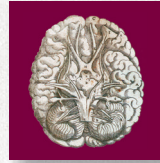




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ABSTRACTS OF THE 24TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF THE NEUROSCIENCES

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Inflammatory Demyelinating Central Nervous System Diseases in Lithuania (17th – 19th centuries)

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The history of inflammatory demyelinating central nervous system (CNS) diseases in Lithuania was introduced as the first documented cases of probable multiple sclerosis (MS) described in the 17th century Marian Miracle Books of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. A couple of centuries later the personal diary of Sir Augustus d'Este (born in 1794), grandson of King George III of England, revealed a medical history strongly suggesting that Augustus suffered from MS. In 1868 Jean-Martin Charcot coined the term *sclerose en plaques*, and the French term *neuro-myelite optique aigue* was first used by Eugene Devic in a paper communicated on the occasion of the *Congres Francais de Medecine* in Lyon in 1894. At the same time, anthropometric, morphometric, somatic and neurological examinations were performed in Vilnius University clinics.

The official date of establishing the Faculty of Medicine of Vilnius university (founded in 1579) is 1781. Nervous system (NS) diseases, including encephalitis, apoplexy, hydrocephalus, paralysis, spinal cord diseases, were described at the beginning of the 19th century in Vilnius. The history of myelitis, including the results of autopsy showing inflammation of spinal cord and meninges, was first described by Kazimieras Dobrovolskis in his doctoral thesis, defended in 1829. Even though in Vilnius, as well as in other European clinics, the causes of NS diseases were sought in the cerebrum and spinal cord, using autopsy findings as an essential part of the anatomo-clinical method (the influence of solidism doctrine), autopsy findings usually revealed brain and spinal cord congestion with blood, confirming the inflammation of NS theory. The level of diagnostics and treatment methods of nervous system diseases (including probable inflammatory demyelinating CNS diseases) in the 19th century Vilnius corresponded to the level of Western Europe.