

WELLBEING – A PRECIOUS COMMODITY

Healthy food, healthy habits, a healthy lifestyle, healthy relationships – our lives are infused with the language of health. And for good reason: health is a universal value, treasured across cultures and societies. Perhaps it's even the ultimate measure of well-being, because without it, we lose more than just vitality – we lose part of what makes us capable of living fully. Those who fight through illness, push past pain, or triumph over disability often inspire us as models of extraordinary strength, of heroic resilience.

The World Health Organization has defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” How close we come to this ideal often depends on us. Our seemingly small day-to-day choices build the foundation of our lifestyle. Yet, these choices aren't always wise, as shown by the obesity epidemic, now unfortunately affecting even elementary school children.

Sometimes, despite good preventive measures, we find our health lacking and need help. In Poland, the right to healthcare is guaranteed by the constitution, which assigns public authorities the responsibility of ensuring access to medical services. However, anyone who has tried to book an appointment with a specialist knows the challenges involved. In many cases, people turn to private healthcare providers. In 2023, spending on private healthcare in Poland reached 50 billion PLN – 20 billion more than state spending on public healthcare.

The shortcomings of national healthcare systems should not overshadow the achievements of modern medicine. Gene therapy, stem cell therapy, tissue engineering, mRNA vaccines, gene editing, magnetic resonance imaging, and computed tomography are just a few examples of groundbreaking innovations – often recognized with Nobel Prizes – that save lives today. These are advancements our ancestors couldn't even imagine. To this, we can now add machine learning (commonly referred to as artificial intelligence), which is increasingly assisting doctors in diagnostics and treatment while supporting researchers in their work.

Hippocrates famously taught: “First, do no harm; second, proceed with caution; and only then, treat.” Ideally, we'd prefer to avoid needing treatment altogether. To that end, let's take steps toward healthier living. How? I expect the articles in this issue of *Academia* will offer some valuable ideas.

ASSOC. PROF. **ANDRZEJ Z. KOTARBA**, PhD, DSC

Aleksandr Yasin,
Complementarity I,
2024, 60×70 cm,
acrylic on canvas

works in watercolor, acrylic, and oil painting. In 1997, he graduated with honors from the Faculty of Architecture at the Crimean Academy, where he defended his master's thesis with distinction. He is a member of the Warsaw District of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (ZPAP) and the Polish Watercolor Society, which is part of the European Confederation of Watercolor Societies. Yasin has participated in over 100 solo and group exhibitions in Poland and abroad. His works are featured in private collections on nearly every continent and in the collections of art museums.



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