On bruits, hums, and sounds in the ear and in the head: the Polish forgotten contribution

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ABSTRACT

Reviewing the relevant medical literature on cranial bruits, revealed that the contributions of the Jewish-Polish laryngologist Samuel Meyerson (1851-1939) and his colleague the famous Jewish-Polish neurologist Samuel Goldflam (1852-1932), is totally forgotten. This article is a reminder of one of the many historical Polish original contributions to medicine and science.

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In 1968, Gareeboo reported on: "Crani
buits in adults have not so far been reported as a
result of severe anaemia. Over the past nine months I have noted the presence of cranial buits in adults suffering from severe anaemia due to various causes
from pernicious anaemia to anaemia resulting from acute blood loss in bleeding peptic ulcers" [1]. He reviewed the literature: buits can be a normal
phenomenon in infants, and pathological intracranial buits in can be found in adults suffering
from anaemia, a-v malformation or fistula, angiomata, carotid stenosis, cardiac valvular problems, Paget disease of bone and aneurism.

The neurologist Christopher Gardner-Thorpe, the previous editor of Journal of Medical
Biography, has added two case reports, in a letter to the editor of the BMJ [2].

Downie [3] added that Gareeboo was not the first to report on anaemia causing buit in the
head, but rather Allen in 1962.

A month later, Sears also referred to authors
that were unknown to Gareeboo [4]: JD Fisher 1833
and L P Hamburger in 1931. John Dix Fisher (March 27, 1797 – March 3, 1850) was a physician and
founder of Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts. Previously, he was a pupil
in Paris of RTH Laennec, Gabriel Andral and A. Velpeau. He called the phenomenon of buits in the
head: "cephalic bellows-sound" [5].

It seems that all authors were not aware of
an extensive review and clinical report on cranial
buits, that was made in Poland back in 1893.

The Jewish-Polish laryngologist Samuel
Meyerson (1851-1939), a pupil of Adam Politizer
(1835-1920) and Leopold Schroetter von Kristelli
(1837 – 1908) of Vienna and the famous Jewish-
Polish neurologist Samuel Goldflam (1852-1932),
presented in a medical conference in Nuremberg,
their clinical experience with two women who
suffered from cranial tumors. Later the lecture was
published in Polish [6].

The article brought references written by
Sir William Richard Gowers (1845–1915), a British
neurologist; C. Pilz "By 1868 Pilz was able to collect
600 recorded cases of carotid ligation for cervical
aneurysm or hemorrhage with a mortality rate of
43%" [7]; George Hayem (1841-1933); the German
otologist Salomon Moos (1831–1895), and the
Austrian otologist Viktor Urbantschitsch (1847-
1921).

The authors discuss the differential
diagnosis:
• arterial aneurisms
• anemia
• intra cranial elevated pressure
• tumors.

Their first patient underwent ligation of the
common carotid artery [8] on the same side of the
bruit, by Prof. Wladyslaw Krajejewski (1855- 1907). Before the operation, external pressure on the artery

relieves the headache and the bruit, and the bruit intensified while turning the head, and correlated
with the systolic pulse. A few weeks after the
operation, her eyesight was blurred, and the bruit
heard over the left ear and the head. It remained but
weaker. Using a stethoscope, the bruit was heard
through the bandage. The father of the patient
decided to discharge his daughter and a few weeks
later she died at home. The authors presumed that the
cause of the bruit was an intracranial tumor or a
ruptured aneurism.

When S. Goldflam died, a memorial
booklet was published [9]. Famous people
contributed to this booklet: Nahum Sokolow (1859 –
1936) a Zionist leader, author, translator, and a
pioneer of Hebrew journalism; Leon Lewite (1878–
1944), a Zionist leader in Poland, who devoted
himself to acquiring pledges for shares in the Jewish
Colonial Trust and worked with the Centralny
Komitet dla Antyhitlerowskiej akcji Gospodarczej;
Maurycy Mayzel (1872-1947), the last president of
the Warsaw Jewish community; Janusz Korczak,
(1878-1942); Mateusz Hindes (of the Lodz Deposit
Bank in Warsaw).

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