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в изданиях НИЦ "Социосфера"



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UDC 613.2

SELF-MEDICATION AS A PROBLEM OF MODERN MEDICINE

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Abstract. The pace and conditions of modern life lead to the need to introduce new technologies into the work of a doctor that would save time for both medical workers and patients. Telemedicine and medical information systems are gradually being integrated into practical healthcare. But, despite this, there is still such a problem as self-medication. Patients are trying to independently diagnose themselves and prescribe treatment based on the information material of the Internet. However, the availability of medical information in the Internet space is becoming one of the main reasons for the global increase in self-medication in modern society.

Keywords: Internet space; self-medication; lifestyle.

With the growth of public culture and the spread of medical knowledge, the population begins to better understand many aspects related to health. People are gradually realizing the importance of preserving their own health, as well as the prevention of various diseases. In the world, millions of people resort to self-medication every day. This includes over-the-counter medicines (drugs) and traditional medicine.

Most patients do not think about the risk of using medicines without a doctor's appointment. According to WHO, mortality from side effects of medicines is on the 5th place in the world after cardiovascular diseases, oncopathology, diseases of the respiratory system and injuries. At first glance, self-medication is something harmless, but in fact it poses a huge danger to the population [1, p. 47; 2; 3].

It is worth noting that there is such a thing as responsible self-medication. It means a rational approach to choosing medications for self-treatment or prevention of

mild disorders when the need for professional medical care is impractical. Responsible self-medication is especially relevant for the Russian economy, as international studies note that the rational use of over-the-counter medications that relieve acute symptoms reduces the number of trips to general practitioners and ambulance calls by 40 % and 50 %, respectively.

The purpose of the study: to study the prevalence of self-medication; to identify the most significant links in the problem of self-medication and possible options for their improvement.

Tasks:

- 1) to assess the prevalence of self-medication;
- 2) identify possible causes of the prevalence of self-medication;
- 3) analyze the international experience on the introduction of responsible self-treatment.

Today in the Russian Federation, up to 70 % of drugs are freely available over-the-counter [3].

To conduct the study, a sociological method was used – a survey of residents of Saransk and the Republic of Mordovia (111 respondents) using a questionnaire (11 questions). The respondents – 63.1 % – were women and 36.9 % – men. The population of different age groups was surveyed: 55.9 % under 25, 36 % from 25 to 50, 8.1 % from 51 and older. Approximately an equal number of students and employees passed the survey, 46.8 % and 44.1 %, respectively. In retirement – 4.5 %.

It turned out that 79.1 % of the population is self-medicating. Of these, men – 68.3 %, women – 86.7 %, i.e. women self-medicate a little more often. It is curious that the people who passed the survey estimate their level of knowledge about medicines at: high level – 16.2 %, average level – 50.5 %, low level – 33.3 %. To the question: "Why do you resort to self-medication?", respondents answered as follows: it is difficult to get an appointment with a doctor – 52.3 %, the need for monetary expenses – 26.1 %, follow the example of friends – 22.5 %, distrust of the doctor – 20.7 %, believes that they know their body best – 12.6 %, other options – 2.7 %.

These indicators tell us about some problems of domestic and, in particular, Mordovian healthcare. More than half of the respondents cannot attend a doctor's appointment. This is due to a decrease in the availability of medical care, long queues in polyclinics and a decrease in the number of specialists.

More than a quarter of respondents noted that the possibility of financial costs is an important reason for their irresponsible attitude to what is rightfully considered priceless, to their own health. This tells us about the low financial situation of at least a quarter of the population.

It is also important to note that most people, when choosing a drug, are guided by the recommendations of a doctor (42.3 %), then by their own opinion (35.1 %) and only then by the advice of a pharmacist (30.6 %). Also,

a considerable part of the population, namely 27.9 %, trusts the advice of relatives.

The main drugs used for self-medication are vitamins and antivirals, 41.4 % of the population turn to them. A little less often use agents acting on the gastrointestinal tract, they are used by 40.5 % of respondents. It is also worth noting that more than a third of respondents use antibiotics, anti-inflammatory and antipyretic agents.

Among the respondents, they feel unwell after using medicines purchased without the advice of a specialist: often – 9.1 %, rarely – 31.8 %. It may seem that these results are not particularly great, but nationwide the number of such people is simply huge.

The survey also revealed that the majority of respondents (43.1 %) spend from 100 to 500 rubles a month on self-medication, 20.0 % spend less than 100 rubles, 19.1 % of respondents spend from 500 to 1000 rubles and, finally, 17.8 % give pharmaceutical companies more than 1000 rubles a month.

In order to avoid all the troubles associated with the uncontrolled use of over-the-counter medicines, it is necessary to introduce into public practice such a concept as responsible self-medication. In order for the concept of responsible self-treatment to successfully exist in the Russian healthcare system, it is necessary to increase the level of literacy of the population, as well as to additionally train pharmacists in the diagnosis and treatment of common acute and chronic diseases.

It is impossible not to mention the importance of creating official Internet resources in which the population will be able to find out verified information about the diagnosis and treatment of lung diseases, as well as a list of permissible over-the-counter medicines for them. In order for people to form a stable tendency to responsible self-medication, it is necessary to teach children to this from early childhood. It is also necessary to create programs that increase the level of medical literacy of the population as a whole, since it has been proven that the lower it is, the worse the state of health of the popu-

lation and the higher the percentage of hospitalizations.

It would be nice to use innovative technologies in solving this issue. Almost every person in the modern world has a smartphone or tablet. By creating certain virtual programs that reflect individual health indicators, give various recommendations, and motivate you to exercise, you can raise responsible self-medication to a completely different level.

Also, for a more successful implementation of this concept, it is necessary to create, with the help of representatives of the main therapeutic specialties, methodological recommendations with clear and understandable algorithms for self-diagnosis and self-treatment of the most common nosologies.

It is also important that a huge number of diseases in adults are the result of bad habits acquired at puberty. Accordingly, it is necessary to carry out more successful work to attract children and adolescents from an early age to a healthy lifestyle and sports. This activity will not only launch a rational approach to health among young people, but will also protect them from terrible diseases in the future.

Thus, for a more successful implementation of responsible self-treatment and the widest involvement of patients, a large-scale program is needed, with the participation of

the state, the healthcare system, education, and the media, aimed at forming a healthy lifestyle among the population, responsibility for their health and the health of their loved ones, as well as the elimination of mild ailments and chronic diseases using acquired knowledge and skills.

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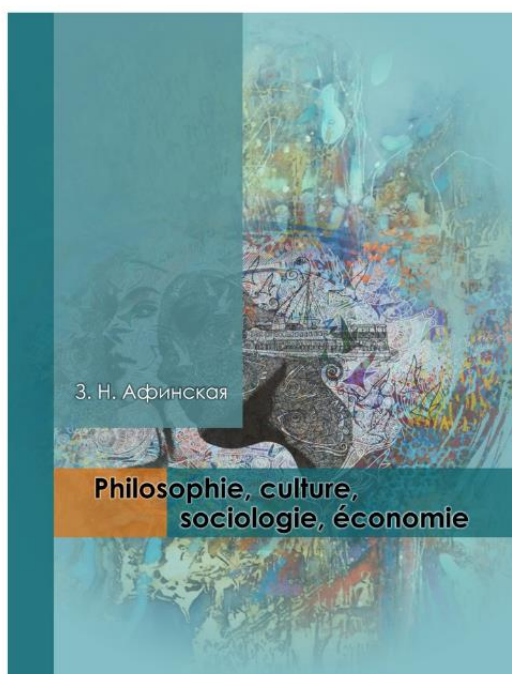
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