Introduction

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present you with the latest volume of "Public Health and Governance," which, this time, is devoted to the implication of the knowledge on the economic burden of diseases towards evidence-based health policy making. This is a continuation of the issues discussed in the third volume of the year 2016 – this time focusing on the usage of the burden of disease analyses' results to propose and economically evaluate health interventions aimed at solving identified major health problems of population.

We have already presented an examples of assessing disease burden to the societies in units of time lost and in monetary units. There is also a third group of measures, which reflects the effect of diseases on individuals, households, employers and societies. Healthy children are able to learn in a more effective way, obtain better education and, therefore, gain larger income in adulthood. In a healthy family, the education of children will be less likely to be discontinued due to their poor health condition or an illness in the family. Healthier employees are more physically and mentally resilient and more efficient at work. Furthermore, their absences on account of illness (or illness in the family) at work happen less often so they earn more than people with health problems. The effectiveness of healthy employees allows their companies to generate larger incomes. The good health condition of the population making up the human resources on the employment market attracts foreign investment.

One of the presented studies discusses the issue of protein and energy malnutrition as a result of the poor nutrition of infants and children in Ghana and other developing countries. The authors also show the extent of the burden caused by protein deficiency in the nutrition of the children in Ghana. This results in serious immediate and remote outcomes – deaths, lost incomes and consumption, and thus – the decrease of the national income. The proposed programme of supplying an additional source of protein in feeding infants is easy to conduct – the paper also presents its economic evaluation.

We would like to draw your attention to the text discussing the economic evaluation of preventive vaccination programme against infectious disease in Poland. The article presents valuable data concerning the medical and economic benefis of vaccinations, indicating vaccination as the most available and the cheapest way to prevent infectious diseases such as pertussis. Abandonment of vaccination could result in a recurrence of an epidemic, generating losses in population health as well as economic consequences to the society, far exceeding the cost of immunisation. Another article shows the effects (the influence of the pharmacotherapy on results and costs) of replacing branded medicine with generic.

This volume also presents an overview of the international guidelines for economic evaluation of health promotion programmes.

We also introduce an article about the System of Health Accounts (SHA), a powerful tool of data collection and information for the description of financial flow in the health sector at the level of EU Member States. The author describes the methodological potential of the SHA, pointing out the possibility of providing multidimensional analysis of health spending, including doing so by groups of diseases.

We hope, that the proposed papers will contribute to the debate on evidence-based health policy creation.

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