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**Kumys i kefir jako środki odżywcze o lecznicze. Rozważania na łamach  
polskich czasopism medycznych drugiej połowy XIX w.**

**Koumiss and kephir as foodstuffs and medicines. Discussions on Polish  
medical journals of the second half of 19th century**

SUMMARY

Beverages based on fermented milk began to attract the attention of official medicine in the second half of the 19th century, first in Russia but later also in the lands of Poland and in Germany. Using observations of the practices of ethnic groups in southern and eastern Russia, where koumiss or kephir were traditionally consumed, it was concluded that the beverages could be effective in treating tuberculosis and diseases of the alimentary tract. At the same time, a number of studies were undertaken to establish the chemical composition and the curative properties of koumiss and kephir and to investigate the processes of milk fermentation. The research soon revealed that those beverages did not contain any specific ingredient that would be effective in treating tuberculosis. It was noted, however, that beverages based on fermented milk could be an effective supplement in treating a number of diseases that led to the emaciation of the body.

Polish scientists were among the first to take an interest in the curative properties of koumiss and kephir, and to start research on the two beverages. This is testified to by a number of papers published in the period of 1860s-1880s in Polish medical journals. The uses of koumiss and kephir in medicine were discussed in publications by, among others, E. Miłosz (1868), Wiktor Jagielski (1871) and Bolesław Lutostański (1872); the chemical composition, microflora and fermentation processes were discussed in works by Aleksander Weinberg (1869), Fanciszek Fijałkowski (1875), M. Heilpern (1886) and Leon Nencki and Aleksander Fabian (1887).

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