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Jolanta Sykut-Cegielska, MD, PhD, Ass Prof.
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Dear Dr Sykut-Cegielska

Re Importance of Paediatric Metabolic Medicine as a medical specialty

Thank you for your recent letter. I am dismayed that the Polish Ministry of Health has suggested deleting Paediatric Metabolic Medicine (PMM) from the list of medical specialties.

Inherited metabolic disorders are individually rare but, because there are so many of them, collectively they affect many individuals. Moreover, many are treatable, in contrast to most other genetic disorders. The treatment is highly specialized and errors can lead to death or permanent handicap. It is now a huge field and it is unrealistic to expect general paediatricians to know much about these disorders or their management.

For these reasons, PMM was recognized as a paediatric specialty by the Confederation of European Specialists in Paediatrics in 2002 and subsequently by its successor, the European Association of Paediatrics. The importance of inherited metabolic diseases has also been recognized by the European Union, with the establishment of its own European Reference Network (MetabERN). Specific training programs have been implemented in most European countries following the syllabus recommended by the Society for the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism. In an era when we recognize the need for individualized medicine, it would be a severe retrograde step to remove PMM from the Polish list of medical specialties.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morris
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