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DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC MEDICAL SERVICE IN UKRAINE

It is common knowledge that the public medical service (public health system) started in different countries in different historical periods, but as a rule, this process took place under the conditions of bourgeois society formation.

The development of public medical system in Russia as a historic phenomenon was influenced by the surge of the revolutionary situation at th eend of the 50th — beginning of the 60th of the 19th century. That period witnessed the transition of the nation to the capitalist economy.

But the sources of the public medicine in Russia can be traced as far back as the middle of the XVIIIth century when under the impact of the M.V. Lomonosov's ideas amidst such outstanding figures in the field of medicine of our country as N.M. Maksimovich-Ambodick, S.G. Zybelin, I.E. Dyadkovsky, D.S. Samoylovich, E.O. Mukhin etc. there was realized the necessity to draw wide sections of the public to work on the improvement of medical aid to the population.

At the turn of this century, characteristic and original forms of the Russian public medicine were represented by medical periodicals of a new democratic type, associations of doctors, set up in vaious Russian povinces, initiation of regular doctors congresses and other forms of public activities, aimed at the improvement of public health system.

All these manifestations of the public-medical activities, including congresses of the Russian doctors in memory of N.I. Pirogov (headed by distinguished figures) in sphere of the public medicine N.V. Sklifosovsky, F.F. Erisman, E.A. Osipov, S.S. Korsakov etc. laid the foundation for unification of doctors and made it possible to develop the most rational for its time, and characteristic only of our country such form of providing medical aid to the population which is known as zemstvo medicine. And that was precisely the form of medical care which most fully reflected the features of the Russian public medical system of the period of capitalism development.

It is worth mentioning here, that zemstvo « self-government » introduced in 1864 in some Russian provinces after the abolition of serfdom was rather limited. To use Lenin's words, zemstvo reform « was one of those concessions, which had been snatched from the autocratic government by a surge of the public agitation and revolutionary onslaught ».

Zemtsvo self-government was headed by landlords-nobility, who were in reality not concerned with the allocation of funds for the development of the system of medical aid to the population.

Nevertheless, even under such trying conditions the progressive scientists of

the public medicine did their best to improve the effectiveness of the medical assistance, particularly to peasants, who were practically deprived of any medical care.

The social and economic conditions which arose in the country urged the doctors to formulate and solve the important problms of organizing medical aid to the population.

The majority of representatives of the public medicine suggested that medical aid to the rural population was provided by doctors heading the district hospital, and not by doctors' assistants. This medical care, and that principle later won ciple of ensuring population with medical care, and that principle later won recognition throughout the world. And not without reason the hygienic committee of the League of Nations in 1934 found it possible to recommend to other countries to introduce the medical district as an organization form of medical aid to the rural population.

One of the characteristic features of the development of zemstvo medical system in Russia was the beginning of doctors' specialization. Surgery was the first to become a separate speciality, as the importance of it for the rural population was proved by N.I. Pirogov who personally practised as a surgeon for many years in the countryside.

The set-up of the therapeutic aid in the zemstvo medicine was followed by the organization of the sanitary system. Both therapeutic and sanitation systems in different provinces varied as to their effectiveness, being dependent on the level of the economic development, political views of the zemstvo bosses, and the initiative and persistence of doctors.

In the zemstvo provinces of the Ukraine (first of all in the Poltava, Kharkov, Kherson, Ekaterinoslav provinces) where medical care was delivered by a number of progressive doctors, the public medical system manifested certain development.

There were set up zemstvo sanitary organizations which played the leading role in raising numerous urgent problems of the public hygiene and sanitation system.

The medical care and nourishment stations, suggested first by the sanitary doctors of the Kherson province (after the initiative of N.I. Tezyakov), which were organized in the areas of gatherings of crowds of the seasonal farm labourers, played a positive role in the fight against infectious diseases in the Southern provinces of the Ukraine. These stations served as a model for the creation of similar stations in other provinces of the country.

The development of the medical and sanitary activity was also promoted by the profound study of the conditions of toil and everyday life of the farm labourers, which was carried out by a group of doctors of the Kherson sanitary organization (M.S. Uvarov, N.I. Tezyakov, P.F. Kudryavtsev etc.). Of great importance were also socio-hygienic, sanitary and statistical reports on the health status investigations of various categories of the Ukrainian population (S.N. Igumnov, A.V. Korchak-Chepurkovsky etc.). The findings of the above research allowed to reveal the social roots of the prevalent pathology and to outline certain measures on the sanitation of the conditions of the peasants' everyday life.

Another urgent task facing the medical world was the necessity to elaborate sanitary-antiepidemic measures, as the territory of the Ukraine continuously became the scene of the servere epidemics of such diseases as plague, cholera, parasitogenic fevers, pox, malaria, pediatric infections. But the fight against epidemics as a rule proved to be ineffective as it neglected the social causes of the morbidity of the overwhelming majority of the population.

The zemstvo doctors considered it to be their task of primary importance to

spread the hygienic ideas. These doctors were among the first to light the torch of knowledge amidst common people.

Zemstvo medical organization of the Kharkov, Kherson, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav and other provinces regularly convened provincial conferences of doctors, published medical and sanitary reviews and surveys, covering the population morbidity as well as medical and hygienic measures of sanitation character.

Especially, one has to distinguish such a weekly journal as « Zemskij vrach » (Zemstvo doctor), published in the 80-90th years of the 19th century in two provincial centres of the Ukraine — namely in Chernigov and Poltava (after the initiative of E.V. Svyatlovsky).

This journal being a publication of the progressive medical community, widely elucidated the problem facing the public health system and ways of improvement of population medical care.

Doctors' associations in Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa and other big Ukrainian cities actively participated in public activities. Besides carrying out scientific discussions of the medical problms they were also engaged in organizing free hospitals, nurseries and consultative stations for the poorest strata of the population.

Despite all the difficulties arising from the lack of concern on the part of the tsarist authorities with the people's health, the Ukrainian zemstvo medical system managed to achieve certain successes in the development of the effectiveness of the medical aid to the rural population.

A number of provincial and district hospitals as well as medical stations headed by doctors' assistants, were constructed on money allocated by zemstvos. The development of the zemstvo health system resulted in decrease of number of residents per one medical district from 34 thousand in 1890 to 23,5 thousand in 1912. The 40 year-long activities of zemstvos in the Ukrainian provinces led to 6 fold increase of doctors' number. However this figure was too small to meet the demands of that time.

In general, under the conditions of the tsarist Russia the efforts of the progressive medical community could not substantially influence the health status of the population, though a number of public medicine figure because their selfless labour and devoted service to the doctor's duty gained the deepest respect amidst people.

The Soviet public health system adopting and developing the best traditions of the Russian prerevolutionary public medicine raised the problems of the people's health to the level of the primary state concern. In the Soviet Union health of people has become the national wealth.

For the first time in its history the public medicine enjoys the support of the broad masses of people, and is being developed in harmonious concord with the tasks of the socialist public health system. The general public takes an active part in tackling the problems concerning improvement of the conditions of work and everyday life, prevention of diseases, health protection of mother and child and so on. Permanent committees of the local authorities, and trade unions discuss and handle the problems of the protection of labour and improvement of working conditions, control the fulfillment of the appropriate labour laws, and put into practice the sanitary measures. The public and medical activities rely upon the active support of all government departments and institutions of the national economy, which was reflected in the Soviet Union legislation on the protection of public health.

One of the forms of the public medicine in the URSS which enjoys a wide spread support is the humane activity of the Red Cross Society.

Therefore, the system of the public medicine in the socialist society is provided with all the conditions for all-round comprehensive development.