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THE ISSUE OF PALLIATIVE MEDICINE IN UKRAINE

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As of today, the issue of palliative medicine is very widespread in Ukraine. Since there is currently no accurate data on the number of wounded and crippled people, we can only guess what awaits us after victory. Namely, how many people will need care, rehabilitation, and psychological support. Guided by the available data, we can conduct an analysis of the state of palliative care before the start of a full-scale invasion and draw conclusions about what should be worked on and what should be strengthened.

The peculiarities of the medical and demographic situation in Ukraine during the last decades are the rapid aging of the population, a high level of morbidity and mortality from oncological and severe sequels of chronic non-infectious diseases, a significant spread of HIV infection/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, the consequences of an accident in Chernobyl, etc.

But unfortunately, Ukrainians struggle not only with diseases. In 2014 a significant number of disabled and incurable patients appeared in Ukraine from among those wounded in the anti-terrorist operation zone. This leads to one of the highest mortality rates in the world. Since the beginning of hostilities in Donbas 29,500–33,500 people have been injured including 7,000 to 9,000 civilians, 9,700–10,700 Ukrainian military personnel, and 12,700–13,700 militants.

According to data in Ukraine, almost 600,000 people need quality palliative care every year. If we add to this the families of patients, this indicator can already reach more than 1,200,000 people annually. Even before the beginning of a large-scale war, scientists assumed that in the next 10–15 years, the need for palliative care is expected to grow by an average of 20% [1], how much the need will grow now no one can say at once.

It should be added that the above-mentioned and other incurable diseases - especially in the decompensated and terminal stages - are accompanied by pain syndrome and other severe disorders of vital activity causing significant physical and mental suffering, reducing the quality of life for patients and their family.

This requires creating and developing an accessible and effective system of palliative and hospice care for the population in Ukraine. An important factor in determining the urgent need for palliative and hospice care can be seen as since

2014 there is an increasing number of patients who struggle with severe consequences from injuries and are forced to live with acquired mental illnesses. This is almost 35% of the total number of victims in the Anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine. Unfortunately, the development of a network of palliative care institutions in the country lags significantly behind the demand. Currently, there are very few facilities that can be identified as hospices and minimal palliative care units with around 850 beds available for use. However, the minimum requirement is 4,500 beds.

Ukraine is a civilized country where palliative care is mandatory for palliative patients. However, it has its own problems, the main of which is insufficient funding and an imperfect regulatory and imperfect legal framework. All other problems in the form of missing medicines and lack of understanding among the population follow from this. The last of the listed problems can be solved by introducing mandatory information for people in matters related to the provision of medical care, including palliative medicine.[2]

From 01/04/2020 palliative care was included in the Medical Guarantee Program. Based on the above, we can conclude that many tasks and challenges await palliative care in Ukraine. But we all see and understand how great the potential of our state is, and we don't just believe, but know that development and success await us in all areas in caring for and helping all those who defended our country's freedom.

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