the first issue in 1997. The Editor-in-Chief was then Jerzy Sienkiewicz, MD, PhD. After a year, the Society Board entrusted the function of the Editor-in-Chief to Andrzej Permoda, MD, PhD, who has been performing this function to this day.

The advisory body of the journal is the Scientific Council, which consists of prominent specialists in the field of medicine, physiotherapy, and health promotion from Poland and abroad; it was also co-created by Professor Henryk Chmielewski. The function of the Scientific Council Chairman was performed by Mirosław Janiszewski, MD, PhD (1997–2006) and then by Professor Przemysław Minta, MD, PhD (2006–2018); currently, Associate Professor Maciej Krawczyk, PhD, is the Scientific Council Chairman.

By 2018, about 500 scientific articles were published in the journal, with the participation of over 400 authors. In 2018, the *Manual Medicine* quarterly became an organ of the Polish Chamber of Physiotherapists. The journal is available online at <https://kif.info.pl/wydawnictwo-naukowe/>.

### Dr Andrzej Rakowski

The pioneers of manual therapy in Poland undoubtedly include Dr Andrzej Rakowski. He is a graduate of the University of Physical Education in Warsaw (1969). He received a doctoral degree in physical education in 1973 on the basis of the dissertation entitled *Motor criteria for the selection of candidates for shooting sport*; the supervisor of the work

was Professor Zbigniew Drozdowski, PhD, from the Poznan University of Physical Education. From the beginning of the 1970s, Dr Rakowski was involved in manual medicine. Between 1994 and 2002, he was President of the Polish Society of Manual Medicine. He was the creator of the Holistic Manual Therapy school. He founded the Polish Society of Manual Holistic Therapy, of which he has been President until now. The Society published their own scientific journal under the same title. Dr Rakowski is actively engaged in treatment activity at the Manual Therapy Centre located in Sierosław near Poznan and in scientific and didactic activity at the Rakowski Institute. The Rakowski Institute was established in March 2020 as a non-public lifelong learning institution. The statutory tasks of the Institute include conducting education in the field of physiotherapy, with a particular emphasis on manual therapy in the so-called Rakowski model. The forms of education include courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. Among the participants, there are doctors, physiotherapists, nurses, psychologists, educators. The supervision over the institution is exercised by the Wielkopolska Superintendent of Education (the registration as a training institution took place on March 6, 2020, under the number 2.30/00078/2020). Dr Rakowski is the author of recognized textbooks, including *The spine in stress* (published in 1992 by GWP in Gdansk; thoroughly re-edited and published in 2017 by PWN in Poznan) and, in co-authorship with Janina Słobodzian, *Manual therapy in lumbosacral pain syndromes* (2001). In 2011, he published the textbook *Manual holistic therapy* (reprint in 2017). Dr Rakowski is also the author of over 150 scientific articles and translations, mainly from German. He has been a member of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Manuelle Medizin since 1988. He has great merits in the organization and conducting trainings in the field of manual therapy. He integrates the community of doctors of various clinical specializations and physiotherapists. Regular scientific and training conferences organized by the Manual Therapy Centre contribute to the development and popularization of manual medicine in Poland.

### Conclusions

Owing to the aim and volume of this article, it does not describe many of those Polish specialists in manual therapy who have made a significant contribution to its popularization and development, e.g. Professors: Zbigniew Śliwiński, Edward Saulicz, Dariusz Mucha, Andrzej Suchanowski, Rafał Gnat, Michał Kuszewski, Jacek Wilczyński; Doctors: Mirosław Kokosz, Andrzej Szczygieł, Tomasz Ridan, Adrian Kuźdzał, Jarema Padaszyński, Jarosław Ciechomski, and many others.

In the discussed period of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, significant progress was made in the development of manual therapy in Poland. Can one, however, express the opinion that manual therapy has undeniably found recognition in the medical world? Unfortunately, many doctors still do not accept this method of therapy and do not have extensive knowledge in this area. This can be confirmed by the results of a study by Romanowski and Korman [14], which show that 46% of the surveyed doctors did not come across the term ‘osteopathy’ and 53% of them indicated that manual therapy was the domain of physiotherapists.

To sum up, one can state that the fulfilment of the hope of the father of the Polish rehabilitation, Professor Wiktor Dega, i.e. the recognition of manual therapy by science, will have to wait a little longer.

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## Ethical approval

The conducted research is not related to either human or animal use.

## Disclosure statement

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## Conflict of interest

The authors state no conflict of interest.

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