

Healthy Life Expectancy in the Russian Far East

KEY CONCLUSIONS

The Russian authorities are devoting great attention to increasing people's life expectancy and providing treatment

"With his 'May decrees', the Russian President, as you know, assigned us the monumental and ambitious task of extending life expectancy to 78 years by 2024, and in 2030 we should already have it above 80 [...] The President provided us with the opportunity to create a national healthcare project. Imagine that – RUB 1.34 trillion on healthcare", Russian First Deputy Minister of Healthcare Tatyana Yakovleva said.

Mechanisms are being created to radically improve the Far East healthcare system

"In the Far East, rural health centres aren't even the most important thing because we know how vast the Far East is and about the lack of roads; mobile forms [of healthcare] are what are essential here [...] Air medical services as well. The Far East is already receiving subsidies in 2017–2018 from the federal budget for the development of air medical services. Today, we are expanding this project even further" Yakovleva said.

"For the first time, the Ministry of Health is currently working on mapping, logistics, and monitoring each patient in the territory. This is a unique system and makes it possible to do a lot of things taking into account the development of new technologies [...] Prenatal screening is now rapidly developing. We hope that in the near future roughly 17 genetic diseases, including Down's syndrome, will become available for diagnosis", Dmitry Rogachev National Research Center General Director Alexander Rumyantsev said.

Russia and Japan are developing productive cooperation in the Far East healthcare sector

"Recently, we have been actively working with the Russian Gerontology Centre. Last year we held an open seminar for Russian representatives. The topics we discussed were life expectancy and dementia", Director of the Education and Innovation Centre for Geriatrics and Gerontology at the National Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology of Japan Hidetoshi Endo said.

"I wanted to talk about our highly productive cooperation in education and science with the National Centre for Geriatrics and Gerontology", Russian Gerontology Clinical Research Centre Director Olga Tkacheva said.

"In May 2013, we opened a centre in Khabarovsk. This year we opened a rehabilitation centre in Vladivostok [...] We consider the issue of disease

prevention to be a very important one. This is the basis for our treatment. We would like to bring the same means and methods of treatment to Vladivostok [...] We also have a centre in Khabarovsk. The number of patients increases each year – there are already 8,000 people [...] We want to make sure that our diagnostic centres are used by a large number of people in the Far East”, Hokuto Social Medical Corporation Deputy Secretary General Takao Nishida said.

PROBLEMS

The Far East is lagging behind neighbouring countries in terms of life expectancy indicators

“Life expectancy in the Far East is lower due to the able-bodied population [...] If you take the mortality rate of all men in the Far East, 80% are able-bodied, young men [...] In half of the regions of the Far East, external causes are the leading cause of death, and not cardiovascular diseases”, Yakovleva said.

“For the time being, Russia as a whole and the regions of the Far East in particular, unfortunately, are lagging behind their neighbours, such as Japan and Korea, in terms of such factors as life expectancy [...] At the same time, there was a sharp increase in this indicator in the Far East from 2005 to 2016 [...] For example, this figure grew by 7 years in the Far Eastern Federal District from 2005 to 2016 compared to 2.2 years in China, 4 years in South Korea, and 2.1 years in Japan”, Russian Information Agency TASS Deputy Editor-in-Chief Georgy Kaptelin said.

Shortage of medical personnel in the Far East

“The Primorsky Territory lacks more than 1,000 doctors, and it’s the same in other territories”, Pacific State Medical University Rector Valentin Shumatov said.

SOLUTIONS

The development of primary health care and prevention needs to be made a top priority

“We are talking about oncology and cardiovascular diseases, but the most important thing is primary care, i.e. where the patient goes first. Unfortunately, the situation is very poor in the Far East. What is primary care? Prevention and early detection”, Yakovleva said.

“Right now in our country, particularly in the Far East, the emphasis on prevention is unprecedented. Prevention is incorporated into all the priority projects that have become a method for implementing the President’s decrees announced in May”, Senior Researcher at the Department of Primary Prevention of Chronic Non-Infectious Diseases in the Healthcare System at the State Scientific and Research Centre for Preventive Medicine of the Russian Ministry of Health Lyubov Drozdova said.

“In addition to the National Healthcare Project, there is also the National Demography Project [...] The national project has two main principles – prevention for all ages, from intrauterine development and pregnancy planning all the way up to old age”, Tkacheva said.

Healthcare training for young specialists in the Far East

“We have several medical schools in the Far East [...] We train all specialists. As for our university, we recruit a rather large number of people – 500 in all – on a budgetary basis. Sixty percent of them are recruited on a targeted basis. [...] A year ago we opened an international innovative educational centre [...] We analyse and try to obtain and share practices that not only exist today in Russia, but also those of our neighbours in particular. Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are involved in this, as are universities in China”, Shumatov said.