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History of Allergology at Lithuanian Universities

Allergology as a separate branch of medicine was established in Lithuania in 1926 with the publication by the physician, and later academician, Vladas Lašas (1892–1966) of his monograph *Anafilaksija* [Anaphylaxis]. He defended it at the University of Lithuania in Kaunas as a doctoral thesis. From the beginning in 1926 until 1980, the Kaunas Medical Institute was the leading center of allergy and immunology in Lithuania and Vladas Lašas, as the founder of experimental allergology in Lithuania, was its leading figure

After 1980, leadership in the field of allergology shifted to the Vilnius University medical faculty. Other research institutions in Vilnius were also involved. The Institute of Experimental Medicine of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences carried out investigations in allergy research from 1960 until 1990. Every research institution made valuable contributions to the development of allergology and clinical immunology. An historical analysis of research, conferences, publications, and doctoral theses from 1926 until today shows their great input. The number of specialists trained, the doctoral theses defended and the scientific articles written has greatly increased in number. In 1963, the first out-patient allergy consulting room was opened. In 1969, the Allergy Centre of the Vilnius University Antakalnis Hospital was founded (closed in 1990 and then re-opened in 1992).

Currently allergy services are concentrated in the biggest cities of Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai. Allergology and clinical immunology as a separate specialty in Lithuania was established in 1970. In 1996, specialty standards were approved by Lithuania's Ministry of Health. These standards were revised in 2006 according to the requirements of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) and the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS).

Since 1993, residency training for allergologists and clinical immunologists takes place at Vilnius University and the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences in Kaunas. The first Lithuanian textbook on allergy was published in 2002 by Prof. Ruta Dubakiene. In 1998, a Lithuanian website on allergies was created. The on-line scientific journal *Alergologija ir klinikinė imunologija* was launched in 1999. Since 1996, scientific issues concerning allergology have been coordinated by the Allergology Commission of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.