

The objective of the research project is to conduct a multimodal analysis of the social use of 'alternative medicine' and the growing phenomenon of medical populism in Poland. According to data from the portal Rynekaptek.pl, there were at least 50,000 healers in 2000, 70,000 ten years later, and calculations from 2018 indicated more than 100,000 biotherapists, healers, herbalists, homeopaths, chiropractors, hypnotherapists, radiesthetists, iridologists, white magicians and shamans operating in Poland.

The research concept is to explain the phenomenon from three perspectives: a) Polish society and its various groups of different class, cultural and demographic backgrounds; b) health care professionals (general practitioners, specialist physicians, nurses; and c) supporters of alternative medicine and participants of various social initiatives that are part of the phenomenon of medical populism (anti-vaccine movements, Polish Association of Spiritual Healers, International Institute for Complementary Therapists).

A number of research methods and techniques in the field of social sciences will be used in the project:

- CATI survey on a nationwide sample of adult representatives of Polish society;
- focus group interviews (FGIs) with social groups of different class, geographic and cultural background;
- FGIs with health professionals;
- content analysis of materials from websites and YouTube disseminated by social activists that are part of the phenomenon of medical populism;
- CAWI research on a sample of 600 people who use the internet on conspiracy theories concerning the pandemic available on the internet;
- twenty interviews with leaders of movements and associations related to medical populism;
- sociological intervention with members of the social movement of medical populism and groups of supporters of alternative medicine.

The reasons for taking up the research subject are the observed (but unexplored) phenomena, such as anti-vaccine movements, rejection of official conventional medicine treatment procedures and the popularity of online stores with various alternative medicines. These trends not only affect public health, but are also a phenomenon that official health policy cannot ignore. From a sociological perspective, it is extremely interesting to find out the social causes of such behaviour and the scale of the 'counter-Enlightenment practices' in the approach to health.