Nowadays, polygraph testing is frequently used in most European countries in both criminal cases and recruitment. The amount of cases in which polygraph testing could be applied is increasing. For a practising polygrapher, it is crucial to share experience and problems and ask questions about different situations, because this facilitates problem-solving. A conference on different aspects of polygraph testing for criminal cases and recruitment was held in the Higher Police School in Szczytyno, Poland on 12–13 June 2008. For two days experts from Polish universities and the police and invited foreign guests presented historical and current opportunities of polygraph testing including legal regulations. The symposium was addressed to academics, Polish police management, experts testing police officers and professionals from criminal laboratories. The book contains 11 chapters. One of them, presenting a new, computerized polygraph, has the form of a printed slide PowerPoint presentation.

The first chapter, written by Professor Jerzy Konieczny (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University), discusses the preparation of expert opinion in both a criminal and employment setting. The author explains the range of duties and information about cases indispensable for the expert to prepare an examination. Devising an adequate question format is a key issue for a polygrapher. A properly devised question increases the usefulness of the expert opinion and reduces the testing duration. In this chapter Professor Konieczny presents hints on adequate question formulation.
The second chapter presents the history of polygraph use before 1990. The author – Łucjan Wiśniewski, PhD – explains that in Poland the polygraph is also miscalled a variograph.

An invited guest from Lithuania, Vitas Saldžiūnas, considers how they made a transformation of a POT test to EKT (Event Test Knowledge), and obviously the reason for this. This paper, the third chapter, also explains problems even in understanding the definition of “deception” in Lithuanian courts.

The acceptability of using polygraph testing in criminal cases is the main topic of the next chapter. Edward Lewandowski provides an analysis of article 199a of the Criminal Procedure Code, emphasizing requirements for any method to generate reliable proof which can be acceptable in a criminal trial. If those requirements are fulfilled, polygraph testing should be regarded as a reliable method on which expert opinion can be based.

The police officer Piotr Herbowski discusses the usefulness of the POT test and its limitations in certain situations. He also explains why this method is so important for the court by presenting its major advantages, not omitting the considerable risk of missing a “guilty” person.

The next chapter, the fruit of cooperation between R. Kwasiński, M. Tokarski and M. Zubańska, analyzes the influence of polygraph testing on the effectiveness of an investigation.

The authors present their own findings about the frequency of polygraph testing in all Polish districts, the referral source of testing and the type of crime cases in which it was used, including information about the time interval between a crime being committed and the testing process.

A range of opportunities of polygraph use in criminal investigation activities is outlined by Superintendent Marek Abramowicz. He specifies its three main applications: to a suspect, to a witness and to verify criminal version from the investigation. Moreover, the author claims that polygraph testing may be used to control the veracity of an informant and his/her future plans for living and to verify if the intention to get a crown witness status is honest.

It is not only criminals who may be tested. In the following chapter, Superintendent Ewa Reczek defines the legal basis of using psychophysiological testing in the police.

The chapter entitled “Difficulties associated with using polygraph testing in hearing of evidence” contains an interpretation of the Polish Supreme Court’s judgment about the situation when the witness’s statement is the only existing evidence of guilt and it is possible to verify it by testing performed by an expert. In such cases this testing should be undertaken. The author of this paper – Superintendent Piotr Herbowski – claims that it also refers to polygraph testing.

The aforementioned presentation, on a new, computerized polygraph named DIANA 01, is placed in the penultimate chapter. Pictures show software options of the apparatus and its components.
The last chapter, written by Superintendent Iwona Klonowska-Senderska and entitled “Polygraph testing as an element of candidate selection for a chosen group of positions in the police”, discusses the legal basis of a specialist course for future polygraphers. The author claims that the course is not well prepared and too short to provide students with even basic knowledge on the subject. This book can be strongly recommended not only for those who were unable to participate in the symposium, but also for all interested in the opportunities of using polygraph testing in criminal cases and recruitment for the police. The papers described above discuss both theoretical issues and potential difficulties during polygraph testing. Certainly, this is a valuable source of knowledge, which may help to understand the most important aspects of detecting deception from the professional point of view.

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