

PERCEPTION OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AMONG STUDENTS OF MEDICAL SCHOOLS

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PERCEPCIJA ZDRAVOG NAČINA ŽIVOTA KOD STUDENATA MEDICINSKIH FAKULTETA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Aim: The aim of the present study was to evaluate ideas and motivational attitudes of medical school students towards a healthy lifestyle and its components. **Methods:** The study was conducted from March until August 2017, at the Department of Medical Sociology, Healthcare Economics and Health Insurance and at N.A. Semashko Public Health and Healthcare Department, I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University. We ran a medical and sociological survey in 984 randomly selected students from eight Russian medical universities. **Results:** The article presents the results of the medical and sociological study aimed at assessing the ideas and motivational attitudes of medical students towards healthy lifestyle and its elements. Our research showed that students of medical schools, while recognizing the importance of preserving their own health, are still largely committed to an unhealthy lifestyle, secondly, they refuse sports activities even more often, and, thirdly, they prove not to be active enough when it comes to disease prevention and health preservation. **Conclusion:** Taking into consideration the obtained results, healthy lifestyle among students of medical schools is an exception rather than common practice.

Keywords: health, healthy lifestyle, medical students, motivation

SAŽETAK

Uvod/cilj: Cilj ove studije je da proceni ideje i motivacione stavove studenata medicinskih fakulteta prema zdravom načinu života i njegovim smernicama. **Studija** je izvedena u periodu od marta do avgusta 2017. godine na katedri za medicinsku sociologiju, ekonomiku zdravstva i zdravstveno osiguranje i na N.A. Semashko katedri za javno zdravlje i zdravstvenu zaštitu, I.M. Sechenov Prvog moskovskog državnog medicinskog univerziteta. Sproveli smo medicinsku i sociološku anketu na 984 slučajno odabranih studenata sa osam medicinskih univerziteta u Rusiji. **Rezultati:** Ovaj rad predstavlja rezultate medicinske i sociološke studije koja je imala za cilj da proceni ideje i motivacione stavove studentata medicine prema zdravom načinu života i njegovim principima. Naše istraživanje je pokazalo da studenti medicinskih fakulteta, bez obzira što priznaju važnost očuvanja svog zdravlja, još uvek vode nezdrav način života, odbijaju da se bave sportskim aktivnostima i nisu dovoljno aktivni što se tiče prevencije bolesti i očuvanja zdravlja. **Zaključak:** Uzimajući u obzir dobijene rezultate, zdrav način života među studentima medicinskih fakulteta je više izuzetak nego uobičajena praksa.

Ključne reči: zdravlje, zdrav način života, studenti medicine, motivacija



INTRODUCTION

The processes of globalization and integration in the modern world have a clear effect on the national educational system both at the macro-level and the level of particular institutions and individuals. As noted by Maslow in his major treatise, in a new, dynamically changing socio-historical situation: "We need a different type of person capable of living in a continuously changing environment"(1). At the moment, this requirement appears especially relevant to medical professionals.

Reshetnikov AV pointed out the high dynamics of changes in health professions - related not only to the economic transformation of the health system, but also to social changes, as well as changes in the attitude to health and disease (2). Under these conditions, medical universities are increasingly focused on creating the systems aimed at training not merely knowledgeable and skilful professionals but also personalities capable of effectively adapting to the dynamically changing social environment (3-7).

Shchepin pointed out that personnel is the most significant and valuable component of the healthcare system, especially in the state and municipal institutions (8). That is why in medical universities, considerable attention is paid to the formation of health-preserving environment, promotion of healthy lifestyles and implementation of measures to improve health of future medical professionals. However, the effective implementation of these measures requires internal readiness of young people to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The objective of the present study was to evaluate ideas and motivational attitudes of medical school students towards a healthy lifestyle and its components.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

The study was conducted from March until August 2017, at the Department of Medical Sociology, Healthcare Economics and Health Insurance and N.A.Semashko Public Health and Healthcare Department, I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Sechenov University). We ran a medical and sociological survey in 984 randomly selected students from eight Russian medical universities.

For studying of representations and motivational attitudes of students of medical higher education institutions concerning a healthy lifestyle and its components in March-August 2017, at the Department of Medical Sociology, Healthcare Economics and Health Insurance (IPE) together with N.A.Semashko Public Health and Healthcare Department, Sechenov University conducted a medico-sociological survey, which was attended by 984 students of eight medical universities: V.I. Razumovsky Saratov State Medical University (SSMU – Saratov, Russia), Sechenov University (FMSMU – Moscow, Russia), Kazan State Medical University (KSMU – Kazan, Russia), N.N. Burdenko Voronezh State Medical Academy (VSMA – Voronezh, Russia),

Rostov State Medical University (RostSMU – Rostov, Russia), Volgograd State Medical University (VolgSMU – Volgograd, Russia), Krasnoyarsk State Medical University named after V. F. Voyno-Yasenetsky (Krasnoyarsk, Russia), I.P. Pavlov Ryazan State Medical University (RyazSMU – Ryazan, Russia).

An anonymous survey was chosen as a research method. The selection of participants was performed using a random sampling technique. The data processing was performed using SPSS Statistics 19 package.

Among the participants of the study, there were 68% of women and 32% of men. The age of respondents was expected to be in the range of 18-23 years. The age distribution of the survey participants was in line with the distribution of respondents' years of training, and was represented mainly by equivalent groups, with a slight decrease in the share of the senior course objectively explained by the movement of the population structure. The survey was attended by students of all faculties (in accordance with the proportions of the sample).

More than half of the respondents (59.5%) received higher education in medical universities on a state-funded basis, and 40.5% were self-funded on a contractual basis. It should be noted that among the surveyed university students, 11.3% had already had a degree from medical colleges (equivalent to nursing schools).

At the time of the survey, 7.1% and 19.6% of respondents were married and cohabited, respectively; 70.6% of respondents had no spouse (a partner); 3.3% had children; 2.7% refused to answer the question about the marital status.

According to the responses, 15.8% of participants had a subsistence level of income, with a comparable variability of self-assessment of their own financial situation (the most frequent answers were "living beyond poverty, not enough money even for food", "only enough money for food", "normal income, but constantly have to save up"). One respondent out of five (19.6%) indicated the amount of monthly per capita income fell in the range from 11 to 20 thousand rubles (155-290 eur). Other 10.6% of students reported the income amounting to 21-30 thousand roubles per family member per month (around 300-430 euro). Only 10.3% of respondents whose income exceeded 30 thousand rubles (430 euro) per one family member per month could be attributed to the conditional middle class in terms of welfare. Other 22.0% refused to discuss the financial situation of their family, and 21.7% of respondents could not decide on the answer to this question.

According to the self-rating, 42.5% of respondents "live normally, but have to save up", another third of respondents (33.2%) say that their available income is sufficient for covering the needs, and 15% of respondents consider that they "have enough funds to live well". However, 6.8% of respondents, according to their own estimates, live beyond the



poverty line and are forced to save even on food. In addition, 2.5% of students interviewed could not decide on the answer.

Most of the respondents (67.5%) did not have their own housing and lived in the apartment of relatives (29%), rented accommodation (28.9%) or university dormitory (9.6%); 32.5% of students owned a flat or a house.

RESULTS

The conducted medical and sociological research allowed to obtain an idea of the basic motivational attitudes of students of medical schools towards healthy lifestyles and their components, as well as to obtain the data on the most common problems of youth related to preservation and promotion of their health.

Awareness of respondents about the principles of healthy lifestyle

The survey demonstrated that healthy lifestyle in students, was associated predominantly with the physical activity and sports, and the organization of proper nutrition and good health ("a healthy body makes a healthy spirit") (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Respondents' associations with the term "Healthy lifestyle" (% , N=974)



Interestingly, among the most important components of a healthy lifestyle, students named the active lifestyle (88.1%), proper nutrition (84.7%), kicking bad habits (63.7%), compliance with the regime of work and rest (36.5%), compliance with the regime of the day (26.4%), emotion management, stress resilience (29.3%), acclimatization training (water quenching) (9.6%), intellectual development (17.1%), spiritual self-improvement (12.4%).

In addition, 89.1% of students in medical schools believe that a healthy lifestyle requires, first and foremost, willpower and patience. Also, to maintain a healthy lifestyle, in the opinion of students, the availability of free time (49.4%), financial opportunities (24.2%), motivation (22.1%) and understanding and support of close people (23.2%) are important.

In connection with the above, a logical question arises – which factors can contribute to the involvement of young people in healthy lifestyles? According to the majority of the

survey participants (84.2%) who stated their opinion in the free fields of the questionnaire, the leading factor in the introduction to a healthy lifestyle was the presence of a person's internal motivation to preserve and strengthen their health. The view of 71.9% of the surveyed medical students is that family traditions of healthy lifestyles help promote the same in younger generations; while 31.4% of respondents suggested "the implementation of active state policy to increase the prestige and promote healthy lifestyle, as well as creating conditions for strengthening the health of citizens". More than a third of respondents (35.4%) believe that a positive example of an authoritative person is important for young people to lead a healthy lifestyle, and 17.2% believe that such an authority can be represented by famous people (actors, artists, media persons) who can inspire fans with their example.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to assess whether their lifestyle complies with the basic principles of a healthy lifestyle. In accordance with the received data, only one third of students (35.4%) believe they lead a healthy lifestyle. More than half of respondents (53.0%) gave the answer "my way of life not entirely consistent with the principles of healthy lifestyle", and 11.6% admitted that their way of life was radically opposite to the principles of a healthy lifestyle.

The majority of participants (53.9%) who stick to a healthy lifestyle, are students of KSMU (Krasnoyarsk). They are followed by KSMU, where 42.9% of students adhere to the healthy lifestyle (HLS) principles. The third place belongs to RyazSMU (Ryazan), where one third of students (34.3%) who participated in the survey, considered themselves to be leading a healthy lifestyle.

Notably, three quarters of the surveyed students (75.4%) would like to lead a healthier lifestyle in the future, but for a number of reasons, they can not adhere to the principles of HLS currently, while 4.7% do not consider it necessary to adhere to a healthy lifestyle and do not plan to do so. Another 19.9% found it difficult to answer.

As shown by the survey data, the main reason for non-adherence among students is the high workload of education / job (73.2%). In addition, one in four respondents (23.1%) acknowledges that HLS cannot be managed simply due to the lack of finances to ensure a healthy diet. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of respondents (65% in total) frankly acknowledges that only their own inertia and internal reluctance (laziness, lack of willpower, motivation) prevent them from properly maintaining and strengthening their own health – and it must be recognized that the formation of motivation for a healthy lifestyle among students in this category of respondents will be one of the most difficult tasks. In addition, 11.6% of students admitted that their "busy personal life" hindered organising the proper nutrition, and 7.8% of respondents indicated that their circle of communication "would not understand the commitment to a healthy lifestyle." Other 3.2% are reluctant to give up their bad habits – which is certainly incompatible with the principles of a healthy lifestyle.



The involvement of medical students in sports

The most important component of a healthy lifestyle for people of any age category is the physical activity (9). Clearly, the health potential of exercise, is in the first place based on the properly organized and balanced physical activity. The majority of respondents (90.2%) agree with the statement that sports and physical education are essential for the promotion and preservation of human health.

At the same time, among the main results for sports, the respondents emphasised the positive impact of physical activity on the physical (88.4%) and mental development (31.1%), improvement in the appearance (80.9%), facilitating the stress relief (72.4%) and harmonization of the emotional sphere (38.9%), improving the performance (55.7%) and maintaining a high level of activity for a long time (48.3%), strengthening the reputation of young people involved in sports (16%), helping young professionals to achieve a higher qualification in their job (12.2%), enhancing the willpower and discipline (0.5%). However, 2.9% of young people consider sports to be a waste of time.

It is important to note that a lot is being done in Russia for the development of physical activity-based sports. Championships and international competitions, student Universiades, sports tournaments at the Federal and regional levels are held regularly. Professional and semi-professional sports clubs are actively reviving in the cities, and domestic sports are developing. It is of note that more than half of the respondents (57%) are interested in sports events in our country, and other 4.5% of students are interested in these activities "from time to time". However, 26.8% of the survey participants are indifferent to these events, and 11.7% found it difficult to answer.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle requires a personal activity and attitude, which makes it important to boost interest among the university students in the opportunity to engage in sports. Among the surveyed students, 64.4% indicated that they had engaged in sports prior to entering the University, while the average duration was more than 5 years (5.1 years). Besides, 19.9% of respondents had a sports category and 24% took part in sports competitions.

Most of the medical students (61.2%) indicated that they had joined sports independently, 18.2% had been referred to sports classes by their parents, and one in ten (10.5%) had come to sport classes "along with a friend". A tenth (10.1%) of the students who participated in the survey were unable to decide on the answer.

The respondents' enthusiasm for sports was primarily facilitated by the motivation to improve their health (63.4%) and appearance (56.3%). In addition, 41% of respondents liked the aesthetics, culture, traditions adopted in the sport they were engaged in, and another 28.3% were attracted by the environment and community. A third (31.7%) of the survey participants indicated that they wanted to increase self-

confidence through sports. For every fifth respondent, it was important to become a professional in this sport (20.4%), and 5.8% of respondents counted on receiving the additional income as a result of sports activities.

Thus, while obtaining a university degree, students appear to expect sports not only to improve their appearance (53.6%) and health (52.0%), but also to facilitate emotional relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance the mental activity (the total of 58.3% of opinions).

Being a university student, of course, requires the redistribution of time resources in favor of the academic disciplines and greater attention to obtaining the professional skills. In many respects, it is for this reason that only 40.7% of the total number of respondents were able to continue sports training after the start of a term (remember that 64.4% of respondents had been engaged in sports before the enrollment).

Interestingly, the structure of students' interests prior to medical school and after years of training was shown to undergo marked changes. Whereas before the beginning of student life, the major share of hobbies consisted of a highly active sports requiring regular practice (swimming, volleyball, dance, athletics, martial arts), after the admission to the university, sports allowing to schedule classes at a convenient time, such as training in the gym, came out on top of others.

To understand the motivation of students to lead a healthy lifestyle, it is important to clarify the reasons for refusal of youth to engage in sports. As part of the survey, the majority of students (70%) indicated that they could not continue to play sports due to the high workload in education / work. The lack of funding hinders young people from sport for 16.4 per cent of. In addition, 14.2 per cent of respondents indicated that they were not currently involved in sports because they had no desire. In other 9.7% of respondents, what interfered with sports activities was a busy personal life, and 5.3% reported that their family circumstances did not allow for this. Health problems limited sports opportunities for 2.7% of students who participated in the survey. Finally, 1.4% of the respondents admitted that they were "just too lazy".

At the same time, according to the survey, one third of respondents (32.0%) was completely satisfied with the level of their physical activity at the moment, while other 53.5% felt "not completely satisfied", and 14.5% – were categorically dissatisfied with the values of their physical activity.

Education and health are closely interlinked. It is extremely important that the conditions of education and life of students contribute to the preservation and strengthening of their health, and in this regard, the administration of medical Universities pays considerable attention to the formation of health-preserving behavior in future doctors, strengthening of their health and promotion of sports. It should be noted that among those who strive to take care of their health, more than a half (53%) use the opportunities of their university –



for example, 46.6% of respondents indicated that in order to deal with the health issues, they use clinics of their university, 25.8% attend sports facilities at their medical schools, and 1.1% go to the swimming pool. However, almost half of the students (47%) do not use the opportunities provided by their universities for the health improvement.

Complying with the work-rest regime in medical students

An important role in maintaining health is the correct daily routine, which implies keeping up with the regime of work, rest, sleep, and nutrition. The high dynamics of modern life, stress, imbalance of the physical activity and mental stress lead to the chronification of fatigue and exacerbate the disease.

According to the survey, the majority of respondents fail to comply with the regime of the day and harmonize the ratio of work and rest. Thus, only 16.3% of respondents do fully comply with the regime of the day, while 54.2% of respondents admitted that they could not completely comply, and other 29.5% responded that they were absolutely unable to organize the proper regime and schedule. This means that the vast majority of respondents, despite their efforts to comply with the regime of the day, face certain obstacles that prevent them from living up to it.

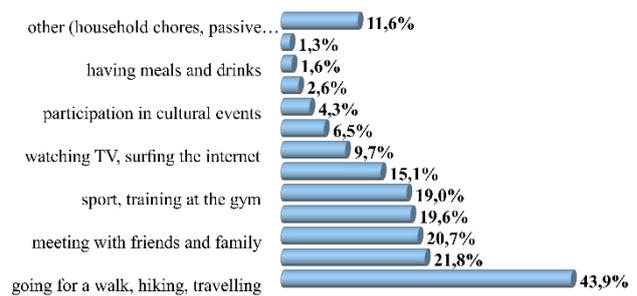
According to the self-report, students associate their unbalanced regimes mainly with high workload at universities/jobs (85/5%). Also, the "urge "to surf the net" (as reported by 31.6%) hinders the harmonious organization of work and rest and daily routine for almost a third of respondents. As one of the obstacles to complying with the regime of the day, a quarter of respondents (25.2%) named "being busy with their hobbies". In addition, 22.6% explained violations of the regime of the day with a busy personal life, and 15.3% of respondents chose the answer "family circumstances", which indicated the fact that in some cases, the rules adopted in the family and the fulfillment of their obligations could cause students –not to comply with the regime of the day (for example, when due to the family circumstances students had to study and prepare for exams in the evenings or at night).

It is notable that the high pressure of workload is exacerbated by the lack of recreation among young people. Despite the different need for sleep in different people, on average, to ensure the normal functioning of the nervous system, it is recommended to sleep for at least eight hours. However, 79.5% of students reported chronic sleep failure – one in five respondents (20.4%) admitted that he/she slept less than five hours a day. Only 20.5% of the survey participants had the opportunity to sleep for at least eight hours a day. At the same time, even among those who sleep formally enough (8 hours or more), only 14.6% consider themselves satisfied with the number of hours of the night rest (i.e. consider the duration of their night sleep as optimal). It can be assumed that this is due to the high level of chronic fatigue and stress. Note that the systematic lack of a full night rest can have an adverse

effect on the health outcomes, performance and progress of students.

Fundamentally important for any young person, including medical students, is the question of spending leisure time. According to the results of the study, 43.9% of the survey participants prefer to spend their leisure time actively (meetings, sports, walking, traveling), but a significant proportion of the rest of the students favours the passive rest (sleep, reading, watching TV, etc.) – which is primarily due to the accumulated fatigue as a result of the high workload (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Preferred ways to spend leisure time among medical students (% , N= 920)



Most often, the cultural leisure of medical students implies going to the cinema, cafes and restaurants – most of the respondents visit these places at least 1-2 times per month. In addition, once or twice a year, students go to the theater, museums and exhibitions. Unexpectedly, 63% of the interviewed medical students have never visited a night club.

At the same time, the best type of recreation according to most of the respondents is that involving the physical activity – 50.8% of the surveyed gave this answer. Supporters of the passive recreation are 37.6% of medical students, and 10.3% of the respondents prefer to alternate leisure with a passive "doing nothing"; 1.3% of respondents found it difficult to answer.

It is not surprising that students find travelling to the countryside as the most affordable kind of recreation: 58% of respondents prefer to spend their free time outside big cities, "in the nature". At the same time, the average values for this type of rest in students amount to 29.6 days a year.

The second most popular option is staying within the territory of the Russian Federation (travelling around Russia): this answer was chosen by 33.3% of respondents. The average duration of this type of vacation for students is 18.7 days. In turn, travelling abroad is available to almost every fourth student (24%), while the average trip abroad is 14 days.

Keeping a healthy diet among medical students

Food is a source of vitality, and a balanced diet and quality of food have a decisive influence on one's health. The



study examined some characteristics of the organization of the diet in respondents.

The responses of medical students who took part in the survey demonstrated their understanding of the following notion: compliance with the diet is one of the most important conditions for a healthy lifestyle. Among the principles of healthy eating known to participants of the study, the majority of respondents (83.6%) pointed out “balanced diet in accordance with energy costs and needs”. More than a half of the respondents (53.8%) believe that in order to ensure a healthy diet, it is necessary to include a large number of vegetables in the diet, and just less than a half of the survey participants (48.6%) are of the opinion that a healthy diet involves the inclusion of more fruit. For 45.1% of respondents, the main principle of healthy eating is the diet diversity. Other 39.7% of medical students consider it necessary to strictly follow the diet. The need to exclude fried food and food containing preservatives from the diet was indicated by the equal number of respondents – 39% respectively, and other 24.4% of respondents spoke in favor of excluding spicy and salty dishes from the diet. “Careful chewing of food” was named as the main condition of a healthy diet by 22.9% of the survey participants. Every fifth (19.5%) respondent considers the refusal to eat after 18.00 to be the fundamental principle of healthy eating. The important principle of healthy eating, in the opinion of 15.8% of the students interviewed, is the exclusion of snacks between the main meals. Those who frankly admitted that they did not know any principles of healthy eating and, accordingly, did not adhere to them, constituted 3.5% of respondents. Only 1.1% of respondents believe that in order to ensure a healthy diet, it is necessary to abandon the intake of sugar and sweets. Compliance with the water balance as the condition of healthy nutrition was mentioned by 0.6% respondents, while “split meals” was considered as the main principle of healthy nutrition by just 0.1% of the respondents.

The data obtained allow us to conclude that medical students who took part in the survey were familiar with the rules of healthy eating and had a notion of a healthy diet. However, only 21.4% of the survey participants did comply with a “proper” diet.

The majority of respondents (78.6%) indicated that they could not set certain meal hours and organized the proper diet due to the high workload at universities (and, in some cases, jobs).

In addition, one of the most significant obstacles to complying with a healthy eating regime was the “lack of financial resources” (35.7%), a much smaller number of respondents named “family circumstances” as the reasons for non-compliance with the diet (6.9%), as well as love for delicious food (1.8%) and “laziness” (1.6%). The curious factor was the “lack of willpower to abandon tasty but harmful products”, which was indicated by 1.4% of respondents.

Only a quarter (25.5%) of students expressed confidence that they adhered to a healthy diet. Other 56.5% of respondents admitted that, despite the desire to comply with the principles of proper nutrition, they could not always resist the harmful food, and 18.0% considered their diet completely unhealthy.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to describe their established diet. According to the obtained data, the daily grocery set of a medical university student includes: vegetables/herbs (57.4%), milk and dairy beverages/cottage cheese (54.3%), bakery products (52.8%), fruits (52.1%), cereals/cereals (40.8%), sweets/butter pastries (40.8%) and poultry meat (35.2%).

At the same time, the diet of the student of medical University includes a large number of bakery products and sweets, which is associated with the risk of extra weight, common disorders of the gastrointestinal tract, and can not be attributed to the category of products suitable for a healthy diet. Fish, for example, is only consumed by students 1-2 times per month at best, which can be linked to the lack of financial resources cited by respondents as one of the reasons that prevented adherence to a healthy diet. Note that 13.7% respondents deliberately refuse sausages, recognizing them as the “harmful” products.

However, 11.4% of students drink alcohol daily or regularly (1-2 times a week). In addition, more than half of respondents (51.4%) occasionally drink the alcoholic beverages. At the same time, more than a third of respondents (35.9%) have said that they never drink alcohol, which is clearly a good indicator.

In general, the obtained data allow to conclude that despite the presence of theoretical knowledge of respondents regarding compliance with the regime of proper nutrition, there is a compelling need to further improve the literacy of students in the field of healthy eating, as well as the organization of time to ensure the maintenance of a healthy regime and diet. It also appears necessary to intensify efforts to increase the personal motivation of medical students to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The prevalence of harmful habits and addictions of different kinds in respondents

One of the principles of a healthy lifestyle is quitting bad habits. According to the obtained data, 79.9% of the surveyed students, in their own opinion, do not have any bad habits. However, among the remaining fifth of the respondents (20.5%), most often, there is a trend of having several bad habits at the same time. So, 15.1% indicated that they are smokers, 7.3% – that they regularly drink the alcoholic beverages, and 2.9% of respondents find harmful their addiction to sweet dishes and fast food.

The debut of smoking occurred in high school (16-17 years) in over half of smokers (51.9%) and 26.7% – that is, one in four nicotine-dependent students – began smoking at



the legal age (18 years and older). In high school (11-15 years), the smoking habit was formed in 17% of smokers. Some students admitted that they started smoking at the age of 7-10 years (2.4%) and even earlier (1.9%).

On average, the expenses of smoking students on cigarettes do not exceed 50 rubles per day – and the financial accessibility contributes to the "preservation" of this abuse in students. The smoking respondents have on average 9-10 cigarettes per day and most often do it in the company of friends.

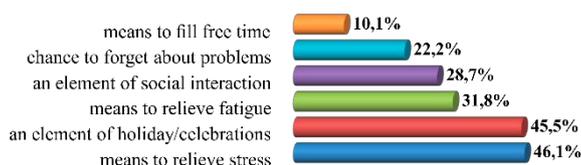
Note that 40.8% recognize that smoking is harmful to health, 34.3% of the smoking respondents consider smoking an unpleasant addiction, and one in four (26.3%) associates this habit with the need for constant financial expenses. In addition, 29.3% of smokers do not like the unpleasant smell of cigarettes. At the same time, for 42.9% of students, smoking a cigarette is a way to relieve pressure and stress, and 18.3% see it as a way to spend free time. Of the total number of smokers, 16.3% consider smoking as an attribute of communication in the company of friends.

At the same time, not everyone with this addiction wishes to give up smoking – only a third (31.5%) expressed a desire to do so, while 14% do not want to part with the habit of smoking. It is remarkable that more than a half of young smokers (54.5%) found it difficult to answer.

The involvement of young people in consumption of the alcoholic beverages is certainly a wake-up call. Note that the first alcohol sample of the overwhelming number of respondents of this group (78.6%) occurred between the ages of 14 and 18, and the first alcoholic beverage was beer. At the same time, we must admit that the use of alcohol by the majority of students of the medical university is sporadic.

According to the respondents' own estimates, the alcohol consumption is primarily an opportunity to relieve stress and fatigue, as well as an attribute of the holiday. In addition, it is alarming that for every tenth respondent (10.1%), drinking alcohol is a way to "fill their free time" (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. The motivation for the consumption of alcoholic beverages among respondents (% , the sum of percentages does not equal 100% as question allowed for multiple answers, N= 222)



At the same time, a quarter of respondents (24.8%) believes that alcohol brings undeniable harm to health. In addition, among other aspects of the negative impact of alcohol, students named the regular financial expenses (14.6%), the formation of an unpleasant addiction (13.5%), and odour (10.4%).

It is interesting that among those who, in principle, consume the alcoholic beverages, 40.7% do not consider it necessary to abandon this habit and only 7.3% would like not to drink alcohol in the future.

One of the most pressing addictions among young people is that to the Internet (social networks) and gadgets: 36.3% of respondents admit that they are seriously affected by the Internet addiction: another third (37.4%) do not consider themselves addicted to the gadgets and social networks, and 26.3% found it difficult to answer this question. Mainly, the addiction is manifested in the abuse of social networks by young people (67.1%), but students also spend a lot of time watching movies (33.7%) and reading online (20,4%).

The attention medical students pay to their health

The key to preserving and promoting health is a person's careful attitude to the state of their own health (10). According to the self-report, 62.3% of respondents considered themselves to be in good health; however, the third of respondents (34.6%) considered their health just "satisfactory", and 2.7% characterized the state of the health as "bad" or "very bad".

According to the survey, 29.9% of medical students suffer from chronic diseases, 26% are overweight, 11.9% of students have the genetic load of a number of diseases, and 2.7% of respondents have a disability. Frequent colds are present in 27.8% of students, 26.1% of them with the common allergic reactions. The presence of dental problems was noted by 23% of the survey participants. A third (35.1%) of the students indicated that they did not have health characteristics.

It is interesting that despite the presence of all kinds of diseases, 90.1% of students are at least partially satisfied with their own health – whereas 29.5% are fully satisfied, 61.0% of respondents consider themselves partially satisfied with their health.

Regarding the self-assessment of their own care of their health, 41% of respondents considered that they took enough care of it; while an approximately equal share of respondents (39.3%) reported a negative evaluation of the degree of care for their health.

That said, the question about measures of health preservation yielded the following response frequency: "having no bad habits" – 68.7%, engaging in sports and the physical activity – 46.8%. Next, 44.1% of the respondents believe that regular medical examination allows them to maintain good health. Other 28.1% of students responded that in order to maintain health, they adhered to a healthy diet, and one in five (21.4%) mentioned the work-rest regime; 12.5% of respondents found it difficult to respond. Finally, 11.7% medical students admitted that they did nothing to improve their health.

A positive indicator is the fact that 37.7% of medical students tried to tackle the health issues proactively. However, more than half (52%) of students who participated in the



survey noted that they were accustomed to solving the health problems "as they come on", and other 8% seek medical help only in the case of serious health problems. In addition, 3.3% of respondents "do not pay attention to health problems" – which indicates that the increase in students' motivation for a preventive approach in matters related to their health would be a useful resource for improving the health outcomes.

DISCUSSION

According to the results of the study, a healthy lifestyle is an immutable value for the majority of medical students. However, actual adherence to the principles of a healthy lifestyle in terms of nutrition, physical activity, daily routine, work and rest regime, was only characteristic of a little more than a third of the students. The main obstacle to this is the high workload at the university/job (73.2% of opinions), as well as internal reluctance (laziness, lack of willpower, motivation) of students to take care of the maintenance and strengthening of their own health. Moreover, every fourth respondent recognizes that they cannot commit to a properly healthy lifestyle because of the financial difficulties.

The high workload at the university is perhaps the most significant barrier to healthy lifestyles of students: for example, 83.7% of students reported that the university workload prevented them from complying with the daily routine, limited the possibility of decent night rest in 79.5% (every fifth student slept less than 5 hours a day), it did not allow them to organize the correct diet (78.4%), and reduced the opportunity to engage in sports.

At the same time, most of the surveyed medical students are satisfied with their own health, and believe they pay enough attention to the preservation and strengthening of their health. The survey data showed that the majority of students cared about their health, in that, they aimed to refrain from bad habits, regularly underwent the medical examinations, and tried to maintain sufficient levels of the physical activity. However, not all respondents found that it was possible to comply with the regime of day and nutrition, and one person out of nine admitted that they did nothing to preserve their health. In addition, almost half of the students (47%) did not use the facilities of their Universities for the benefit of their health.

CONCLUSION

In general, while recognizing the importance of preserving their own health, medical students, are, first of all, committed to unhealthy lifestyles, secondly, they increasingly refuse to engage in sports, and, thirdly, they are insufficiently active in the prevention of diseases and health preservation. This is confirmed by the study, which suggests that at the moment, leading a healthy lifestyle among medical students is an exception rather than the common practice – which, of

course, requires intensification of efforts to increase the motivation of future doctors to lead a healthy lifestyle.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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