

THE ATTITUDE OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF THE POPULATION OF UKRAINE TO PERSONAL HEALTH DURING THE WAR AGAINST RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

DOI: 10.36740/WLek202308126

Ivan S. Myronyuk¹, Gennadiy O. Slabkiy¹, Victoria J. Bilak-Lukianchuk¹, Valeria V. Brych¹, Vitalii I. Kondratskyi²¹UZHGOROD NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, UZHGOROD, UKRAINE²WARSAW MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, WARSAW, POLAND

ABSTRACT

The aim: To study the self-assessment of personal social and medical well-being by certain categories of the population of Ukraine in the conditions of war.

Materials and methods: The results of a sociological survey among 127 internally displaced persons from the war zone and the territory temporary occupied by the Russian invaders, as well as 122 permanent residents of the Transcarpathian region were used as the materials of the study. Bibliosemantic, sociological, medico-statistical methods and the method of structural and logical analysis were applied.

Results: It was determined that personal health, as a priority, takes the fifth position among the surveyed population with a score of 9.0 points in the group of surveyed internally displaced persons and 9.2 points in the group of interviewed permanent residents of Transcarpathian region. At the same time, 66.2% of the surveyed internally displaced persons and 71.4% of permanent residents of the Transcarpathian region during the war of Ukraine against Russian aggression noted a decrease in attitude to their own health as a personal priority.

Conclusions: The results of the study indicate a low level of health-preserving behavior of the surveyed population during Ukraine's war against Russian aggression. This situation in the future may lead to a deterioration in public health and an increase in the need for medical services.

KEY WORDS: Ukraine, war, population, personal health, attitude, sociological survey, results

Wiad Lek. 2023;76(8):1883-1887

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to traditional armed conflicts, in modern wars a constant disregard of International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Convention by the parts of the conflicts is detected [1]. The scale of losses on both sides is already much higher than in the typical war of the modern era. Analysis of available information sources indicates that armed conflicts, forced displacement of people and related problems, such as unemployment, poverty and social isolation, significantly increase vulnerability to psychosocial stress and the prevalence of mental and behavioral disorders among the population affected by the military conflict by more than 20% [2-5]. Thus, the war also affects the health of citizens and these are not only the wounds, contusions and injuries, but also long-term consequences. It is noted that in the future, many Ukrainians may face psychological and mental problems, increased addictions and exacerbation of some diseases [6]. The analysis of the situation experienced by Ukrainian society in the context of a hybrid war with Russian federation in post-COVID period shows an increase in the burden due to mental

and behavioral disorders [7,8]. Researchers point to a significant deterioration in the state of civilian population of Ukraine as a result of the war [9,10]. In these conditions, it is important to have a motivated attitude of the population to the preservation and strengthening of personal health, which led to the relevance of this study.

THE AIM

The aim was to study the self-assessment of personal social and medical well-being by certain categories of the population of Ukraine in the conditions of war.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The results of a sociological survey among 127 internally displaced persons from the war zone and the territory temporary occupied by the Russian invaders, as well as 122 permanent residents of the Transcarpathian region were used as the materials of the study. The survey was conducted according to a specially developed

questionnaire. The attitude to health in the system of personal priorities was assessed by the respondents on a 10-point scale. 10 points determined the highest level of priority. Participation in the study was voluntary. The activity of the respondents composed 83.0% (300 questionnaires were distributed). The study was conducted in February 2023. The study preserved the confidentiality of information about respondents. Bibliosemantic, sociological, medico-statistical methods and the method of structural and logical analysis were applied in the course of study.

For the application of these materials and methods during the study, permission was obtained from the ethical commission of Uzhhorod National University. Protocol dated 08.02. 2023 № 6/2.

RESULTS

The results of the sociological survey were summarized in a table, statistically processed and analyzed. Table I provides data from the results of the study on determining personal priorities for the surveyed population and the place of personal health in these priorities.

The analysis of the results obtained during the sociological survey showed that during the war economic and security priorities are among the personal priorities for the surveyed category of the population. At the same time, for internally displaced persons, the leading positions belong to security priorities, and for

permanent residents of Transcarpathian region to ones of economic nature.

Personal health, as a priority, takes the fifth position in both groups of the surveyed population with a score of 9.0 points in the group of surveyed internally displaced persons and 9.2 points in the group of interviewed permanent residents of Transcarpathian region.

It should be noted that 66.2% of the polled internally displaced persons and 71.4% of permanent residents of Transcarpathian region during the war of Ukraine against Russian aggression pointed out a decrease in attitude to their own health as a personal priority, and only 9.4% and 17.1% respectively indicated its increase.

Next the data on the presence of certain harmful habits in the studied groups of respondents were statistically processed and analyzed. The results are given in Table II.

The analysis of the results of study given in Table II indicates an increase in the level of all identified harmful habits among the surveyed population. It is alarming to have a conceiving increase in the proportion of the population with alcohol abuse and the use of psychoactive substances. Thus, among internally displaced persons, the share of those who abuse alcoholic beverages increased 2.1 times and amounted to 18.1%, and such, respectively, among permanent residents of the Transcarpathian region increased 1.6 times and amounted to 17.2%.

Next the level of health-preserving behavior of the

Table I. The level of attitude to health in the system of personal priorities

Personal priorities	Internally displaced persons		Permanent residents of Transcarpathian region	
	Points	Rank	Points	Rank
Personal health	9.0	V	9.2	V
Children's health	9.5	I	9.4	III
Health of family members	9.2	IV	9.3	IV
Economic well-being of the family	9.5	I	9.6	I
Ensuring decent living conditions	8.9	VI	9.5	II
Family safety	9.3	III	9.3	IV
Personal safety	9.0	V	9.1	VI
The presence of a permanent job	8.8	VII	9.6	I
Constant communication with relatives who are in the zone of hostilities / occupation	9.4	II	8.7	VII
Providing the family with food	8.2	VIII	8.4	VIII
Share of respondents, %				
Reducing during the war the level of attitude to one's own health, as a personal priority	66.2		71.4	
Raising during the war the level of attitude to one's own health as a personal priority	9.4		17.1	
Could not answer the question	24.4		11.5	

Table II. Presence of harmful habits, %

Harmful habits	Internally displaced persons		Permanent residents of Transcarpathian region	
	Before the war	During the war	Before the war	During the war
Tobacco smoking	24.4	38.6	27.9	34.4
Frequent alcohol consumption	11.8	21.3	13.9	19.7
Alcohol abuse	8.7	18.1	10.6	17.2
The use of psychoactive substances	3.5	7.1	5.7	8.2

Table III. The level of health-preserving behavior of the polled population during the war of Ukraine against Russian aggression, %

Indicator	Internally displaced persons		Permanent residents of Transcarpathian region	
	Practically healthy (n-52)	Individuals with chronic diseases (n-75)	Practically healthy (n-69)	Individuals with chronic diseases (n-53)
Consulted a doctor for preventive purposes	-	-	30.4	32.0
Wages a healthy lifestyle	5.8	9.3	30.4	35.8
Adheres to preventive behavior when staying in crowded places	17.3	14.7	36.2	45.3
When the state of health worsens, self-medication is carried out	71.2	52.0	31.9	35.8
Performs the doctor's prescriptions of therapeutic nature	-	16.0	-	54.7
Partially performs the doctor's prescriptions of therapeutic nature	-	49.3	-	35.8
Performs the doctor's prescriptions of preventive nature	-	10.7	-	30.2
The maximum possible adheres to the rules of sanitary culture	40.4	45.3	69.6	77.4
The maximum possible adheres to the rules of personal hygiene	59.6	54.7	82.6	90.6

surveyed population during Ukraine's war against Russian aggression was studied. The results obtained are presented in Table III.

The analysis of the results of study given in Table III indicates a low level of health-preserving behavior of the surveyed population during the war of Ukraine against Russian aggression. At the same time, among internally displaced persons, it is much lower than among the permanent population of Transcarpathian region. In general, the surveyed contingents of the population are mostly not prone to the prevention of diseases and the preservation of personal health. This situation is facilitated by both psychological and socio-economic and living conditions of internally displaced persons.

DISCUSSION

In the course of the study, the results of which are presented in this article, the goal was achieved and the attitude of certain categories of the population of Ukraine to personal health during the war against

Russian aggression was studied. Organizational and methodological restrictions arose in the course of the study, that are associated with the psychological state of internally displaced persons and the lack of their motivation to participate in a sociological survey.

The results of the study are original. They point to a decrease in the attitude of the population to their own health as a personal priority and a low level of health-saving behavior.

At the same time, the publication within the framework of the "National Program of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support" on the initiative of the First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska indicates that part of the country's population is in some uncertainty. They are sure that they have no control over anything in their lives, and therefore, they as if put it on pause, postponed it indefinitely "after the victory". The result is self-doubt; lack of understanding in the new layout; uncontrollable panic, fear and anxiety; constant depression; loss of identity; complete misunderstanding of how to get out of this state and where to start. In psychology, this condition is called fading [11].

Chaban O.S., Khaustova O.O. [12] note that for the population of Ukraine in the current conditions of full-scale Russian military aggression, a parallel formation of both individual and collective traumatization is registered, which, accordingly, negatively affects the level of both individual psychosomatic and public health. The management of conditions associated with acute stress and grief in non-specialized health care facilities is carried out in accordance with the special manual (Assessment and Management of Conditions Specifically Related to Stress: mhGAP Intervention Guide Module, v. 1.0), [13] developed under the

The Ministry of Health predicts that about 15 million Ukrainians will need psychological support because of the war. At the same time: people with mental disorders are more prone to smoking, quit harder and, on average, smoke more; in general, visiting the doctors, attention to one's own health and the frequency of routine examinations decreases in the presence of mental diseases, which leads to late diagnosis of diseases and less success of their treatment; the risk of death from cancer in the presence of depressive disorders increases by 50%, and from heart diseases – by 67%; in people with post-traumatic stress syndrome, hypertension, angina pectoris, tachycardia, other heart diseases, gastric ulcer, gastritis and arthritis are more common; PTSD often encourages risky behaviors that lead to alcohol, drug abuse [14]. This in general confirms the data we have obtained on the attitude of certain categories of

the population of Ukraine to personal health during the war against Russian aggression.

The problem described above was not covered in the foreign and domestic scientific literature available during the last decade. In the future, it is planned to conduct a comprehensive study of the impact of Russian aggression on the health of the population of Ukraine in three zones: temporary occupation, active hostilities and a zone that is remote from active hostilities.

CONCLUSIONS

The attitude of certain categories of the population of Ukraine to personal health during the war against Russian aggression is studied. It was established that personal health, as a priority, takes the fifth position among the surveyed population with a score of 9.0 points in the group of surveyed internally displaced persons and 9.2 points in the group of interviewed permanent residents of Transcarpathian region. At the same time, 66.2% of the polled internally displaced persons and 71.4% of permanent residents of Transcarpathian region during the war of Ukraine against Russian aggression noted a decrease in attitude to their own health as a personal priority. The results of the study indicate a low level of health-preserving behavior of the surveyed population during Ukraine's war against Russian aggression. The situation described may in the future lead to deterioration in public health and an increase in the need for medical services.

REFERENCES

1. Khorram-Manesh A, Burkle FM, Goniewicz K, Robinson Y. Estimating the Number of Civilian Casualties in Modern Armed Conflicts-A Systematic Review. *Front Public Health*. 2021;9:765261. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2021.765261.
2. Jawad M, Hone T, Vamos EP et al. Estimating indirect mortality impacts of armed conflict in civilian populations: panel regression analyses of 193 countries, 1990- 2017. *BMC Med*. 2020;18(1):266. doi: 10.1186/s12916-020-01708-5.
3. Markova MV. Poststresova psichichna dezadaptatsiia: zakonomirnosti rozvytku ta spetsyfika klinichnykh proiaviv dezadaptivnykh staniv v okremykh hrupakh naselennia, yaki intruzywni do dii makrosotsialnoho stresu [Post-stress psychic maladjustment: patterns of development and specificity of clinical manifestations of maladaptive states in specific population groups that are intrusive to the action of macrosocial stress]. Kharkiv: Madry. 2019, p.492 (Ukrainian)
4. Roberts B, Fuhr DC. Scaling up mental health interventions in conflict zones. *Lancet Public Health*. 2019; 4 (10): e489-90. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(19)30179-3.
5. Vermetten E, Frankova I, Carmi L. Risk management of terrorism induced stress: NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, Sub-series E: Human and Societal Dynamics. Netherlands: IOS Press. 2020. p.148.
6. Galea S, Merchant RM, Lurie N. The Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 and Physical Distancing: The Need for Prevention and Early Intervention. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2020;180(6):817-8. doi: 0.1001/jamainternmed.2020.1562.
7. Pfefferbaum B, North CS. Mental Health and the Covid-19 Pandemic. *N Engl J Med*. 2020;383(6):510-2. doi: 10.1056/NEJMp2008017.
8. Maruta NO, Markova MV. Informatsiino-psychologichna viina yak novyi vyklyk suchasnosti: stan problemy ta napriamky yii podolannia [The information in psychological war as a new challenge of our time: state of the problem and directions of its overcoming]. *Ukrainskyi visnyk psichonevrolohii*. 2015; 3(84): 21-28 (Ukrainian)
9. Myroniuk IS, Slabkyi HO, Shcherbinska OS, Bilak-Lukianchuk VI. Naslidky viiny z rosiiskoiiu federatsiieiu dlia hromadskoho zdorovia Ukrainy [Consequences of the war with the russian federation for the public health of Ukraine]. *Reproduktyvne zdorovia zhinky*. 2022; 8(63): 26-31 (Ukrainian)

10. Myroniuk I, Slabkyi H, Bilak-Lukianchuk V. Vyklyky dlia systemy hromadskoho zdorovia rehionalnoho rivnia v umovakh voiennoho stanu v Ukraini. [Challenges for the Regional Public Health System Under Martial Law in Ukraine]. Ružomberské zdravotnícke dni 2022 – XVI. Ročník: Zborník z medzinárodnej konferencie. Ružomberok. 2022, 358-363. (Ukrainian)
11. Psykholohiczne zdorovia: stan zavmyrannia vid vplyvu viiny [Psychological health: a state of fading from the effects of war]. Ministerstvo okhorony zdorovia Ukrainy. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/psihologichne-zdorovya-stan-zavmirannya-vid-vplyvu-vijni> [date access 23.02.2023] (Ukrainian)
12. Chaban OS, Khaustova OO. Medyko-psykholohichni naslidky dystresu viiny v Ukraini: shcho my ochikuiemo ta shcho potribno vrakhovuvaty pry nadanni medychnoi dopomohy? [Medical and psychological consequences of the distress of the war in Ukraine: what do we expect and what should be taken into account when providing medical care?]. Ukrainskyi medychnyi chasopys. 2022; 4 (150): 1-11. (Ukrainian)
13. Assessment and Management of Conditions Specifically Related to Stress: mhGAP Intervention Guide Module (version 1.0). World Health Organization 2013: 11 p. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85623/9789241505932_eng.pdf [date access 23.02.2023].
14. Do 4 milioniv ukrainsiv matymut psykhični rozlady cherez viinu [Up to 4 million Ukrainians will have mental disorders due to the war]. Informatsiine ahentstvo «Konkurent». <https://konkurent.ua/publication/98036/do-4-milyoniv-ukrainsiv-matimut-psihični-rozlady-cherez-viynu/> [date access 23.02.2023] (Ukrainian)

This article was prepared within the framework of the research "Medical-and-demographic and sanitary-and-epidemiological situation in the Transcarpathian region as a factor in the formation of the regional system of public health" of the Department of Health Sciences of Uzhhorod National University.

ORCID and contributionship:

Ivan S. Myronyuk: 0000-0003-4203-4447 ^{A, F}

Gennadiy O. Slabkiy: 0000-0003-2308-7869 ^{E, F}

Victoria J. Bilak-Lukyanchuk: 0000-0003-3020-316 ^C

Valeria V. Brych: 0000-0003-3741-6002 ^D

Vitalii I. Kondratskyi: 0000-0002-2413-0198 ^B

Conflict of Interest:

The Authors declare no conflict of interest.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Gennadiy O. Slabkiy

Uzhhorod National University

3 Narodna Square, 88000 Uzhhorod, Ukraine

tel: +380501711648

e-mail: gennadiy.slabkiy@uzhnu.edu.ua

Received: 30.03.2023

Accepted: 28.07.2023

A - Work concept and design, **B** – Data collection and analysis, **C** – Responsibility for statistical analysis, **D** – Writing the article, **E** – Critical review, **F** – Final approval of the article

 Article published on-line and available in open access are published under Creative Common Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)