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Popularization of health in Polish philately
Part 1 — postage stamps

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Original article

Abstract

The article constitutes an attempt of presenting the phenomenon of popularization of health, health protection, achievements in medicine and people connected to medicine through a postal stamp. A stamp is an object of collection and the subject of the more and more elitist hobby but at the same time it is an element of correspondence used by many people, including a sender and a recipient in numerous countires.

That is why, reaching for such a topic in different emissions of postal stamps can spread the knowledge about different almost all aspects of human civilization.

This publication is a compilation of information about postal stamps issued by Polish Post Office between 1919 and 2022 and referring in multiple ways and methods to the widely understood topic of health and its protection. The aim of the work was to present the stamps in chronological order, including the emission title, circumstances and occasions of the emission, circulation numbers and short presentation of events, phenomena, people and objects depicted on the stamps.

Keywords

- health
- achievements in medicine
- philately
- postal stamps

Contribution

A – the preparation of the research project
B – the assembly of data for the research undertaken
C – the conducting of statistical analysis
D – interpretation of results
E – manuscript preparation
F – literature review
G – revising the manuscript

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Philately, emerging together with the appearance of postage stamps used as the payment for shipment of goods, became very rapidly, already in the 19th century, a mass phenomenon. This phenomenon brought about the change of attitude of issuers of stamps who saw in them the means of popularization of certain ideas or widely understood – achievements of human civilization. Every country issuing postage stamps preserves its characteristics, either in respect of the content and form or other editorial elements. The Polish Post Office, operating in different years in various organizational systems, does not deviate distinctly from European issuers of postage stamps in this respect. We can observe the variety of subjects, reaching for numerous areas of civilization as well as the cultural and literary output. That is why, it is not astonishing that health, its protection, preventive treatments and achievements in the field of medicine have also become – though it must be emphasised that rarely – the subject of a great number of series of Polish postage stamps.

Therefore, here is the attempt to draw attention to the magnitude of this phenomenon. This article constitutes the first part of the review of the achievements of the Polish Post Office in that respect. In this article, attempt was made (in author's subjective belief) to discuss all stamps issued by the Polish Post Office which were devoted to the subject of health and its protection. The topic was presented in the simplest, chronological arrangement. This arrangement allowed to direct attention to the fact that the subject of health has never been overly popular in the issuance policy of the Polish Post Office. The second part of this article deals with the already mentioned topic but in the context of different postal objects, that is postcards; the third part disputes the topic of ornamental time stamps (daters), which were used to stamp cancelling.

For the purposes of this article, there was use of enumeration of Polish postage stamps as used in philatelic catalogues. These catalogues are issued in Poland annually, and their issuer adopted the universal of numerating subsequent stamps, which is supposed to simplify the use of the stamps for the commercial, collectible and scientific needs. That is why, each discussed stamp possesses philately designation 'Fi' and a consecutive number. The symbol 'Fi' in this case means the abbreviation of the name 'Fisher' (the company issuing the catalogue), the consecutive number is the number of a particular stamp in the aforementioned catalogue.[1] By the end of June, 2022 Polish Post Office had released 5245 postage stamps, which of course requires the already cited order and systematization. At this point the author would like to express his warmest thanks to Mr Marek Jedziniak, PhD, who runs www.kzp.pl, for sharing with him the illustrations of postage stamps.

The Polish Post Office used the subject of health protection for the first time on 3.05.1921. On the exact date the series of four stamps, so called 'reprinted' were emitted. Those stamps had **extra charge for the Polish Red Cross** (Fi 121–124). Initially, those stamps were issued in 1920 and had circulating character, which means a mass release most commonly used for paying for postal services. Social needs caused the need of popularization of the Polish Red Cross as an institution providing widely understood help for health. That was why, the graphic symbol of red cross and the value of the surcharge (in each case it was 30 Polish mark) were printed on the original stamps. However, the circulation figures of those stamps were low (only 100 thousand of each), so the propaganda effect as well as financial impact were relatively inconsiderable. Moreover, the stamps were used only till 15.08.1922.

In 1923, the Polish Post Office issued stamps which could definitely be associated with health protection. They depicted **Mikołaj Kopernik**, university educated physician, on his 450th birth anniversary. Kopernik is mostly associated with his astronomical achievements and discoveries but it is worth mentioning that as an astronomer he was only an amateur, and as a physician he was qualified to follow his profession as he received a degree in medicine at Bologna and Padua Universities.[2] The stamps with Kopernik were emitted during the period of spiraling inflation- hence their nominal value – 1000 and 5000 mk (Polish Mark). Those stamps were in wide circulation – Fi 164 20 million copies, Fi 166 45 million copies. Soon, due to inflation several dozen of stamps were put on the envelopes, making them useless. They were withdrawn from circulation in step with the introduction of new currency in Poland in 1924.

Next postal stamps devoted to health protection were issued by the Polish Post Office on 8.05.1927 on the occasion of the **4th International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy** taking place in Warsaw. On the stamps there was presented graphically identical (though in different colours) portrait of general **Karol Kaczkowski** (1797–1867). He is one of the most recognized Polish physicians of the 19th century – professor of Warsaw University, Surgeon General of the Army of the Kingdom of Poland, the creator of modern

[1] All information in the text concerning the titles of emissions, the consecutive numbers of stamps, their circulation numbers and respectively their circular validity come from the publication of S. Styła (see Ref. 1).

[2] The literature devoted to the person of Nicolaus Copernicus (Mikołaj Kopernik) is enormous. However, here, the most standard publication of J. Dobrzycki and L. Hajdukiewicz was summoned (see Ref. 2). In case of subsequent stamps associated with the person of Copernicus, the footnotes were omitted.

sanitary services, one of the authors of the Universal Encyclopedia of Orgelbrand, the recipient of the Order Virtiuti Militari. Moreover, Kaczkowski was a social activist, popularizer of modern medicine and hygiene. After the defeat of January Uprising in Poland, he was exiled by Russians and he died in Kherson.[3]

Postal stamps of nominal value of 10 gr (grosh – 1/10 of Polish zloty) (Fi 230), 25 gr (Fi 231) and 40 gr (Fi 232) were used to pay for both domestic and international shipment (including Free City of Danzing). Considering the times, they were issued in small quantities: Fi 230 1.54 million copies, Fi 231 0.975 million copies and Fi 232 1.02 million copies.

The three emissions discussed above are basically the whole output of the Polish Post Office concerning the subject of health during the inter-war period.

Another postal stamp referring to the problem of health and promotion of health was issued by the Polish Post Office as late as 1.06.1947. It was the emission with **obligatory surcharge for the Polish Red Cross**. The nominal value of the stamp was 5 zł (Polish zloty). It was used to pay for standard domestic shipment with the surcharge of 5 zł. Each customer intending to use the stamp on his parcel had to pay twice the charge. The stamp showed a set arrangement- a little boy walking in front of a nurse who was leading a wounded soldier. The stamp (Fi 428) was emitted in smallish circulation of 122.5 thousand copies, and its validity expired on 15.02.1948.

On 16.12.1948 the series of four stamps was introduced into mass circulation. As before, it was with **additional charge in aid of the fight against tuberculosis**. The subsequent stamps (of nominal value 3 + 2 zł, 5 + 5 zł, 6 + 4 zł, 15 + 10 zł) showed photographs of small children. Each stamp was linked with additional area of the same size (so called label). These labels were actually the spots for propaganda slogans and drawings which were supposed to provide the Polish with information about the danger of TB. Successive labels contained the following slogans: 'BCG vaccination is the rescue from TB;' 'Maybe you are the spreader of TB – have an x-ray!;' 'Do you want to prevent TB, detect and treat it, turn to TB clinic;' 'If you care for your child, make it resistant to TB with BCG vaccination;' 'TB slows down the work of reconstruction;' 'Healing the sick from TB means saving hands needed for reconstruction of the Country;' 'Anti-tuberculosis BCG vaccinations lower the possibility of contracting it fivefold;' 'The whole world fights with TB under that sign;' 'TB clinic prevents, detects, treats;' 'TB can cost you life, anit-TB vaccinations cost you nothing.'

Although some parts of the slogans covered political propaganda, the whole emission served distinctly to encourage the preventive measures and treatment of TB. Another matter is that the circulation figure of those stamps was insignificant taking into account that they were supposed to popularize an important initiative of preventive vaccinations. Moreover, the nominal value of the stamps surely discouraged the poorest ones to use them as the postal charge.

On 25.06.1951 the series of postal stamps devoted to the **1st Congress of Polish Science** proceeding in Warsaw was introduced into mass circulation. On five stamps there were depicted portraits of great Polish scholars (Mikołaj Kopernik, Karol Olszewski and Zygmunt Wróblewski, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Stanisław Staszic and also- interesting for us from the viewpoint of medicine – **Marceli Nencki**). He is one of the most prestigious Polish physicians of 19th century. He was granted the title of PhD for his work *Oxidation of aromatic substances in the animal organism*. He carried out scientific research on production of sugar in organism and also parametres and retention of carbamide. He was a Honorary Memeber of Society of the Friends of Science in Poznań and German Chemical Society. He worked in Industrial Academy in Bavaria, he was an assistant professor of medical chemistry at the University of Bern. Over the period of 1888–1891, he was a professor of bacteriology – he researched nitrogen compounds, uric acid and their derivatives. In the years of 1884–1886, he was the dean of the medical department. From 1891 in Saint Petersburg he continued his research on the chemistry of gastric acids and cholera. In 1895 he fought with the outbreak of rinderpest. While examining the chemistry of the bacteria he discovered bacteria capable of living in oxygen-free atmosphere. He discovered therapeutic agent called salol. He died in Saint Petersburg but he was buried in Warsaw in Powązki Cemetery.[4]

The **500th anniversary of the birth of Leonardo da Vinci** (1452–1519) was the occasion for the emission of the next postal stamp connected to the topic of the development of medicne. Da Vinci contributed greatly to the development of anatomy. During preparations to the exact imitation of movement, he undertook studies over the structure of the human body. He conducted, at those times forbidden, autopsies, he researched the cardiovascular system, he was interested in the creation of life so for that purpose he analysed the state of pregnancy, he was the first to try to picture a fetus in a womb of its mother. He described in details human skeletal system, he researched the functioning of respiratory system, he made the mould of human brain and ventricles of human heart.[5] The stamp (Fi 608) appeared on 1.06.1952 in relatively small circulation of 531 thousand copies with nominal value of 30 + 15 gr (Polish grosch).

On 1.09.1952 on the **1000th anniversary of birth of Avicenna**, there appeapred another postal stamp (Fi 36). The date of his birth, though, may not be certain. Avicenna was an outstanding Farsi (Persian) scholar, the other of over 450 scientific treatises, from which The *Canon of Medicine* gave basis to have called him the father of modern medicine. The *Canon...* is rightly believed to have had the greatest impact on the development of medicine in medieval Europe; even greater than the achievements of the Roman physician, Galen.[6] The stamp to honour Avicenna was issued in large amounts – 1.02 million copies – and having quite high nominal value of 75 gr was used to pay for international shipment. Nevertheless, it was not used by the majority of post office customers.

In 1953, the Polish Post Office again decided to summon the person of **Mikołaj Kopernik**, although in that emission (Fi 667–668) the scholar's astronomical feats were recalled. The first of the stamps was issued in huge amount of over 61 million copies, the other was in small circulation, only 98.7 thousand.

Health services, a figure of a nurse became the topic of the series of postal stamps (Fi 678–679) introduced into regular usage on 21.09.1953. On the first stamp with nominal value of 80 gr and circulation of 100 thousand copies, we can see a nurse administering a vaccination to an infant and the slogan: 'Vaccination protects from TB.' On the other stamp, 1.75 gr and of circulation of 10 170 000 copies, we can see a mother and a nurse weighing a child.

The same year, on 16.12.1953, a series of four stamps entitled **Health Resorts** were issued. The title of the stamps may seem misleading, as only the first stamp (Fi 689) depicting the old Spa House in Krynica and the last one (Fi 692) showing graduation towers in Ciechocinek, can be included into the group of regular resorts. The two other stamps showed attractive tourist destinations in Polish mountains – Morskie Oko – the lake in the Tatra Mountains (Fi 690) and the Dunajec River Gorge in Pieniny Mountains (Fi 691). The places could be considered tourist attractions but also the places for recuperation and rehabilitation.

Leisure activities of workers, the way of recuparation and relaxation of their strength weakened by hardships of labour, became the topic of one of the stamps (Fi 750) of the series issued on 28.06.1954. The stamp was issued on the occasion of the **10th anniversary of the creation of People's Republic of Poland (PRL)**. The stamp was emitted in the number of 1.46 million copies and, having the nominal value of 40 gr, it was widely used to pay for regular domestic shipments eg. picture postcards from holiday centres and resorts.

In the first part of the series called **The Monuments of Warsaw**, on 31.03.1955, there was issued a stamp (Fi 765) depicting the statue of Kopernik in Warsaw. The presentation of the scholar refers to his astronomical achievements – it is a person seated, holding in his hands a pair of compasses and armillary sphere. The stamps was emitted in significant amount of over 27.5 million copies.

Sports competitions organized for handicapped people have colossal meaning for their rehabilitation and functioning. They are not only modern Paralympic Games. On 9.02.1956, the Polish Post Office issued two stamps (Fi 810-811) referring to **Chess World Championships for the Deaf** taking place in Warsaw. Both stamps were used to pay for domestic shipments. The first one was issued in the print run of 310 thousand copies, the other – over 10 million.

The series of postal stamps entitled **Polish Medicine** and introduced into circulation in two parts on 27.04 and 30.09.1957 appears to be very fascinating. The emission had circular character, therefore high circulation numbers and massive usage of those stamps. Of course, we can ask the question if a person using such a stamp took the trouble to get to know the person depicted on it. The series presented altogether eight famous Polish physicians from different eras:

1. Sebastian Petrycy – Fi 863 (10 gr, 40.37 million copies).
2. Wojciech Oczko – Fi 864 (20 gr, 81.195 million copies).
3. Jędrzej Śniadecki – Fi 865 (40 gr, 96.764 million copies).
4. Tytus Chałubiński – Fi 866 (60 gr, 33.66 million copies).
5. Władysław Biegański – Fi 867 (1 zł, 32.59 million copies).
6. Józef Dietl – Fi 868 (1.35 zł, 29.218 million copies).
7. Benedykt Dybowski – Fi 869 (2 zł, 29.281 million copies).
8. Henryk Jordan – Fi 879 (3zł, 26.623 million copies).

It is difficult nowadays to recreate the process of the choice of just those persons. However, it is definitely worth trying to present shortly their biographies and their achievements in the field of medicine and health protection.

Sebastian Petrycy (1554–1626) came from a burgher family from Pilsen. He studied at the Academy of Cracow, and he worked as a teacher and a lecturer of poetics at the Academy. He was granted PhD degree after graduating from the University of Padova. After many life disturbances he became a personal physician of the bishop of Cracow, Bernard Maciejowski. He spent some

time in Moscow together with Maryna Mniszchówna where he was taken prisoner. After returning to Cracow, he returned to being a lecturer focusing on popularizing the attitude typical for Italian medicine. His scholarly achievements include three fields: medical treatises (about illnesses), translations of Horace and translations and commentary of the works of Aristotle. The earliest medical treatise of Petrycy was *De natura, causis, symptomatis morbi gallici eiusque curatione quaestio*, published in Cracow in 1591 in Lasarus printing house. The work Instruction or science, how to behave during outbreak, pulished in Cracow in 1613 in the printing house of M. Loba is also worth mentioning.[7]

Wojciech Oczko (1537–1599) is one of the creators of Polish medicine, the expert on syphilis and a medical writer. He advocated practising sports realizing the its benefits both for the body and the mental well-being. He was granted the PhD in medicine at the University of Bologna. He was a personal physician of the bishop of Cracow Franciszek Karasiński and Polish kings- Stephen Bathory and Sigismund III Vasa. He wrote in Polish two fundamental works which dealt with the issues from the fields of anatomy, surgery and nutrition. He also established plenty of Polish names for medical terms and conditions. In the first of his treatises, entiltled *Hot Springs* (Pol. *Cieplice*). He initiated Polish research on balneology, he made classification of hydrotherapy and mineral waters present in Poland, he described their functions and applications and methods of their usage in various therapies. His work was published in Cracow in Lasarius Printing House in 1578. The second valuable treatise written by Oczko was entitled *Attribute*. It was a compilation of contemporary knowledge about syphilis. This work was also published in Cracow in 1581. As the promotion of physical activity, Oczko recommended horse-riding, wrestling, fencing, ball games and dancing. He is the author of the saying: 'Physical activity will replace almost every medicine while no medicine will replace physical activity.'[8]

Jędrzej Śniadecki (1768–1838) studied among many at Nowy Dwór Schools. He studied mecidine in the Central Crown School, next in Padova, where he was specializing also in chemistry and physiology. He became a professor of chemistry and medicine in the Central School of Grand Duchy of Lithuania and at the Medical and Surgical Academy in Vilnius. He was the President of Vilnius Medical Society, a senior fellow of the Society of Friends of Science in Warsaw. Śniadecki developed the framework of Polish chemical terminology and he wrote the first Polish textbook for chemistry (*The beginnings of chemistry*). He was the first to describe the method of treating rickets using the increased exposure to sunlight (which causes endogenous production of vitamin D in skin). What is more, he was an educational theorist – in 1805 – he published the work *About physical upbringing of children,* which was one of the first Polish works about physical activities. In this work, Śniadecki emphasized the fact that the sense of bringing up children should include mental education as well as taking care of physical activity.[9]

Tytus Aureliusz Chałubiński (1820–1889) was a physician, professor of pathology, botanist, social and political activist, philanthropist, academic lecturer, philosopher of medicine, mountaineer and nature lover, writer and participant of Hungarian Uprising. He worked as a physician in Warsaw from 1846 in his own medical practice as well as in the Evangelical Hospital. He quickly became a famous diagnostician. As a memeber of Medical Society of Warsaw he gave lectures and discussed new medical theories. He promoted anatomical pathology and physical examinations, he encouraged to have restraint in eating and to give up using medicine. His PhD thesis included the contemporary level of knowledge about urine. He constantly published articles and taught medical students. He carried out research on malaria, which- after years- became the basis for the achievements awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Chałubiński is considered to be the creator and at his times the greatest representative of Polish school of philosophy of medicine. He cooperated with famous European centres sending his students to Vienna and Paris. He introduced some medical practices, such as anesthetic with ether, he was interested in laryngoscopy and the production of vaccination against rabies.[10]

Władysław Biegański (1857–1917) was a general practitioner, doctor of medical science, theorist of logic and psychology, philosopher and social activist. He specialized in infectious diseases, diagnostics and logic in medicine. He studied medicine in Warsaw graduating in 1880. After his internship in Berlin, Prague and his stay in Russia, he settled in Częstochowa. He opened there his own medical practice, he also worked in a city hospital, at the railway and in factories. Biegański connected his social and scientific activity – he presided over Medical Society of Częstochowa, he founded the Charitable Society for the Christian, the Częstochowa branch of Polish Tourist Society, Hygienic Society, he belonged to the Medical Society of Warsaw. Biegański carried out his scientific research far from academic centres. He wrote several textbooks, to name a few: *Differential diagnostics of internal medicine* (1891), *Lectures about acute infectious diseases* (1900–1901), *General issues from theories of medical science* (1897), *The logic of medicine* (1894). He also published his articles in *Review of Medicine, The News* and *Medicine*.[11]

Józef Dietl (1804–1878) – phycisian, politician, professor and the dean of Jagiellonian University, the President of Cracow. He studied medicine in Vienna, where he received his PhD degree and where he started his medical practice. In 1851 he became a professor and the head of Internal Medicine Department and medical clinic of the Jagiellonian University. In order to spread the notion of hygiene and awareness among patients, he ordered to cut off tangled hair of patients; he advocated the idea that patients ill with the same disease should be hospitalized in the same hospital room as so to not infect one another. Dietl created a new field of medicine – balneology. He was the first one to make classification of Polish medical spa waters. Thanks to Dietl, Polish health resorts such as Krynica, Rabka, Iwonicz, Szczawnica or Żegiestów became popular. Thanks to his actions, on 9 March 1858, the Committee of Balneology started to operate as a branch of Scientific Society of Cracow. He also advocated physiotherapy, hygienic and dietary treatment and balneology.[12]

Benedykt Dybowski (1833–1930) – traveller, botanist, discoverer and physician. He studied medicine and natural sciences first in Dorpart and next in Breslau and Berlin. He became recognized as an explorer and researcher of the fauna of Baikal and Siberia and also as an anthropologist examining the tribes of Kamchatka which were in danger of extinction. It was where he developed his activity in the field of medicine and hygiene. He was given a post of a dictrict physician in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski. He established hospitals for lepers, he fought outbreaks. He popularized breeding of goats and rabbits among the starving inhabitants of the region, he initiated the creation of reserves for sables, which were the only source of income of the islands in the vicinity of Kamchatka. He did not resign from his scientific studies after his return to Lvov. Then he specialized in comparative anatomy. He was a strong opponent of alcohol consumption.[13]

Henryk Jordan (1842–1907) – physician, social activist, pioneer of physical education in Poland, professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, promoter of creating playgrounds for children. He began his medical studies in Vienna but he graduated in Cracow. While in the USA, for the first time he came into contact with the system of gymnastics called Linga, which later became his passion. He started his obstetrical practice in the USA – he started here the school for midwives – next he worked in England and Germany. After a short period of his obstetrical practice in Vienna, he became an assistant at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Cracow. Jordan gained recognitiona both as a gynecologist and an educator. From 1890 he was a professor – the chief of Department, twice the dean of Medical Department of Jagiellonian University. He published his works, among many there are: *The study of obstetrics for the use of midwives* (1872), *The study of obstetrics for the use of students and doctors. Section I: physiology and dietetics of pregnancy, labour and puerperium* (1881). Joradan was the chairman of the Gynaecological Society of Cracow and Medical Society of Cracow. He was a co-founder of Health Care Society and the Society of Self-support for Physicians. He founded and edited the magazine Hygienic Review. He contributed to the introduction to school the lessons of gymnastics (today physical education) and also professional medical care. He was a member of the Supreme Sanitary Council in Vienna.[14]

Ludwik Zamenhof (1859–1917) is another Polish physician of Jewish origin practising medicine at the turn of the 19th and 20th century who was presented on Polish postage stamp. His portrait was presented on one of the stamps from the series: **International Congress of Esperantists**, issued on 24.09.1959. This stamp (Fi 967) of nominal value 60 gr was used to pay for standard domestic letters. It was printed in large volume of 5,075 million copies. For thematic accuracy, it is important to mention that Zamenhof, although known mainly for his invention of Esperanto language, was a medical doctor – an oculist. He studied medicine in Moscow and Warsaw, he specialized in ophthalmology in Vienna.[15]

The next thematic stamp edition connected to popularization of health was the series (Fi 976–978) printed on 21.09.1959 on the **40th anniversary of the creation of the Polish Red Cross**. The title of the series refers to the foundation in 1919 of the Polish Committee of Red Cross (from 1927 it was renamed: Polish Red Cross). In the first period of the activitity, the Committee supported the wounded and the ill during uprising and border wars and also looked for the missing. The Committee also operated medical institutions including hospitals, covalesent-homes and preventoria. Nurses and paramedics were educated and in 1921 first Clubs of Polish Red Cross were created in schools. Two stamps showing nurses were published in large circulation amounts (5.1 millon and 10.63 million copies). On the third stamps from the series (in circulation of merely 450 thousand copies) the portrait of the Swiss entrepreneur and philanthropist Henri Dunant (1828–1910) was presented. He was the initiator of establishing an international organization which would come to rescue to people suffering because of wars. In that was, International Red Cross was created.[16]

In the same year, on 12th of December, the Polish Post Office issued a series of stamps entitled **Outstanding Scholars** (Fi 988–993). On the fourth stamp there was presented **Louis Pasteur**, on the sixth one **Mikołaj**

Kopernik. As Kopernik and his impact on medicine have already been mentioned, the person of Pasteur is worth a closer look. Pasteur was not a physician but a biologist. Between 1857 and 1868 he carried out scientific research of the process of fermentation, pointing out that it was triggered by germs. Next, he developed the method of preservation of food using heat treatment. Finally, he refuted the theory of abiogenesis of germs. Nevertheless, his greatest achievement was in the field of bacteriology and virology – he developed the first preventive vaccination against rabies for people.[17] This vaccination was used on people as quickly as in 1885 and with a success. Pasteur started the new era for mankind.

V Scientific Pharmaceutical Convention became the subject of the stamp issued on 14.09.1960 (Fi 1034). It was printed in circulation of 1 million copies and was used to pay for standard domestic letter. The stamp showed the portrait of Ignacy Łukasiewicz and the contour of a karosene lamp.

A noteworthy series entitled **Fight with Malaria** appeared on 1.10.1962. There were issued 3 individual stamps (Fi 1198–1200) and the fourth one in a block (Fi 1202, Block 35). The stamps showed an anopheles mosquito (*Anopheles maculipennis*), blood cells with malaria germs as seen through a microscope, the flower of cinchona tree and another mosquito. The stamps had various circulatory numbers (from 728.6 thousand to 2.058 million copies). But only the first stamp, of value 60 gr, had a widespread usage. On the other hand, in Poland there were almost no cases of malaria which is common in tropical countries or contracted by tourists returning from those parts of the world. In times of People's Republic of Poland such countires were not tourist destinations.

Another stamp of the Polish Post Office referring to the subject of health is linked to the celebrations of **100th anniversary of creation of International Red Cross** (Fi 1244, nominal value 2.50 zł). It appeared on 8.05.1963 in circulation of 1.134 thousand copies. The stamp contained a slogan devoted to the century of Humanitarian Geneva Convention, although the first international convention of this type was signed in 1864. At that time, the sign of red cross was introduced. The sign of red cross was to be put on medical formations and their staff during wars and armed conflicts. It was established that medical personnel remained always fully neutral, it could not be attacked and could not participate in fighting. Moreover, it was prohibited to attack civilians helping the wounded and sick soldiers. Finally, it was etablished that the wounded should be treated equally, regardless of nationality.

Mikołaj Kopernik was once again presented in the series of five stamps issued on 5.05.1964 on the occasion of **600th anniversary of foundation of Jagiellonian University**. The stamp with Kopernik (Fi 1340) was of the nominal value of 60gr (which was equal to standard domestic letter shipment) and was in huge circulation of 9.768 million copies.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962), the wife of the US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was among many world's influential people who promoted and supported the activities of International Red Cross.[18] The Polish Post Office honoured Eleanor Roosevelt with a special stamp (Fi 383) issued on the occasion of her 80th birthday. The stamp with nominal value of 2.50 zł (certified mail) was published on 10.10.1964 in 3.27 million copies.

Space medicine was a specialty of a astronaut-physician Borys Jegorow (1937–1994). His portrait was depicted on Polish stamp in block (Fi 1391, Block 44) of the emission **III manned space flight**, published on 20.11.1964. The stamp of 60 gr and circulation number of 1.3 million copies showed not only Jegorow but also medical and pharmaceutical symbols – a serpent coiled around Aesculapian staff (Asclepius).

It was only after several years later when the Polish Post Office returned to the topic of health, issuing a stamp of **V Congress of World Federation of the Deaf** (Fi 1633) of nominal value 60 gr. Its large circulation number (4.524 million copies) could be used by many customers. The image presented on the stamp, however, could not be easily understood by the majority of the users. The image showed three palms of hands in finger spelling pattern in abbreviation: V Congress of the Deaf. On the other hand, the stamp drew attention of the public to the problem of functioning in society of hearing impaired people.

In 1969, the Polish Post Office commanced the cycle of stamps devoted to **Mikołaj Kopernik** (let me remind you – an educated physician), whose **500th anniversary of birth** was supposed to fall in 1973. Due to this fact, on 26.06.1969, the series of three stamps appeared (Fi 1778–1780). The stamps showed the portrait of the scholar referring in the graphics to his achievements in the field of astronomy.

As the continuation of the same subject, on 26.06.1970, the Polish Post Office issued a series of three stamps (Fi 1867–1869) referring the period when Kopernik studied at Italian universities. The stamp of nominal value of 40 gr (Fi 1967) showed Kopernik against the background of the panorama of Bologna according to the drawing from 15th century, and the stamp valued 60 gr (Fi 1868) – the portrait of Kopernik on the background of the panorama of Padova according to the drawing from the same century. It is important to emphasize at this moment that Kopernik studied

medicine exactly in those cities, having being granted the bachelor degree.

To be accurate with the chronicle of events, I would like to recall four stamps issued on 1.06.1971 in the series **On the Copernicus trail** (Fi 1940–1943). They all referred to Polish locations connected to the person of Kopernik; additionally they illustrated his astronimical achievements.

A fascinating emission of stamps appeared on 28.03.1972. Then the Polish Post Office issued the stamp (Fi 2001) with value of 2.50 zł on the occasion of **World Heart Month**. A few interesting symbols were presented on the stamp: the symbol of Polish Cardiological Society, founded in 1951, and WHO- World Health Organization. A final piece was a slogan 'Your heart – Your health.' The circulation number of this stamp was not small- as many as 3 million copies.

Copernicus – as an astronomer and translator – was depicted again on the stamps of the Polish Post Office issued on 28.09.1972. Within the series **Mikołaj Kopernik – life and activity** four stamps and philatelic block were printed (Fi 2043–2046, Block 90). It was not the first time when medical aspect of the education of the scholar was omitted.

Soon, on 16.10.1972, the Polish Post Office emitted a very unique stamp of emission for **The Children's Memorial Health Institute** (Fi 2054). The value of the stamp 60 gr was enough to pay for standard domestic letter, and huge circulation number – 6.402 million copies – allowed to popularize widely the already undertaken initiative (1965) of building a specialist pediatric hospital. Even nowadays, this hospital is considered to be the most advanced and modern of all pediatric hospitals in Poland. It conducts treatment, rehabilitation and it is also scientific and educational centre. It includes 17 clinics, 29 independent medical dispensaries, hospital pharmacy, a complex of specialist clinics and a school complex for patients. The Institute is at the same time a memorial – to commemorate children who were victims of World War II. That is why, on the aforementioned stamp, we can see the sculpture of Janusz Jrnuszkiewicz the *Little Insurrectionist* and the graphic logo of Children's Memorial Health Institute.

The portrait of Copernicus (again only with astronomical attributes!) is the illustration of two more stamps introduced into circulation on 28.12.1972 (Fi 2083–2084). The value of stamps was adjusted to the rise of postal services- 1zł and 1.50 zł. They were in large circulation numbers (27.3 and 26.9 million of copies) so the public could easily remember the person of Copernicus, unfortunately, there was nothing mentioned about his medical background.

The year 1973 brought several series of stamps connected to the person of the scholar from Toruń. Already on 18.02 the series of five stamps were in circulation (Fi 2085-2089) showing portraits of Copernicus due to the **500th anniversary of his birth**. Next, on 27.09.1973 on the occasion of The Day of Stamp, the portrait of Copernicus by Bacciarelli was issued on the stamp of nominal value of 4 zł with obligatory surcharge of 2 zł devoted to the rebuilding of Royal Castle in Warsaw.

Maintaining the thematic style, on 30.11.1973 the Polish Post Office issued the series of eight stamps entitled **Polish scholars of XIX and XX centuries**. The stamps (Fi 2133–2140) presented Henryk Arctowski, Paweł Strzelecki, Benedykt Dybowski, Stefan Rogoziński, Bronisław Malinowski, Stefan Drzewiecki, Edward Adolf Strasburger and Ignacy Domeyko. From this group of scholars only B. Dybowski was a physician, although his greatest discoveries are linked to Lake Baikal. However, the stamp with Dybowski was very popular, mostly due to the great circulation number – 6.118 million copies.

A significant thematic change was connected with the emission **Popularization of National Health Protection Fund** issued on 12.07.1975. The Polish Post Office emitted then a stamp (Fi 2242) of nominal value of 1.50 zł and in huge circulation of 10.6 million copies, which actually contributed to common response to this idea. The fund was linked to the initiative of building (based on voluntary donations) of hospitals, hospital pavilions, local health centres, factory clinics, health and rehabilitation centres, nursing homes. The Fund itself was created in January 1973, based a little on the already existing Social Fund for Building Schools and Boarding Houses, which undertook a valuable initiative to build 'A thousand schools for Millenium.'

As soon as on 30.08.1975 the Polish Post Office prepared even more fascinating emission designed to **popularization of the social idea of building The Children's Memorial Health Institute**. Four stamps were issued (Fi 2245–2248), on each there was a graphic logo of the Institute, but what is more important, there were also illustrations showing characters from popular TV programmes for children. There were characters of Bolek and Lolek, Jacek and Agatka, Reksio and Telesfor the Dragon. The circulation numbers of three of the stamps were 10 million copies, the forth – 1.055 million.

Popularization of the activity of the Polish Red Cross was the title of the stamp (Fi 2336) of value of 1.50 zł, issued on 24.01.1977. High circulation number – 6.252 million copies – truly served the popularization of this respectable institution. The stamp included a graphic symbol of PRC and a figure of a PRC nurse helping an elderly woman.

Another attractive emission – from 19.08.1978 – was devoted to **IV International Congress of Parasitologists**. And although by definition the area of study is parasitism as a distinctive phenomenon in nature, its mechanisms and processes present in parasite-host relationship, it is clear that some of the described phenomena could be related to the topic of health protection. On the stamps (Fi 2420–2421) there were presented two insects which have enormous influence on the development of diseases – anopheles mosquito and tsetse fly (kind of insects from the family of dipteran, *Glossina*). In case of mosquitos, parts of the species are so called vectors of spores, causing malaria in people; there are also nematodes infecting people with filariasis. In case of tsetse flies – some of them cause African sleeping sickness, others cause disease called nagana or they are carriers of malaria spores. The stamps of nominal value of 1.50 zł and 6 zł were issued in 6.942 and 3.552 million of copies.

International Year of the Child, celebrated thanks to a special resolution of the General Assembly of the UN, was the subject of the stamp emission in Poland from 13.01.1979. Four stamps (Fi 2456–2459) showed the drawing of children from the Children's Palace and Community Center of Muranów in Warsaw and also the graphic symbol of the Year and – what is the most significant for us- graphic symbol of The Children's Memorial Health Institute. Those stamps were in huge circulation numbers (from 4.710 do 11.895 million copies) so the idea of popularization of the Institute was successful.

In 1981, I**nternational Year of Disabled Persons** was celebrated again thanks to the resolution of the UN. Just on this occasion the Polish Post Office issued the stamp (Fi 2620), whose graphics include international sign meaning facilitation for the handicapped and disabled. The stamp also included a graphic symbol of the Year. The circulation number was low (1.5 million copies) and the stamp was expensive – 8,40 zł (the stamp was used to pay for air mail). It did not contribute to the raise of awareness of society as to the area of disability.

On 22.03.1982 the Polish Post Office returned to the person of **Ignacy Łukasiewicz** presenting the **100th anniversary of his birth** on the series of six stamps (Fi 2651–2656). Only the first one presented his portrait, the rest depicted different kinds of karosene lamps. The stamps were in large circulation – from 5.325 million to 53.43 million copies – but there was not a single reference to pharmaceutical activity of Łukasiewicz.[19]

100th anniversary of the discovery of tubercle bacillus by Robert Koch became the subject of an interesting series of stamps (Fi 2679–2680) issued on 22.09.1982. As the inflation was on the rise and the value of stamps was higher, they cost 10 and 25 zł. On the stamps there were presented portraits of Robert Koch and Odon Bujwid. Koch was an outstanding German scholar, physician and bacteriologist (1843–1910). He discovered, among many, bacteria causing anthrax, cholera and TB. For his research on TB, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology in 1905. He is recognised, altogether with L. Pasteur), as one of the creators of medicinal microbiology. One of his most significant discoveries was the develpoment of method of sterilization using the work of water pump, destroying the spore-forming phase of anthrax. Koch spoke Polish, for many years he worked in Wolsztyn(at the time German Greater Poland) and in Sławęcice (at the time also German part of Upper Silesia).[20] Odo Bujwid (1857–1942) was the first Polish bacteriologist, a pioneer of hygiene and health protection, one of the first Polish scholars dealing with mass production of medicinal vaccinations, including rabies vaccination. He studied medicine at the Imperial University in Warsaw, he completed specialisation as a bacteriologist in Berlin where he was a student of Robert Koch and in Paris as a student of L. Pasteur. He founded in Warsaw the first in Poland institute of prevention against rabies, and the first station of testing food. In 1893 he became the chief of the Hygiene Department at Medical Department of Jagiellonian University. He quickly created there the clinic of Pasteur vaccinations. In his own house, in Lubicz Street, he started the manufacture of serum and vaccines, which during WWII provided Polish residents of Cracow with vaccinations against typhus fever.[21] On both stamps there is also the Lorraine Cross – the symbol of organizations fighting TB.

Commemorating of the medical services during the Warsaw Uprising became the topic of one of the stamps of the series (Fi 2782–2785) issued on 1.08.1984 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the onset of this huge patriotic zeal. The stamp contains a part of archive photo on which medical orderlies of the insurgent sanitary service tend to the wounded. The image is completed with a red cross.

It was only on 26.09.1986 when the Polish Post Office referred directly to matters linked to health protection. The stamp presenting the portrait of **Albert Schweitzer** (1875–1965) was issued. He was a theologian from Alsace, Lutheran clergy, philosopher, organist, musicologist and physician, laureate of Nobel Peace Prize in 1952. Although he was a successful scholar, after medical studies he resigned form scientific career, he left for West Africa where he started a hospital in the place called Lambarene. His moral notion was the statement: 'I am life which desires to live, among the life which desires to live.'[22] The stamp (Fi 2909) of nominal value of 5 zł (it was used to pay for sending standard postcards) was issued in large amount of 10.97 million of copies.

Ludwik Zamenhof (again as the creator of Esperanto language, not as a physician) became a hero of another postal stamp (Fi 2956) printed on 25.07.1987 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the creation of this international language. The stamp did not present any medical referrences of Zamenhof, and its circulation was quite low (1.689 million copies).

The series: **Prominent Activists of Democratic Party** seemingly has nothing to do with the topic of health protection. However, it is worth mentioning that on the stamp (Fi 2976) issued in this emission on 16.10.1987 the portrait of **Antoni Więckowski** (1882–1942) was presented. He was the officer of Polish Army and a physician. He began his career as an adjutant physician of Józef Piłsudski, after 1918 he was consecutively the marshal of District Hospital in Łódź, the chief physician of VI Military District of Łódź, the chief physician of the garrison of the city of Łódź, the chief physician of 28 garrison 'Children of Łódź', the marshal of field hospital no 402. After Polish-Bolshevik war he supervised the work of so called Department of Invalids in Chief Ministry of IV District Headquarters of the city of Łódź. Next, Więckowski was the marshall of the District Hospital no 4 in Łódź. Between 1935 and 1939, after retiring from the army, he was the chief physician of Social Security Services as well as the head of department in the Hospital for Mentally and Nervously Ill 'Kochanówka.' He was murdered in KL Auschwitz.[23]

In 1989, the Polish Post Office commenced the series **Medicinal Plants**. The series was issued during the period of several years. First stamps of the series (Fi 3066–3067) were printed on 25.08.1989. Despite multi-million and regularly repeated circulations, it is hard to see any popularization of health. The stamps did not have an attractive graphic design and monotonous (rather greyish) colours and a small size did not simplify reading the details. On the stamps of values 40 and 60 zł (another evidence for the rising inflation), common daisy and common juniper were presented. For the purposes of this article it is worth mentioning that **common daisy** (*Bellis perennis*) can be indeed used for medicine. The flower is herbal raw material containing bitter agents, tannins, organic acids, mucus, saponin, essential oils and significant amount of mineral salts. In folk medicine daisy flower was used for bleedings form lungs and urinary bladder, as a fever-reducing medicine and as restorative agent. Brew from daisy was used in metabolic disorders, irregular menstruation and also as diuretic in kidney stones and bladder stones and as laxative. The brew is specially recommended to the elderly as it lowers the blood pressure and prevents atherosclerosis. Nowadays, it is rarely used internally as expectorant in diseases of respiratory tract and as a mild astrigent in gastrointestinal diseases. Externally, it can be used in the form of baths and compresses as anit-inflammatory agent for badly healing wounds, bleedings, open sores and skin eruptions.

Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) has been used for the medicinal purposes since the prehistoric times. Its medicinal usage was already confirmed by scholars of the Antiquity. They emphasized juniper's properties: diuretic, mild astrigent, beneficial for stomach, in case of chest ailments and cough. Medicine from juniper was prepared in various ways: as brews, extracts, tinctures, syrups, wine and beer and even jams. The buds of juniper are used in gemmotherapy. In Poland in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century it was common to drink the brew from juniper berry, which helped with urinary retention and swellings. Ripe juniper berries eaten on an empty stomach were supposed to help with digestion. Juniper was used for colic, for the purpose of 'purifying the blood', in retention of menstruation and sometimes even in TB. During the outbreak of cholera, people used juniper to fumigate their houses and flats. Sometimes juniper was put on swollen parts of body, although it had more to do with sorcery than medicine. Externally, products from juniper were used in neuralgia, radiculitis inflammation and arthritis. Juniper oil has fungicidal and antibacterial properties. It is recommended to use juniper after antibiotic treatment in urinary infections which is supposed to prevent the relapse of disease and to destroy the bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Extracts from juniper berries increase secretion of bile and gastric acid. The extracts are supposed also to stimulate peristalsis, sweat production, widen capillary vessels of skin causing redness. Juniper oil is an ingredient of warming oitments used for rheumatic pain and neuralgia.

Two great Polish physicians of the 18th and 19th centuries were depicted on stamps (Fi 3973–3074) from the series **Famous Surgeons**. The stamp of 40 zł (circulation 6 million copies) showed the portrait of **Rafał Józef Czerwiakowski** (1743–1816). He was an anatomist, surgeon and obstetrician. As an ordained monk (1771), he was sent to Rome where he undertook medical studies (he received a PhD degree in 1776). He completed his surgical knowledge in Paris and obstetrical practice in Berlin. In 1779 he settled in Cracow where he began teaching surgery, anatomy and obstetrics in the Hospital of Saint Barbara. He became a professor at Cracow Academy creating there the first in Poland Department of Surgery, Obstetrics and Anatomy. Released from his monastery vows, he became a court doctor of the Polish King Stanisław August Poniatowski, and in 1794 he became the chief physician in the Main Hospital in Cracow. He invented a few surgical tools and orthopedic

traction for treating broken bones (he is considered the forerunner of orthopedics in Poland). He conducted charitable work, he treated poor students for free. He donated in his will a huge number of surgical tools and collections of books to Cracow Academy. He is the author of some valuable scientific works: *Study of surgeon tools* (1779), *Dissertation about nobililty, necessity and usage of surgery* (1791), *Instrument of surgical use* (1816–1817), and left in manuscript *Practical surgery* (printed in 1969).[24]

The portrait of **Ludwik Antoni Rydygier** (1850–1920) was presented on the stamp of nominal value 60 zł (circulation 6 million copies). He studied medicine in Cracow (1869–1873), next at the University in Greifswald where he graduated as a medical doctor, and in 1874 was granted the title of PhD. He achieved the postdoctoral degree at the University of Jena, where he was employed as an assistant in the surgical clinic. He specialized in this field writing and publishing his works. He founded a private clinic specializing in treatment of ocular diseases, surgical and women's disorders in Chelm, which at the time belonged to Prussian territory. In 1887 he became the chief of Surgical Department of Jagiellonian University, in 1897 he became a professor at the University of Lvov. He was the first person on the territory of Poland (the second in the world) who conducted the operation of removing a pylorus because of stomach cancer. He was the first one to perform the operation of gastric resection because of the ulcers. In 1884 he introduced a new method of surgical treatment of peptic ulcers disease of stomach and duodenum using gastrointestinal anastomosis. He is also the author of an original method of removing adenoma of prostate gland (1900) and many more surgical techniques. Till the end of his life he strongly objected to women being allowed to become doctors. At the beginning of Polish Independence, he was incorporated into the Polish Army with the rank of brigadier general.[25]

The stamps were not visually attractive and small print prevented the users from recognizing the people presented. Despite large circulation numbers and mass usage to pay for standard shipment, the stamps were quickly withdrawn due to rapidly rising inflation and frequent changes of postal charges.

The series **Medicinal Plants** brought another stamp (Fi 3087) on 19.12.1989. It showed again common daisy (Bellis perennis), just like on the stamp Fi 3066. The colours and nominal value were changed (150 zł). However, it is hard to believe that regular users of this stamp contemplated over medicinal properties of the plant.

In the same series, on 19.12.1989, there appeared two more stamps (Fi 3097–3098) showing a **wild rose / dog rose** (*Rosa canina*) and **cornflower** (*Centaurea cyanus*). Ripe fruit of a wild rose is used in many herbal mixtures. The fruit contains a large amount of vitamin C, but also tannin, carotenoids, organic acids, essential oils, sugars and pectins and vitamins A, B1, B2, E, K and folic acid. Rose is commonly used as general restorative medicine but also as supportive medicine to treat many disorders of liver, kidneys, digestive system and joint disease. It has weak unclenching and bile producing properties and mild diuretic properties. By contrast, the flower of cornflower (without calyx) contains anthocyanidins, flavonoids, mineral salts (including large amount of manganese), cychorin and centaurine. It has diuretic, bile producing and anti-inflammatory properties. Thanks to its mild anti-inflammatory properties it is used in conjunctivitis and in pediatrics. Brew from cornflower is recommended in kidney diseases, inflammation of glomerulosclerosis and renal pelvis, circulatory insufficiency and kidney stones. It is also used externally on hard-healing open sores and wounds and in inflammatory conditions of eyes. These stamps, printed in multi-million copies, were unusually popular as they could be used to pay for standard postal usage of eg. postcards and greeting cards.

Another stamp of this series appeared on 18.06.1990. It was reprinted (due to inflation) – already printed postal sheets of stamp Fi 3067 were used only with the change of the nominal value to the new one – 700 zł. The circulation number of those stamps was 20.67 million (although soon they became useless).

On 13.08.1990 two more stamps were released from this series (Fi 3129–3130). They showed respectively **yellow-water lily** (2000 zł) and **German iris** (5000 zł). Yellow-water lily (*Nuphar lutea*) is a medicinal plant used in homeopathy. Roodstock of German iris (*Iris germanica*) is also a medical agent. In folk medicine it was used to remove freckles and discolorations from the skin. Crowning roodstock was given to teething infants, the oil, however, is used to this day to aromatise in cosmetic and fragrance industries. Powdered roodstock preserves aromas, it is an ingredient of anti-pespirants, tooth powders, dry shampoos and cosmetic masks. These stamps were issued in large numbers (over 50 million copies), they were not graphically attractive and they had unusual form – up till then unheard of in Polish postal tradition – the stamps were self-adhesive.

Next stamp from the series of Medicinal Plants, printed on 26.04.1991 (Fi 3177) shows the drawing of a **lily of the valley** (*Canvallaria majalis*). The medicinal properties of this plant were already recognized by the ancient Chinese; they used products form lily of the valley to treat cardiovascular disorders. In medieval Europe medicinal products based on lily of the valley were used in heart diseases, epilepsy and pains, and

in XVI century brews from the flowers were helpful to easy podagra and eyes inflammations. In folk medicine rhizome and berries of lily of the valley were used while treating epilepsy, the flower was used as a laxative, internally against cramps, powdered flowers in the form of snuff were taken to fight chronic runny nose and colds. The plant was also applied in dropsy swelling and worming. In XIX and XX centuries it was discovered that lily of the valley contained other glycosides. Nowadays, it is believed that lily of the valley as a substance is better tolerated by human organism than foxglove and it has fewer side effects.

A very fascinating series of stamps issued on 3.05.1992 on the occasion of the **World Fair EXPO'92 in Seville** was in absolutely different graphic design. The series presented portraint of five great figures of Polish science and culture. Two stamps- of nominal value 1500 zł (Fi 3224, circulation number of 2.085 million copies) and 5000 zł (Fi 3228, Block 102, circulation number 1.311 million copies) were devoted to people connected to medicine. The first stamp depicted the portrait and signiture stamp of Mikołaj Kopernik, the other showed the portrait and signiture stamp of **Kazimierz Funk** and also the symbol of vitamin B. This outstanding Polish scholar of Jewish origin (1884–1967) studied biology and chemistry (he gained a PhD degree in 1904). He worked in the Pasteur Institute in Paris, at Berlin University and in London. He discovered and separated first vitamin B1, he introduced the usage of the word 'vitamin' into medicine (from Latin *vita* – 'life' and *amina* – 'chemical compound containing amino group'). Funk treated the sick with vitamin deficiency, he showed the relation between lack of vitamins and morbidity with rickets, scurvy and pellagra. After Polish Independence, he worked in National Department of Hygiene in Warsaw and from 1928 he worked in Paris where he carried out scientific research on hormones. In 1939 he emigrated to the USA. There, till his death he researched the reasons for cancer. He is the author of several hundred of scientific publications.[26]

Mikołaj Kopernik, again as not-physician, was depicted on a stamp Fi 3303 issued on 24.05.1993 to celebrate his 450th death anniversary. The portrain of the scholar is presented on the background of the heliocentric system. The circulation number of this stamp was 1.65 million copies and it was associated only with one part of the scholar's activity.

It was only after a few years when the Polish Post Office referred indirectly to the subject of health emitting a stamp **Stop Drug Addiction** (Fi 3680). The image of the stamp was of a withering rose symbolizing a dying man, as a result of drug addiction. The circulation number (2.4 million copies) and its low nominal value – 70 gr (it was used to pay for standard postcards) – and also large size and distinctive design could profoundly draw attention of customers to this important social problem.

Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (Pol. Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy – WOŚP) is one of the most fascinating initiatives of the turn of XX and XXI centuries. This charity gathers donations for the purchase of professional medical equipment. The Polish Post Office published only postcard on this occasion up to 2003. In 2004 for the first time the stamp (Fi 3942) appeared at the Grand Finale of WOŚP. The nominal value of the stamp (1.25 zł) was used to pay for standard domestic shipment, and large circulation number – 4.4 million copies – undoubtedly promoted the idea of WOŚP and its purpose of buying equipment for Polish hospitals.

At the end of the 20th century, the Polish Post Office began the emission of the series **The Polish Around the World**. The stamps of the series appeared on 27.02.2004 (Fi 3947–3948). On the second one, there was presented **Helena Maria Paderewska**, the second wife of Ignacy Paderewski, a pianist and Prime Minister of II Polish Republic. In the period of the First World War, Helena M. Paderewska (1856–1934) organized the help for victims of the war on Polish territory and also for the soldiers of Polish Army in France. In January 1918, she established in the USA the Polish White Cross, the organization which was sending women-volunteers to serve as nurses to places where Polish soldiers fought, regardless of the army (Austrian, German, Russian). The second statutory purpose of this organization was spreading of Polish culture and education, awakening patriotic attitudes and national and civic awareness among Polish soldiers serving in partition armies, and after the WWI among the soldiers of basic military service in Polish Army. In January 1919, under the auspices of H. Paderewska, organizations working on Polish territory, which were following the ideals of the Red Cross made an agreement by virtue of which Polish Society of the Red Cross was founded. Its deputy chief of Paderewska and she held this office till 1926. On the stamp of nominal value of 2.10 zł (circulation of 500 thousand copies) we can see the portrait of Paderewska against the background of a group of nurses of the Polish White Cross.[27]

The **13th Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity** (WOŚP) became the subject of a stamp (Fi 4017) issued on 6.01.2005. The stamp was the value of 1.30 zł and it was used to pay for standard domestic postage and huge circulation number, 10 million copies, contributed to spreading the idea of collection of donations devoted to the development of modern methods of diagnostics and treatment in neonatology and pediatrics.

In 2005 there was the 200th anniversary of creation on Polish territory the first society for doctors and physicians. On this occasion the Polish Post Office, on 24.11.2005 introduced into circulation a stamp (Fi 4074) dedicated to this anniversary. Nowadays, **Polish Medical Societies** work in regional structures including 20 thousand members. The main purpose of Societies is to improve professional skills of their members through widely carried out educational and publishing activity. However, the stamp was issued in a small circulation number (400 thousand copies) and only the drawing presented on it could bring some associations with medical services (a stethoscope against a background of white doctor's coat).

The series of stamps (Fi 4103–4105) printed on 8.09.2006 refers to the **100th anniversary of Society of Polish Internists**. The stamps showed respectively: the portrait of Witold Eugeniusz Orłowski against a background of Sigismund's Column and John the Baptist Cathedral in Warsaw and the part of electrocardiogram, the portrait of Edward Szczeklik on a background od the City Hall in Breslau and anatomical outline of a heart, the portrait of Antoni Władysław Gluziński on a background of Mickiewicz's Column in Lvov and the cover of one of the volumes of *Polish Archives of Internal Medicine*. **Witold Eugeniusz Orłowski** (1876–1966) was a professor of medicine at universities in Kazan, Tomsk, Cracow and Warsaw. He was a pioneer of physiopathology and biochemistry. He published scientific works of experimental-clinical character in the field of metabolic processes, digestive system and cardiology.[28] **Edward Szczeklik** (1898–1985) was born in Pilsen. Initially he was attached to Cracow, where he worked in the Department of Pathological Anatomy of Jagiellonian University, next as an assistant and adjunct in II Clinic of Internal Diseases. In 1946 he moved to Breslau, where soon he became the chief of I and next the III Departments and Clinic of Internal Medicine.[29] He is the patron of so-called old hospital in Tarnów. **Antoni Władysław Gluziński** (1856–1935) worked in Berlin (with Robert Koch), in Cracow, Breslau and Warsaw. He is the author of numerous scientific works in the field of physiology, pathology and diagnostics of digestive system. He was the creator of, at one time widely used in Europe, method of early recognition of stomach cancer. He organized the first in Poland TB clinic. He was also one of the founders of Polish Society of Polish Internists.[30] The stamps were issued in small circulation numbers (300 thousand copies each), they do not contain any information about the title of the series either. The majority of customers of Polish Post Office are not familiar with the presented doctors, that is why the awareness that the series was connected with health protection must have been limited.

XV Jubilee of Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (WOŚP) was the topic of the stamp from 4.01.2007. The stamp (Fi 4147) was co-designed by Jerzy Owsiak. The Charity collected donations for the rescue of children- the victims of accidents and for the education in the field of first aid. The nominal value of the stamp was 1.35 zł and it allowed to pay for standard domestic shipment, but the circulation number was smaller than previously – 2 million copies.

The **200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille** was the occasion to issue on 4.01.2009 the stamp with tablet numbered Fi 4257. The stamp presented the portrait of the French organist and teacher (1809–1852), the creator of the alphabet used by the blind. On the tablet there was located the slogan: Louis Braille[31] in exactly this alphabet (thanks to raised dots). The stamp (1.45 zł) was used to pay for standard domestic mail, the circulation number was low (640 thousand copies), and the stamp lacked an open-access to information about the role of L. Braille in making life easier for the blind.

Next stamps from the series **The Polish Around the World** (Fi 4290–4293) appeared on 28.08.2009. On the third one, there was presented the portrait of **Ludwik Hirszfeld** (1884–1954), a physician, immunologist, bacteriologist and seroanthropologist. He studied medicine in Wurzburg and Berlin, he worked in Heidelberg, Zurich and Serbia. He discovered blood types and RH factor and introduced their names to common use. In Warsaw, he was the chief of National Institute of Hygiene and a lecturer at Warsaw University. In 1942 he luckily escaped for the Warsaw Ghetto and after WWII he undertook the post at Lublin University later transferring to Breslau where he founded The Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy of Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Pregnancy Pathology Research Centre. Moreover, he worked on transfusion medicine, he developed the rules of blood transfusions, in 1950 he was nominated for Nobel Prize in the field of medicine for the explanation of phenomenon of Rh incompatibility between mother and fetus.[32] The stamp was issued in 400 thousand copies and it did not include any additional information.

100 years of Tatra Mountains Voluntary Rescue Service (Pol. Tatrzańskie Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe – TOPR) was the title of another series of stamps referring to widely-understood idea of health protection. The Polish Post Office emitted the stamp (Fi 4307) to celebrate the occasion on 24.10.2009. The initiative of creation of TOPR began in 1908, and organization of the service was accelerated after the death of Mieczysław Karłowicz (1909) in an avalanche. Eventually, the organization was registered in Lvov on 29.10.1909 and one of its leaders was Mariusz Zaruski. The stamp of value

1.55 zł (to pay for standard domestic mail) was printed in 450 thousand copies.

On 28.02.2011 the Polish Post Office issued a stamp (Fi 359) on the occasion of **National Cystic Fibrosis Week**. The stamp was dedicated to show this serious disease and in some way its effects on society. Cystic Fibrosis is innate genetic disease which results in disorder of excretion by exocrine glands. This ailment causes most often changes in respiratory system (due to recurring infections leading to lung damage and respiratory failure) and in digestive system (chronic inflammation of a pancreas leads to the impairment of this organ and its failure, sometimes also to secondary diabetes. It manifests itself with overproduction of unusually slimy mucus by the organism of a sick person. The mucus causes disfunction of all organs containing mucosal glands (eg. Lungs and digestive system). Cystic Fibrosis is a systemic disease, manifesting itself mostly as chronic bronchopulmonary disorder and enzymatic failure of pancreas with problems with digestion and absorption. Sweat glands discharge sweat with increased concentration of chlorine and sodium (so called salty sweat).

Another series of postal stamps (Fi 4379-4382) from **The Polish Around the World** emission was printed on 29.08.2011. One of the stamps was dedicated to **Michał Sędziwój** (1566–1636), physician and alchemist, diplomat and a man famous for his research on philosopher's stone but also an alleged discoverer of oxygen and its importance for life and combustion process.[33] Another stamp of this series was devoted to **Rudolf Weigl** (1883–1957) a biologist, discoverer of the effective vaccination against typhus fever. He was forerunner of using insects as experimental animals to grow bacteria causing typhus. Weigl was a professor of Universities of Lvov, Cracow and Poznań, he was twice nominated to Nobel Prize in Medicine.[34] The stamps were issued 400 thousand copies each. However, they do not include any additional slogans and graphic symbols printed on them (eg. microscope) do not necessarily acknowledge the meaning of the depicted persons for the world science.

The **20th Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity** (WOŚP) was the reason for publication of the stamp in the form of postal block (8.01.2012, Fi 4397, Block 204). This year the main slogan of WOŚP was 'Healthy Mother, Healthy Preemie, Healthy Child!.' The charity collected donations for the hospitals in the area of premature births. On the stamp (circulation of 0.5 million copies) we can see the outline of the heart, which is the symbol of WOŚP, among the orbits of celestial bodies; appropriate slogans including the slogan of the Finale, was situated on the margin of the block.

The **21st Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity** (WOŚP) was the topic of the stamp (Fi 4444) issued on 13.01.2013. The circulation was merely 300 thousand copies. The stamp was printed in a very attractive graphic form – it was round – as a self-adhesive one in a sheet containing six copies and the slogan which was the main theme of the Finale: 'For saving the lives of children and for decent care of the elderly.'

Thematically and graphically interesting stamp (Fi 4555) of the emission called 'The smile heals' was printed on 5.09.2014. The stamp was in circulation of 200 004 copies and it shows a stethoscope arranged to form a smiling face of a clown.

The **23rd Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity** (WOŚP) was illustrated with the stamp (Fi 4600) issued on 7.01.2015. The main slogan of the Finale was: 'Diagnistics. Pediatrics. Oncology. Cardiosurgery. Decent care for the elderly.' The slogan was put on the stamp although it was not very visible. The circulation number was 540 thousand copies and it contributed to popularization of the Finale.

The stamp (Fi 4606) printed on 20.03.2015 was devoted to a very important social issue – **transplantology**. Although its graphics was quite explicit, the low circulation number (400 thousand copies) did not serve as a propagatory agent.

World Blood Donor Day, referring to another socially significant phenomenon, was the topic of the stamp (Fi 4618) issued on 14.06.2015. Here, the circulation number is even lower (350 thousand copies) so in this case as well, the propagatory role of the stamp was not fulfilled.

The Polish Post Office returned to the topic of **Grand Finale of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity** (WOŚP) on 5.01.2016 where the stamp (Fi 4662) was printed. It was of nominal value 2.35 zł and ciruculation of 480 thousand copies. Again, the attractive form – it was heart-shaped – strengthened the idea of the 24th Finale, but the slogan (Pediatrics, Decent Care of the Elderly) was only on the margin of the ornamental sheet containing six stamps.

Continuing the subject of transplantology, the Polish Post Office on 22.01.2016 issued a stamp dedicated to the **50th anniversary of the first successful kidney transplant in Poland**. The stamp (Fi 4668) of nominal value 1.75 zł was published in a low number of 300 thousand copies. FDC – The First-Day Cover – seems exceptional. It included photos of the authors of aforementioned success- professor Jan Nielubowicz and professor Tadeusz Orłowski.

In a very small circulation number of 140 thousand copies, the Polish Post Office issued on 22.06.2016 a stamp devoted to the **450th birth anniversary of Jan Jessenius** (1566–1621). He came from Upper Hungary, today Slovakia. He was a physician – anatomist, writer

and diplomat. The stamp (Fi 4695) was issued with a tag. The stamp depicted the portrait of the scholar, on the tag we could see the reproduction of the title page and a quotation from his work *Anatomy*. Jessenius is famous for the fact that he was the first to conduct an autopsy in Central Europe.[35]

From the series **Achievements of Polish Science** – introduced to postal circulation on 29.10.2016 – three out of six stamps illustrate the achievements in the field of medicine. On the first one (Fi 4728) we can see the portrait of **Edmund Faustyn Biernacki** (1866–1911). He was the professor of medicine at Warsaw University and Lvov University, pathologist and neurologist, philosopher of medicine, the author of numerous scientific treatises and so-called erythrocyte sedimentation rate of Biernacki (the diagnostic value of erythrocyte descent rate). Biernacki was also the author of the first Polish textbook for hematology.[36] The second stamp (Fi 4729) presented the portrait of **Hilary Koprowski** (1916–2013), a physician, virologist and immunologist, university teacher, discovered of the first in the world effective vaccine against polio causing acute anterior poliomyelitis.[37] The third stamp (Fi 4730) depicted **Władysław Kunicki-Goldfinger** (1916–1995), a microbiologist, an expert on the life of bacteria, professor of Universities of Lublin, Breslau and Warsaw.[38] The stamps were issued in limited numbers: 180 thousand each.

In 1992, the Pope John Paul II established **World Day of the Sick**, Christian celebration held annually on 11th February, on the day of the first revelation of Virgin Mary in Lourdes. The celebration takes place in one of Virgin Mary's sanctuaries around the world. The purpose of the celebration is the necessity to provide the sick with better care, upgrading the suffering of the sick on human level but most of all in spiritual sense, including Christian community and religious institutions into the health services pastoral care and finally, the development of voluntary work. On the occasion of this celebration, Polish Post Office on 11.02.2017 introduced a stamp (Fi 4747) of nominal value 5 zł and circulation number of 250 thousand copies.

The series **Polish Herbarium** was given an attractive graphic form. The series appeared on 31.08.2017 and included four stamps (Fi 4783–4786), each of value 2.60 zł and circulation number of 120 thousand copies. The stamps showed the illustrations of four flowers used in herbal medicine. The plants are: cornflower (already shown in the series Medicinal Plantes from 1989 (Fi 3098), wild chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), milfoil (*Achillea millefolium*) and creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*).

Many people associate the person of once forgotten **Irena Sendlerowa** (1910–2008) with rescuing of Jewish children from Warsaw Ghetto during WWII, but just few people know that she also was educated and qualified nurse and medical orderly, organizer of social help, a person empolyed also in secondary medical education.[39] The Polish Post Office devoted to Irena Sendlerowa a stamp (Fi 4830) issued o 24.03.2018. The stamp does not include any information about the medical activity of Sendlerowa and a low circulation number (100 thousand copies) did not allow the mass-consumer to gain knowledge about this person.

On 26.11.2018, on the occasion of **100th anniversary of Patent Office of Poland**, the Polish Post Office emitted a very interesting stamp (in the series of four). The stamp shows a cross section of human skull as the reference to the patents of professor Wiesław Nowiński (*1953), an outstanding Polish scholar and inventor, the author of 35 atlases of human brain. The stamp (Fi 4907) was issued altogether with the others in the circulation number of 80 thousand copies.

The figure of another Polish scholar became the subject of the stamp (Fi 4908) printed on 30.11.2018 on the occasion of **250th anniversary of birth of Jędrzej Śniadecki** (1768–1838). This Polish physician studied in Padova, worked in Vilnius where he was a professor at Imperial University of Vilnius and Medical-Surgical Academy. In years 1806–1836 he was the chairman of Vilnius Medical Society. The stamp of value 2.60 zł and circulation number of 100 thousand copies refers more to his chemical than medical achievements.

The 100th anniversary of the creation of the Polish Red Cross is the title of the emission of stamps from 18.01.2019. The circumstances behind this anniversary have already been discussed while describing other stamps devoted to the Polish Red Cross or to particular people eg. Helena Paderewska. The stamp described here (Fi 4934) directly refers to the anniversary, it shows the logo of the Polish Red Cross and the outline of Polish northern border. The circulation number of the stamp was low (180 thousand copies) and the value of 3.20 zł allowed to pay for standard domestic postage.

The Polish Post Office returned to the series **Polish Herbarium** on 30.09.2020 introducing into circulation four stamps (Fi 5084–5087). The stamps showed: Saint John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) and garden heliotrope (*Valeriana officinalis*). Each of these plants has been used in folk medicine for ages. Nowadays, they are used to manufacture agents used in numerous therapies for numerous disorders.

With the coming of the pandemic of coronavirus Sars-Cov 2, the behaviour of people changed a lot. Among negative manifestations of this behaviour we can observe animosity and negativity towards the idea

of vaccinations. Although in XIX and XX centuries the Polish willingly underwent vaccinations saving themselves from fatal epidemic diseases, in XXI century the majority of them showed ignorance considering anti-covid vaccines to be the embodiment of pure evil. Government agencies, on the one hand, promoted the vaccinations (introducing National Programme of Vaccinations) and encouraged the nation to vaccinate even tempting with lottery prizes. The Polish Post Office introduced a special stamp (Fi 5161) **#Szczepimysię**, which circulation number was quite impressive – 200 million copies, but the nominal value of 4.70 zł was used to pay for more expensive mail and was not commonly used.

It is believed that including the stamp devoted to **Mother Elżbieta Róża Czacka** (Fi 5174), issued on 12.09.2021 on the occasion of ther beatification, will not be considered a misuse. This amazing woman, countess, after losing her sight became a pioneer, founder and the first supervisor of the institute taking care of blind children and blind adults. Nobody had done this work before her. Not only did she found this special-care institution but also she gave the blind the ability to function in society, occupation and very often a job. She is also a pioneer of Polish typhlology.[40]

The next person connected to health protection depicted on Polish postal stamps is **Marek Edelman** (1919/1922–2009). Although he is mainly associated with his role as a leader of the Uprising in Warsaw Ghetto in April 1943, it is definitely worth remembering that professionally he was a physician- a cardiologist (in 1962 he gained the PhD degree). Together with professor Jan Moll he developed a method of performing cardiological surgeries in the state of a massive heart attack.[41] The stamp devoted to Edelman (Fi 5190) was issued on 2.01.2022 and it refers in its graphics to his military involvement (yellow background of a daffodil symbolizes the Uprising in Ghetto). Quite a large circulation number allows the stamp to be used frequently and as it does not have specific value, it it supposed to serve as payment for priority mail.

Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) is another important person showed on Polish postage stamp. The Polish Post Office honoured the 200th anniversary of his birth with the stamp (Fi 5200) introduced into circulation on 7.03.2022. This is the second stamp devoted to this scholar – the first time he became a hero of a stamp in 1959. Current stamp of nominal value of 30 gr can be used to rebalance the rate for standard mail after changing postage rates from 3.30 zł to 3.60 zł. The huge circulation number (the stamp will be printed whenever necessary) may of course popularize the person of Pasteur, however, despite the portrait of the scholar, the stamp does not contain any information about his medical achievements. It is absolutely worth mentioning here that he is the creator of the first in the world successful vaccine against rabies.

Up to the present, the last stamp connected thematically directly or indirectly with the subject of health protection, the Polish Post Office has devoted to the person of **Ignacy Łukasiewicz** (1822–1882). The stamp was printed due to the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his birth. This Polish pharmacist and the inventor of karosene lamp was the hero of the stamps before. This time, however, he is shown in an attractive graphic form of a stamp with two tags emitted together in ornamental philatelic block.

It should be rightly believed that the Polish Post Office will reach for the subject of health protection numerous times. There are still many socially significant issues, which are worth popularization also in the form of postal stamps. There are plenty of outstanding Polish medical doctors whose successes in Poland and around the world are definitely worth acknowledging by the massive consumer using the services of the Polish Post Office. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that the scale of influence of the Polish Post Office through philately has been clearly reduced and the Institution itself resigns from using postal stamps, for instance for certified mail.

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Appendix: Selected postage stamps with a designation from Fisher's Catalog

Fi 124

Fi 166

Fi 231

Fi 428

Fi 485–488

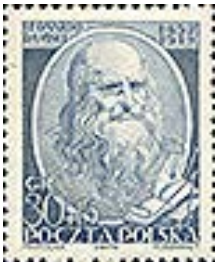
Fi 485

Fi 486

Fi 487

Fi 488

Fi 559


Fi 608

Fi 634

Fi 678

Fi 679

Fi 689

Fi 692

Fi 863

Fi 864

Fi 865

Fi 866

Fi 1244

Fi 867

Fi 868

Fi 869

Fi 870

Fi 967

Fi 977

Fi 978

Fi 1383

Fi 1034

Fi 1201, BI.35

Fi 1389–1391

Fi 1633

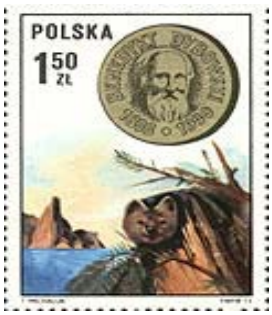
Fi 1244

Fi 1867

Fi 1868

Fi 2001

Fi 2054



Fi 2235

Fi 2045

Fi 2046

Fi 2336

Fi 2420

Fi 2421

Fi 2620

Fi 2047

Fi 2456

Fi 2785

Fi 2956

Fi 2048

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Fi 867


Fi 2902

Fi 2976

Fi 3073

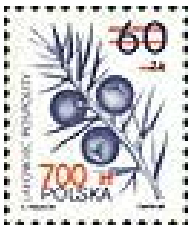
Fi 3074

Fi 3066

Fi 3067

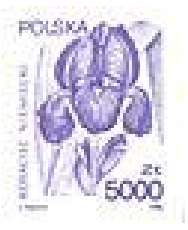
Fi 3097

Fi 3098



Fi 3121

Fi 3129



Fi 3130

Fi 3177

Fi 867

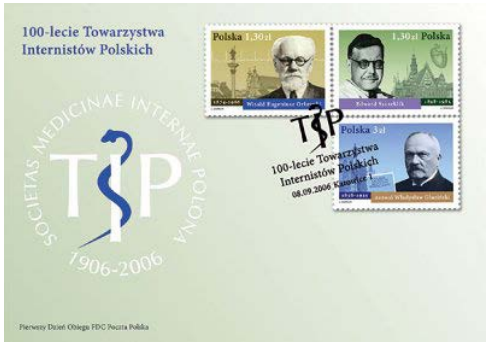
Fi 3680

Fi 4074

Fi 3942

Fi 3948

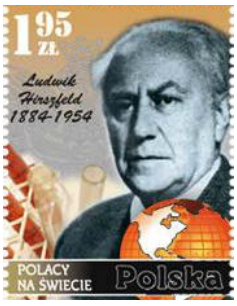
Fi 4017



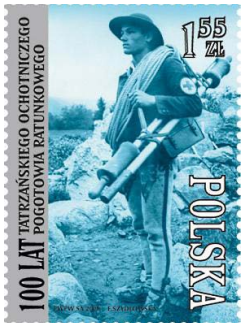
Fi 4103–4105

Fi 4047

Fi 4257



Fi 4992



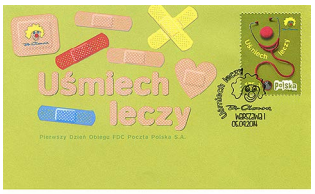
Fi 4307

Fi 4359

Fi 4079

Fi 4081

Fi 4307

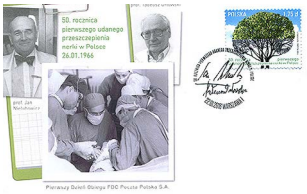


Fi 4555,FDC

Fi 4307

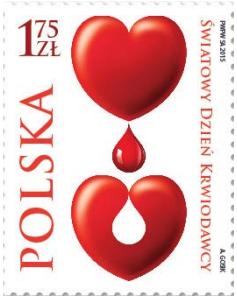
Fi 4600, FDC

Fi 4606

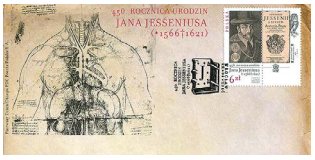


Fi 4668, FDC

Fi 4662 (ark.)



Fi 4606



Fi 4695, FDC

Fi 4783–4786, BI. 307

Fi 4668, FDC

Fi 4081

Fi 4830

Fi 3942

Fi 4908

Fi 4934

Fi 5084–5087

Fi 5190

Fi 4830

Fi 5200

Fi 5201

Fi 5174