

The problems of rendering psychological assistance to oncological patients in the region of Russian Federation

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Summary. Among the most urgent problems of our time, oncological diseases occupy a special place. When the diagnosis sounds like a sentence, when people need highly qualified and expensive help, the state can not stay away. And one of the types of social security here is qualified medical psychological assistance. *The aim of the article:* Is to study various aspects of psychological care for cancer patients in the Saratov region. *Methodological basis:* The methods used are both empirical (analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, systematization), and theoretical (methods of constructing and researching the object of research and methods of constructing and justifying theoretical knowledge) levels. *Results:* The dynamics and prevalence of people who need psychological help in connection with the diagnosis of cancer is shown. The article considers the history of medical care for cancer patients in the Saratov region, the main forms of providing psychological assistance to cancer-patients in the region. *Conclusions:* Currently, there is a shortage of cancer-psychologists in the region, it is necessary to provide psychological support for cancer -psychologists to persons who underwent preventive operations in connection with the high probability of hereditary cancer within the framework of MHI.

Key words: oncological patients, cancer, psychological help, Russian Federation, Hospice, Saratov region, oncopsychologists, support, social security

President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin in the annual Address as one of the priority areas of state policy called the fight against oncological diseases. Indeed, in Russia, almost everyone faced oncology among their friends or relatives. Particularly interesting is the state of the problem and the activities carried out at the regional level.

Currently, the Saratov region is the 29th in the Russian Federation and the 7th in the Volga Federal District by the number of cancer patients. In 2017, according to the chief oncologist of the region Vladimir Semenchenya, for the first time cancer was detected in 11 thousand people, which is 300 more people than last year. Statistics of the dynamics of life expectancy in Russia do testify to the growth of these indicators,

but these data are not proportional to the growth of cancer among the population. It should be noted that the number of detected oncological diseases is increasing in other regions (1).

I would like to draw special attention to the provision of psychological assistance on the basis of the Regional Oncology Dispensary.

According to Art. 4 FZ N 323-FZ "On the fundamentals of protecting the health of citizens in the Russian Federation", the priority of the patient's interests in the provision of medical care is the most important principle for ensuring the protection of public health. A medical psychologist is a subject whose activities are necessary in the field of oncology. From the quality of the provision of psychological assistance, the

qualification of a medical psychologist, many factors depend: the course of the disease, the condition of the patient and his family members, etc. (2).

In general, psychological care in oncology is one of the most important types of social security for cancer patients and their relatives. Accompanied by the oncologist, in one form or another, 90% of patients and up to 40% of those close to them need. The defining thing here is that the very diagnosis of «cancer» for both patients and their family members often sounds like a sentence. Typical in these cases, the suddenness of the detection of the disease, a dramatically changed situation: he was healthy, became deadly sick. This causes a feeling of confusion, impasse, devaluation of the old life experience.

The importance of medical psychological assistance to cancer patients and their relatives is noted at the international level. June 7, 2016 in Bishkek adopted a decision of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS «On the Concept of Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the field of counteracting cancer». One of the main areas of cooperation in the field of prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of oncological diseases is cooperation in the training, retraining and professional development of specialists in the field of medical psychology. Also, among the main goals, the formation of a relation to oncological diseases as curable diseases among the population, as well as ensuring the principles of continuity in the implementation of medical, psychological and social rehabilitation of patients with oncological diseases is noted.

Among the often diagnosed disorders, anxious-phobic, panic and depressive conditions, as well as neurasthenia and post-traumatic stress disorders, are revealed in patients.

The principle of priority of the patient's interests is to provide medical care to the patient, taking into account the patient's desire, his physical condition, while observing the cultural and religious traditions of the patient, if possible. And this becomes especially urgent when providing psychological assistance to cancer patients (3).

In the Saratov region, the psychological support of cancer patients and their families began to develop recently. Only in 2015, on the basis of the Regional On-

cology Dispensary, a psychological service was established. At the same time, the number of people seeking psychological help is only increasing. So, in 2017, in comparison with the previous year, the number of consultations of a psychologist doubled, amounting to 485 consultations. As of April 2018, there are three oncopologists working in the Saratov region. At first glance, this is not much. However, considering that the number of oncopologists in the country is 210 people, the region's indicators look quite optimistic.

Such an increase in the need for psychological care specialists explain not only with the increase in the number of cancer patients. There are two main factors that determine the increased and increasing need for psychological assistance:

- 1) recognition by doctors of an interdisciplinary approach in the treatment of cancer. Attention not only to the physical, but also the psychological state of the patient helps to activate the inner potential of the person and increase the chances of improving and stabilizing the process;

- 2) people's understanding that the diagnosis of oncological pathology and the diagnosis is a serious psychogeny for the patients themselves and for their families. Oncological disease consists of a series of psychotraumatic events occurring at different phases of the disease, so recourse to psychological help is a more natural process in practice.

Currently in the Saratov region, psychological assistance is provided in the following forms:

- 1) the medical psychologist provides psychological assistance to oncological patients and their relatives (with their written consent) in inpatient and outpatient settings according to the direction of the doctor of the polyclinic or hospital or by the method of selection by the psychologist himself in the departments;

- 2) psychological rehabilitation assistance to patients is provided on the basis of the interaction of doctors - oncologists, radiologist doctors, surgeons, who refer patients to a consultation with a medical psychologist. Psychological rehabilitation is provided using modern methods of psychodiagnostics, psychological counseling and psychological correction and non-drug therapy.

- 3) daily (on weekdays) reception of patients in the office of a medical psychologist is carried out. For each

patient a psychological examination card is drawn up, indicating the results of the conducted psychodiagnostics and recommendations. For the patients of the dispensary, a hot-line telephone is available on weekdays on a weekly basis to contact a psychologist.

An important point is the rendering of a psychologist specifically non-pharmacological assistance, since the patient's body is already weakened by the influence of drugs and methods of treatment (chemotherapy, radiation therapy, etc.).

A special place in the work of a medical psychologist is occupied by corrective psychotherapy in the departments of the dispensary's hospital. At the pre-operative stage, individual therapy of fear of surgical treatment and anesthesia is carried out with patients using short-term (focus) psychotherapy, rational psychotherapy and trance techniques.

In the postoperative period, individual and group work is carried out using different directions of art therapy, rational and positive and relaxation psychotherapy. Diagnostics and individual correction of attitude to illness and health are necessarily carried out, when non-rational types are identified.

Also in the work with patients, the Simontonov program is applied. This psychotherapeutic program is the most effective, known and recognized in oncopsychology. A method based on visualization of the process of recovery, self-suggestion and introspection.

The goal of the psycho-correctional work of the psychologist is aimed at harmonizing the emotional state of the individual, improving the quality of life of the patient, the social environment (relationships with family and significant people), with the aim of both reducing and preventing social restrictions caused by the oncological disease.

It should be said about the «School of the patient» in the Saratov regional oncological dispensary, where, in particular, the psychologist organizes various classes on various issues of psychological rehabilitation of cancer patients. Psychologists and doctors of the Saratov regional oncology dispensary noted improvement in the psychological state, quality of life and well-being of patients using methods of psychotherapy in their course of treatment.

Psychologists of the oncological dispensary constantly improve their knowledge, participate in the an-

nual congress of oncopsychologists of Russia in Moscow.

We note the shortcomings of the legal regulation of social security in the form of psychological assistance to oncological patients. First of all, the interconnection of certain hereditary factors of cancer development has been discovered in the world practice (4). Accordingly, the effectiveness of planned operations for the removal of suspected dangerous organs and tissues has been proven. So, in the world oncology practice a good effect of preventive operations is shown: for the prevention of ovarian cancer - bilateral salpingo-ovariectomy, which reduces morbidity and mortality from breast and ovarian cancer. Such an operation is shown to carriers of mutations in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes at the end of the reproductive period (the optimal age is 35 to 40 years) (5). However, these patients are not recognized as cancer patients, respectively, in addition to the fact that these operations can only be carried out on a fee basis because they are not included in the Program of State Guarantees of Free Medical Assistance to Citizens. These patients are deprived of the help of oncopsychologists within the framework of CHI. At the same time, these planned operations injure the patient's psyche, these patients need qualified help of narrow-minded medical psychologists.

Another problem is the lack of narrow specialists. Oncopsychologist for today a rare specialty. Most psychological methods of supporting patients in general are fairly well known. In the Saratov region, currently there is a shortage of these specialists, and this despite the availability of a medical university in the region.

Among the shortcomings of the provision of psychological assistance in the Saratov region, one can note the absence of a hospice. These institutions provide specialized psychological and spiritual help not only to incurable patients of oncological, but also therapeutic, neurological, pediatric profile with the aim of providing them with palliative care, psychosocial rehabilitation, and psychological and social support for relatives for the period of close and loss. So, the hospice in the Volgograd region, even at the level of the visiting brigade's inspection, includes a medical psychologist in this brigade without fail (6).

The complexity of the device of the psychological service is that, according to the OMS, the patient in

our country can receive only what is prescribed in the standard of medical care. For any disease there is such a standard, developed and signed by the Ministry of Health. But in the standards for oncology there is no such kind of services as «accompaniment of psychologist-psychotherapist».

To summarize, we note that in general, the experience of the Saratov region in providing psychological assistance to cancer patients and their relatives could be used in other regions.

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