FROM THE EDITOR

This is the second issue of "TASK Quarterly" devoted to medical applications of information technology (IT). In the first special number several overview papers were accepted to introduce that subject, together with some original contributions. This time only original papers are published and we believe this will start regular exchange of concepts concerning the use of IT in medicine on "TASK Quarterly". We are also glad to see that the number of readers of the journal is expanding including more and more contributions from very different sites of the world.

How this field of research and daily practice is developing one may see observing the expanding activity of the scientific and professional society. Only during 1999 there were several conferences organised in Poland with important impact to IT, listing only more significant events in 1999:

1. I Symposium on Modelling and Measurements in Medicine, 19–23 April, Krynica Gorska,
2. INFOBAZY'99, 30 August–1 September, Gdansk,
3. Computers in Medicine, 23–25 September, Lodz,
4. Multimedia, Data Integration and Medical Databases, 18–23 October, Warsaw,
5. IV Polish Medical Internet Conference, 12–13 November, Torun,
6. XI Conf. Biocybernetics and Biomedical Engineering, 2–4 December, Warsaw.

As a very important event the first European Medical & Biological Engineering Conference, 4–7 November in Vienna, may be added to that list.

In this issue 3 papers devoted to medical databases presented during INFOBAZY'99 conference are published. It should be underlined that both, the conference and specific databases, have been supported by KBN — State Committee for Scientific Research. So, the role of that Institution in promotion of the research in the field of IT implementation to medicine, as well as to the development of the informatic infrastructure in science is evident. Although the presented databases are in an early stage of development, the rise of interest in the field of medical databases in Poland seems to be significant and should be supported because this is a *conditio sine qua non* in further development and implementation of the health–care system reform.

Most papers are devoted to the problems of medical visualisation. This is really a challenging field of IT in medicine. The demands of diagnostics are pushing the development of technology in that field but still several problems are far from satisfactory clinical level. Especially important seem to be advances of IT in distant data exchange, teleconsultation, multimedia presentation and fusion of multimodality data, listing only some more important.

The other important factor for development of IT in medicine is a possible international co–operation. Poland was accepted as a full member to V Framework Programme of EU in September this year. Already several hundred applications have been submitted to that programme but only a few dealing with IT in medicine. We open "TASK Quarterly" as a possible forum for publications of the advances in this programme, too.

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