BEGINNINGS OF THE LAPARAROSCOPICT PROCEDURES IN POLAND

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It’s very difficult to write about historical events in medicine when you have been involved in it yourself because it is too easy to overestimate one’s role. I will try to write about the people who were working with me at this time and who influenced the development of this technique in Poland.

We should mention the creators who developed this laparoscopic procedure in clinical practice. We are the ones who are continuing this idea, which was already begun. We are still developing and improving this method. It is impossible to mention all the important names but I’ll present about a few of the most important ones and also, who I had pleasure and opportunity to meet personally: Kelling, Jacobaeus, Gortz, Veress, Semm, De Kok, Mouret, Perissat, Reddick, Hollender, Berci, Cuschieri at many more.

The adventure with the laparoscopy in my surgical department started in 1990. My assistants: dr. P. Pyda, A. Deja and S. Malinger have had training and practical work abroad. Dr. Pyda was in the university surgical department in Montpellier in France. Two other doctors in University in Kiel, Germany. The department of gastro surgery in Montpellier (Instytut des maladies de l’appareil digestif Hospital Saint-Eloi) was led by Professor H. Baumel. At his invitation I arrived in France for a short course and live presentation of laparoscopic cholecystectomy. Deputy professor Jacques Domergue was the chair of the course. There I became enthusiastic about this new technique.

Fig. 1. Executive Committee of the Polish Association of Surgeons in 1991

Fig. 2. From the right: Prof. H. Boumel, his wife and author in France in 1991
Up to this time the laparoscopic procedure was not used in Poland. We knew about this technique but we didn’t have any advanced technical equipment to carry it out. Also we had no experience using this technique. As a result of our discussion, Professor Domergue agreed to help us and arrived in Poland with this equipment.

We organized a special meeting on 15 and 16 of May, 1991 in the University Department of General and Gastroenterological Surgery in Poznań, Poland where I was the head. During these two days we did five laparoscopy cholecystectomies ourselves with Domergue’s support and advice. The procedure was transmitted from the operating room with the help of Polish television. About 80 surgeons from all over Poland attended this symposium. Among these people were a lot of important surgeons who have had a large influence for the laparoscopic future in Poland: professors Krawczyk, Rybiński, Karcz, Stanowski, Tołłoczko, Mierzewski at al.

The next laparoscopic cholecystectomy was done by M. Krawczyk in Warsaw in June 1991. At this time the procedure was done without any outside support and with our own equipment. After two months we bought the full equipment to my department and from that time, we started our normal clinical practice.

The second training of laparoscopic cholecystectomy in Poznań was organized in the same year by dr. Sikorski in cooperation with German colleagues from Heidelberg.

Despite the fact that our country was not the richest, the amount of purchased equipment grew in a short time. This was the answer to social need. In our department, like in other departments, we actively led the training for surgeons in these new techniques. We also went to other hospitals to demonstrate the new procedures. The most advanced techniques like common bile duct control we did in our department in March 1992.

The most important role in the development of Polish laparoscopy was played by the following surgeons and the centers they represented: Chabielski – Gdańsk, Staszczyk – Lublin, Rybiński – Łódź, Krawczyk, Stanowski – Warszawa, Popiela, Karcz – Kraków, Mordzelewski – Szczecin et al. Within the limited place of this presentation it is impossible to give more details.

To finish, I would like to thank my staff for their enthusiasm and cooperation in introducing this technique.

Also all other eminent surgeons, my colleagues, I congratulate, for their activity in this field, for their individual achievements and for their constant competition which almost always stimulates progress.

REFERENCES
