ORIGINAL BIOGRAPHICAL PAPER WITH ELEMENTS OF REVIEW

PROFESSIONAL INTEREST IN DERMATOPATHOLOGY OF STANISŁAW OSTROWSKI – THE ONLY ONE STATE POLISH PRESIDENT AMONG PHYSICIANS

MARTYNA WOLTANOWSKA¹, ANDRZEJ WINCEWICZ², PIOTR WOLTANOWSKI³, STANISŁAW SUŁKOWSKI⁴

¹Non Public Health Care Unit “IL-MED”, Department of Family Medicine, Szudziałowo, Poland
²Non-Public Health Care Unit – Department of Pathology (NZOZ Zakład Patologii Spółka z o.o.), Kielce, Poland
³Board Member and General Secretary of Information and Organization Centre for the Research on the Public Finances and Tax Law in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Faculty of Law, University of Białystok, Poland
⁴Department of General Pathomorphology, Collegium Pathologicum, Medical University of Białystok, Poland

President of prewar Lwów and Polish Republic on Exile, associate professor Stanisław Ostrowski was a dermatologist with a keen interest in dermatopathology. This study was based on original resources, which – mainly reports of his own authorship – were focused on dermatopathology. Stanisław Ostrowski provided excellent description of naevus epitheliomatosus sebaceus Wolters-Friboes both in Polish and German to be cited after decades in renowned handbooks of dermatopahtology published by Springer Verlag. His scientific output also includes meticulous presentation of Fox-Fordyce disease (apocrine miliaria) as well as gold-induced skin changes to Polish readership. Thus, this study documents dermatopahtological achievements of Stanisław Ostrowski – the unifying statesman of society of Lwów and Polish emigration in London.

Key words: sebaceous nevus, gold-induced skin changes, Fox-Fordyce disease, Lwów, London.

Introduction

Stanisław Ostrowski (1892-1982) was an excellent dermatologist with detailed insight in diagnosis and treatment of skin disorders to obtain associate professorship of King John Casimir University of Lwów (Uniwersytet Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie – UJK) and later to become municipal president of Lwów and president of Polish Republic on Exile in London (Fig. 1) [1]. Stanisław Ostrowski was born on October 29, 1892 in Lemberg (Lwów) in Austro-Hungary and died in exile in London on November 22, 1982 [1, 2]. In the first half of his lifetime, his home town community experienced turbulent history. Namely, Lwów was occupied during World War I by troops of the Russian Empire for a year, to return under Austrian control in 1915 and to later become the arena Polish-Ukrainian fights in 1918 and 1919. Lwów stopped the offensive of the Red Army in 1920 on the outskirts of the city in heroic struggle of Polish municipal society. The military resistance of youngsters known as Lwowian Eaglets was remarkable against Ukrainian troops. So much instability has affected the fate of its inhabitants including Stanisław Ostrowski, who, having been appointed a physician, participated in all these battles as a military medical doctor and in this position he earned a deep respect and esteem, which helped him govern the city later on. Then, Lwów became the third largest city of the reborn Polish Republic, in
which Ostrowski in 1934-1936 was vice president, and 1936-1939 president [1, 2] (Fig. 1). The inter-war period was not only for the development of the city but also for professional development and stability in the personal life of Stanisław Ostrowski, who married Kamila and raised son Stanisław. In 1925-1927 Ostrowski worked in Warsaw with Prof. Franciszek Krzysztanowicz. From 1927 he rejoined his Alma Mater of the King John Casimir University in Lvov where he obtained habilitation in 1930, and in 1931 he was employed in position of associate professor. His military service and royal devotion closely associated him with the Marshall Józef Piłsudski with further implications on his political career. Ostrowski was conscientiously three times elected Member of Parliament (Polish: Sejm) in 1930, 1935 and 1938 [2]. In the lower chamber of Polish Parliament he was involved in public health and social security issues [2]. He also defended the rights of national minorities and was a supporter of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation [2]. His accomplishments as a deputy include the work on the great social security reform in Poland, which resulted in the merger of five financial foundations, to function as one Social Insurance Institution (Polish: Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych), which received solid organizational and financial foundations, to function until now. The Social Security Act of 28 March 1933, which was construed partly by Stanisław Ostrowski in 1931, who tested various histochemical techniques of staining dermal fibers particularly elastin and collagen, categorized these findings as an reactive changes in vicinity of hyperemic blood vessels [12]. He also noted lymphocytic infiltration of dermal papillae, oedema and vacuolization of keratinocytes with spongiosis and retention of melanin. He observed toxic, exfoliative dermatitis with aurokeratosis, eczema skin rash and discoloration predominantly on extremities [12]. In cooperation with Associate Professor Helena Schuster (1884-1949) from Institute of Anatomical Pathology headed by Professor Wioletta Nowicki (1878-1941) Stanisław Ostrowski reported following microscopical findings: epidermal thickness, hyperkeratosis with keratocysts, epidermal ridges and broadening and elongation of
course of toxic dermatitis [12]. Doing so, Ostrowski examined eventual toxicity of gold injection preparations, which were finally withdrawn from its therapeutical use due to outweight of its unwelcomed, side effects over its antimicrobial benefit [10, 12, 13].

Next on the basis of his close cooperation with from Institute of Anatomical Pathology headed by Professor Witold Nowicki (with proper acknowledgement of Witold Nowicki in an original text of the report) it was cited in a renowned dermatopathology handbook titled: Histologie der Hautkrankheiten written by Frankfurt-am-Main University Professors Oscar Gans and Gerl-Klaus Steigleder and published by Springer Verlag in 1957 as well as by Professor Peter Wodziansky from Vienna in a book entitled: Nicht Entziindliche Dermatosen III by Springer Verlag in 1975 [16, 17]. Ostrowski justified his study of naevus sebaceous according to current classification as the Latin term he used [14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19]. Actually as Ostrowski’s publication on sebaceous nevus was cited in handbooks [16, 17], it can be presumed that Stanisław Ostrowski contributed to recognition of this entity on international scale. It is remarkable that Stanisław Ostrowski wrote that he performed technical processing and staining of the material for microscopic evaluation in following way in his report on nevus sebaceous in Dermatological Review: “I sliced the sample in cellodine, then stained with haematoxylin–eosin, methylene blue and Papenhein stain, ocrein for visualisation of elastin fibers and Sudan III for staining of fat tissue” [14].

Among quite numerous of his publications Stanisław Ostrowski together with Tadeusz Chozałak provided detailed description of Fox-Fordyce disease (apocrine milia) both on macroscopic and microscopic level for Polish readership before World War Two [20]. Actually, the publication titled “Fox-Fordyce’sche Krankheit mit eigenartigem Verhalten des Vegetativen System”, was originally published in “Acta Dermatologica-Venerologica” in Stockholm in 1928 and then was translated into Polish and the following year appeared in the “Dermatological Review” [21]. He illustrated cases of nodular eczema in auxiliary region with strong pruritus causing deprivation of dream in female population [20]. Histologically, he reported accumulation of sweat glands of distended excretory ducts with its content with fine and exhausterive description of eccrine and apocrine sweat glands of skin with a fine photographic illustration provided by Helena Schuster (Fig. 5). Overlying epidermis was characterized with acanthosis and focal parakeratosis and keratin plugs in orifices of glands that were hyperactivated and simply dilated with extended production of excretion. The presented descriptions of dermatological entities are concise, easy-to-read and accompanied by microscopic illustrations [8, 14, 15, 20, 21] pointing at Ostrowski’s high academic skills. Thus, Stanisław Ostrowski closely cooperated with Henryk Hilarowicz whose admiration for tissue structure was characteristic in his family- and pathologists like Helena Schuster and Witold Nowicki to provide the best clinic-pathological approach to skin lesions [8, 14, 20]. Stanisław Ostrowski frequently benefited from the hospitality of the Department of Pathology. Memories of Stanisław Ostrowski’s colleague from that period, future professor Henryk Mierzecki (1891–1977), are the best documentation of such an collaboration [22]. Not only Nowicki worked in one Faculty with Stanisław Ostrowski, but also was a Prosector of the State General Hospital in Lvov, where Ostrowski was a head of the department of the Skin and veneral disease. Thanks to the courtesy of Professor Witold Nowicki, the clinical assistants (including Stanisław Ostrowski) were able to participate in all body dissections, in autopsies of patients treated with arsenobenzoles, which resulted in numerous publications of the future President of Poland [23, 24, 25]. This cooperation was also eased by proximity of academic institutions. Namely, the Institute of Pathological Anatomy which gathered open-minded academic workers at the King John Casimir University in Lvov was located on Piekarska Street 32 opposite the department of Dermatology, where Ostrowski worked, located at Piekarska Street 69. In the histological section of Department of Pathology there were besides photographic darkroom and laboratory for histopathology three offices for guest assistants of other research institutions and volun-

**Fig. 4.** Gross and microscopic depiction of sebaceous nevus in Ostrowski’s paper (from prewar “Dermatological Review” [“Przegląd Dermatologiczny”] dated on 1927). Drawings were made in Department of Anatomical Pathology there were besides photographic darkroom and laboratory for histopathology three offices for guest assistants of other research institutions and volun-

**Fig. 5.** Clinico-pathological appearance of Fox-Fordyce disease (from Ostrowski’s files in pre-war “Dermatological Review” [“Przegląd Dermatologiczny”] dated in 1929). Microscopic photos were taken by Associate Professor Helena Schuster from Institute of Anatomical Pathology (with proper acknowledgement of Helena Schuster in an original text of the report).
teers. Integration of community of academic em- ployees determined common scientific interests of the staff and favored intensive cooperation thus be- ing indeed much more important than comfortable proximity of neighboring universities buildings [22].

Discussion

Scarcity of Stanisław Ostrowski is evidenced in detailed, dermatopathological evaluations in his sev- eral reports [8, 14, 15, 20, 21] that were performed in close cooperation with Institute of Anatomical Pathology of Lvov University. With similar preci- sion he put in order the municipal administration of Lvov, holding an office of president of the city from 1956-1939 [1]. Lvov municipal investments of the presidency of Stanisław Ostrowski resembled priority projects implemented in Berlin thanks to the involve- ment of the German pathologist Rudolf Ludwig Karl Voroch (1821-1902), who was extremely popular Berlin councilor continuously for 43 years [20]. The similarity between the social programs implemented in the self-government practice by both outstanding physicians is striking. According to one vice-presi- dents of Lvov at the time of presidency of Stanisław Ostrowski, philanthropist, banker, social and cultural activist, victim of the Katyn Crime, Wiktór (Wigder) Chorążak (http://www.chorzak.org) (which modernizing city investments and sanitation of munici- pal finances), Lvov of the early 30s did not re- semble in the contemporary daily press anything of modernizing city investments and sanitation of Lvov. His publications, which were cited mainly by notable pathologists and a statesman of extraordinary peace and earthworks [29]. Exhibition halls were built to reducing unemployment through the widespread em- ployment of the unemployed people in public works producing unemployment through the widespread em-

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Address for correspondence

Andrew Wincze MD, PhD, FEBP (Professor of UJK from 2013) to 2016) Non-Public Health Care Unit (NNOZ Zakład Patologii Sp. o.o.) 25-734 Kielce, Poland e-mail: andrewc@gmail.com