

Subject of the research. The subject of the research is to present various aspects of the presence of cholera epidemics in the North-western governorates of the Russian Empire in the 19th century and, as emerging from that fact, activities undertaken by the state and society directed towards a fight against those outbreaks. Various aspects of everyday life will be shown, which had been strongly influenced by the plague, as well as the volumes and ways of engaging in the fight against the disease by different institutions of state, military, police, medicine, church, social or individual persons.

Aims of the project. The main aim of the project is the reconstruction of the course (chronological, spatial, statistical) of cholera epidemic in the North-western governorates of the Russian Empire in the 19th century and the analysis of the social/economical/political significance of its presence for the inhabitants of the aforementioned regions. The fast spreading of the disease, its rapid and violent course and the lack of one universal and effective method of its treatment forced state authorities to adopt a broad range of activities aiming at stopping cholera. Various institutions became engaged in the activities, from ministries through army, police and medical services, to spiritual or social institutions and individual persons. The proposed monograph also aims at detailed description of those issues, whereas it will be of crucial significance to indicate similarities and differences in attitudes towards the epidemics in other European countries, to emphasize international initiatives, such as sanitary conferences, for instance. Furthermore, because five waves of the epidemic which swept through the aforementioned areas in 1830-1896 left their mark on organisation of all the fields of the country's life and settled permanently in people's consciousness, the aim of the project and the work will be to present the civilisational changes which would slowly occur under their influence, such as raising the level of hygiene and sanitary state of cities and towns (in particular, building water and sewage systems, creating permanent disposal services), development of medical sciences, increasing the authority of medicine doctors, development of specialised medical facilities.

Research method used/methodology. The research methods implied in the project will be adjusted to the aims set. Therefore, in the case of researching sources which so far have not been used, the implemented technique shall comprise the quality source analysis of: a/ archives (from foreign sources in: Vilnius, Minsk, Sankt Petersburg, Moscow as well as the Polish archives of, among others: Białystok, Warszawa, Gdańsk, Kraków, Poznań); b/ literature of the subject (medical treaties and instructions, governorate memorial books, memoirs); c/ epistolography; d/ press. The work on sources will be conducted in accordance with canons of pragmatic methodology and based on the inductive and deductive methods as far as establishing facts is concerned. Geographical method will also be put to use in order to establish conclusions on the dependency between the directions of the disease spreading and chronology. To narrate the statistical data the method of descriptive research shall be applied, one used in epidemiology and based on routine data (mortality statistics), which enable considering mortality patterns, e.g. according to age or gender in a given period of time. It will allow for conducting certain estimated calculations in reference to particular governorates and consecutive epidemics.

The effect. The assumed effect of the project will comprise the presentation and analysis of certain phenomena accompanying the occurrence and spreading of cholera epidemics in the 19th century, for which the North-western governorates of the Russian Empire shall constitute a background. The developed work is to foster understanding of certain social attitudes expressed in the face of danger, the health awareness of the population of the aforementioned regions as well as the degree of engagement in the fight against cholera of political, military, medical, scientific and religious institutions. The use of a social historian and historian of medicine's workshop, a critical implementation of methods used in humanities, are to lead to the development of an all-encompassing image of all the problems encountered by countries and societies of that period in the time of danger, the occurrence of the epidemic and further on while disposing its effects. The monograph, constituting the final effect of the research, shall not only complement the gap existing so far in Polish, Lithuanian and partially also Russian historiography, but will also serve as a comparison publication in the approach to the subject studied used by Western European historians.