

**REPORT ON THE 21ST WORLD CONGRESS OF MEDICAL LAW
COIMBRA, 2 TO 6 AUGUST 2015**

*Anna Jacek**
*Katarzyna Miaskowska-Daszkiewicz***

In the period between 2 and 6 August 2015 the 21st World Congress of Medical Law was held in Coimbra (Portugal). Its main organizer was the World Association of Medical Law, with the support of the Bioethics Centre in Coimbra. The issues discussed during the congress concerned the realization of the right to health care for the elderly, information technology in health care and the impact of migration on healthcare systems in host countries. As part of the Congress also the 4th International Conference on „Islam and Bioethics” was held. The meeting sessions were accompanied by poster presentations delivered by junior research workers.

The Congress was conceived as an international forum for discussion and exchange of views and experiences of lawyers and doctors in the problematic areas mentioned above.

The plenary session began with a welcoming speech by the Rector of the University of Coimbra, Prof. Dr. João Gabriel Silva. The speech was addressed to the Congress participants representing 32 countries.

The moderator of the plenary session was prof. Dr. Thomas Noguchi, head of the World Association of Medical Law.

During the opening ceremony four eminent scholars gave introductory speeches. The first speaker was Professor Guilherme de Oliveira, founder of the Bioethics Centre at the University of Coimbra, functioning since

* Department of Public Health, Institute of Nursing and Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Rzeszów.

** Department of European Union Law, Institute of European Studies, Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

1988, who delivered a speech on the right to health of the elderly („Health Law and Elderly Persons”). Next was the speech by prof. Katsunori Kai, Dean of Waseda Law School in Japan, who discussed the issue of decisions concerning the end of life and presented it with reference to Japan (paper titled „End-of-Life Decisions in Japan”). Prof. Brigitte Feuillet-Liger, representing the Université Rennes, France, presented the conclusions of a research project on the role of the family and close persons in the process of making decisions concerning health protection. In her presentation professor Feuillet-Liger referred to European reality (paper titled „The Role of Family and Close Persons in Health Care Decisions: A European Perspective”). The last speaker was Dr Cyril Wecht from the United States. He discussed the issue of medico-legal aspects of the right to die from the social and ethical perspective (paper titled „Medicolegal Aspects of the Right to Die: Societal and Ethical Concerns”).

Further deliberations were held as part of several discussion panels on different issues. During the Congress Anna Jacek, PhD in Law, delivered a presentation of her paper titled „Legal Aspects of Health Services Provision for Residents of Nursing Homes in Poland”, and Katarzyna Miaskowska-Daszkiwicz, PhD in Law, presented a paper titled: „Older People in the Maze of the Health Care System - Polish Experience” as part of one of the panels of the Congress - „Ageing & Health Law”. Other panel discussions addressed the issues of the relationship of information technology and health law, reproductive rights and migration in the context of health law.

Although the official language of the Congress was English, one of the panels was held in Spanish.

