



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Memory of Professor Antoni Leśniowski 1867–1940

Professor Antoni Lesniowski is one of the best-known Polish surgeons. As head of multiple Departments and Clinics in Warsaw he dedicated his career to broaden the knowledge and improve techniques used in the field of surgery, urology and gynecology. He presented a case of severe inflammation of the terminal ileum in 1903, 29 years before Burrill Bernard Crohn.

Professor Antoni Leśniowski was born on January 25, 1867 in Lebiedziowa, in the Lublin Province. He was the son of Karolina who's maiden name was Czarnocki and Peter, a veterinarian. He graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Warsaw in 1890. After a 2-year speciality training in Berlin, where he studied mainly in the field of urology, he returned to the Russian partition and from 1892, he worked as an assistant at the Second Department of Women's Surgery at the Baby Jesus Hospital in Warsaw. In 1912 he became the head of the surgery and urology department and the director of the Saint Anthony Hospital created by the Society for the Care of Poor Patients. From 1914 to 1919 he was the head of the Surgical and Urological Department of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit. He practiced surgery, urology and gynecology at the same time. Together, with his assistants, he tried to master the methods of urological examination, he worked on kidney function assessment methods. In 1915 he announced his own modifications of the migrating kidney operation. On June 1, 1919, Leśniowski was appointed a professor and head of the II Surgical Clinic of the University of Warsaw in the Hospital of the Holy Spirit and from July 1, 1920, head of the 1st Surgical Clinic at the Baby Jesus Hospital. In his later career he focused on gastrointestinal surgery, intestinal surgery and postoperative effects on the human body for example the acute acidosis.

He's the author of over 100 publications, including 28 urological ones, the translation of the german detailed textbook on surgery by C. Hueter and H. Lossen (1919), examination guidelines "A diagram on examination of patients and writing hospital cards

in a surgical clinic or surgery department" (1930), the first Polish surgery handbook "General surgery handbook" (vol. I in 1923, vol. II in 1926, vol. III remained in manuscript) and many more in the field of surgery and gynecology.

Married to Wanda (maiden name Brajbisz), had a son Stefan, a neurologist, and two daughters - Jadwiga, a painter and Karolina, a philosopher.

In 1903, at a scientific meeting of the Warsaw Medical Society, he presented a specimen of the intestine (ileocecal region) cut out due to signs of intestinal obstruction, ulceration and inflammation. Accurate description of the dissected specimen and performed surgery by Leśniowski was published in the Memoirs of the Medical Society of Warsaw and the periodical *Medycyna*. On May 10, 1903, the Polish medical weekly *Medycyna* published an article entitled "Contribution to bowel surgery" by Professor Leśniowski from the Hospital Baby Jesus in Warsaw. The surgeon describes several cases of intestinal diseases in one of them, concluding that "a chronic inflammatory process is taking place in the intestinal wall."

The same disease was described in 1932 by the American Burrill Bernard Crohn and since then in the world literature, not taking Leśniowski's priority, it is called Crohn's disease (only in Poland it is called Leśniowski - Crohn's disease). He also wrote a general surgery textbook.

Professor Antoni Leśniowski died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1940 in Warsaw.

Professor Leśniowski is widely recognized as an authority in the field of surgery and gastroenterology. To honor his achievements, in Poland, the inflammatory bowel disease is recognized as Leśniowski-Crohn disease.

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