

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION AND OVERCOMING OF DRUNKENNESS AND ALCOHOLISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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Abstract

The article discusses the main achievements and problems in the field of anti-alcohol policy in the Republic of Belarus, strategic directions for the prevention of drunkenness and alcoholism in the coming years, including those planned for implementation within the framework of the state program "People's health and demographic security of the Republic of Belarus" for 2021-2025; it provides data on the incidence of drug addiction disorders in the population in 2019-2020.

Key words: alcoholism, anti-alcohol policy, state program, prevention of drunkenness

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The problems associated with the high level of alcohol consumption by the population pose a real threat to the demographic security and social stability of any state, hinder its sustainability, as well as hinder balanced and progressive development. Alcohol consumption is one of the risk factors for public health, contributing to a high level of overall mortality.

The problem of excessive consumption of alcohol and its negative impact on the health of the population is urgent for the Republic of Belarus. According to the 2016 STEPS study, 20.2% of respondents (27.4% of men and 13.7% of women) consumed alcohol according to the most unfavourable model - episodic drinking in large quantities (≥ 60 g of pure alcohol on average at a time for men and ≥ 40 g of pure alcohol on average at a time for women) [1].

In the Republic of Belarus, work on the prevention and overcoming of drunkenness and alcoholism at the state level is carried out in the course of the implementation of measures of the state program "People's health and demographic security of the Republic of Belarus".

The state program "People's health and demographic security of the Republic of Belarus" for 2021-2025 (hereinafter - the State program) was approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated January 19, 2021 № 28 [2] and has in its structure

the subprogram "Prevention and overcoming of drunkenness and alcoholism, protection mental health". The tasks of the subprogram routine include:

reducing the level of negative social and economic consequences of drunkenness and alcoholism, as well as the consumption of other psychoactive substances; and protecting mental health and reducing suicide rates.

Fundamentally new in the State Program for 2021-2025 are the following aims:

the development of a system of medical and social rehabilitation of persons who have been using psychoactive substances for a long time;

the implementation of a set of measures to preserve and strengthen the mental health of the population and reduce the level of suicides, including the provision of high-quality and timely assistance to people in crisis and experiencing stressful conditions, including minors.

At the state level, in 2020, seven different interdepartmental comprehensive plans were also implemented, which provided the implementation of information and educational, legal, organizational, restrictive, law enforcement measures to prevent and overcome drunkenness and alcoholism, as well as popularize a healthy lifestyle among the population.

One of the important strategies for the prevention of drunkenness and alcoholism is to carry out activities that motivate the population to stop drinking alcohol and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which will further help reduce alcoholism in the population and, as a result, reduce the negative consequences associated with it.

In all regions of the republic, in order to motivate various segments of the population to maintain a healthy lifestyle and, refuse to consume alcoholic beverages, the development, placement and large-scale coverage on television and radio broadcasts, press events, republican and regional print media, the Internet information network are carried out on an ongoing basis, aimed at the formation of a healthy lifestyle, and preventing of the negative consequences of alcohol consumption.

Explanatory work was carried out on the negative aspects of the impact of alcohol on health among various segments of the population - minors, students of educational institutions and their parents, as well as workers in industry, transport, and agriculture.

In order to achieve increased awareness of the population about the dangers of alcohol, the formation of a healthy lifestyle among the population in 2020, "A set of practical measures to educate and provide assistance to people from the social environment of persons who abuse alcohol or use drugs" for 2020-2022 were approved and an Action plan for the implementation of the Information and Socio-Cultural Strategy for the Prevention of Alcoholism for 2020-2025 was created.

Research is being carried out to maximize the involvement of the population, including minors, in physical culture and sports. In the republic, 25.3% of the country's population or more than two million people, including 1.1 million children and adolescents, are involved in systematic physical culture and sports.

With the aim of early detection of minors prone to alcohol consumption and addictive behaviour, a psychosocial survey of students is carried out annually, based on the results of which targeted individual preventive work is carried out with minors in educational institutions.

The state program provides for the expansion of the practice of screening patients by general practitioners to identify persons prone to alcoholism, with the subsequent organization of their motivational counselling in health care institutions.

To improve the quality of medical and psychiatric care for patients with alcohol dependence syndrome, the state institution "Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Mental Health" has developed and introduced into practical

work new methods of treatment and rehabilitation of addicts: "Method of treating alcohol withdrawal syndrome using hyperbaric oxygenation" [3], "Method for the treatment of alcohol withdrawal syndrome using normoxic therapeutic compression" [4], "Method for the treatment of mental and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol use" [5].

In the republic, in recent years, a tendency has been registered to reduce the incidence of drug addiction disorders caused by excessive alcohol consumption. In 2020, compared to 2021:

the total number of patients under the dispensary supervision of a psychiatrist-narcologist due to alcohol dependence syndrome decreased by 3.4% (in 2019 - 154,842 patients, in 2020 - 149,538 patients);

the total number of patients under the dispensary supervision of a psychiatrist-narcologist in connection with an alcoholic psychotic disorder decreased by 16.7% (in 2019 - 2009 patients, in 2020 - 1674 patients);

the total number of underage patients under medical supervision of a psychiatrist-narcologist in connection with the use of alcohol with harmful consequences decreased by 15.3% (in 2016 - 5,646 people, in 2020 - 4,780 people);

the total number of women under the dispensary supervision of a psychiatrist-narcologist with alcohol dependence syndrome decreased by 3.2% (in 2019 - 32,216, in 2020 - 31,196);

the primary morbidity of women with alcohol dependence syndrome decreased by 11.1% (in 2019 - 3023, in 2020 - 2 686).

In addition, as a result of the implementation of measures aimed at preventing drunkenness and alcoholism, the number of offenses committed while intoxicated has decreased in the republic.

It should be noted that, according to the World Health Organization, the level of alcohol consumption by the population of the republic 15 and older does not exceed the level of alcohol consumption in the neighbouring countries of Europe and the Russian Federation.

According to the World Health Organization, the average level of alcohol consumption per capita 15 and older in the Republic of Belarus for 2015–2017. was 11.2 liters, while in Lithuania - 15 liters, in Latvia - 12.9 liters, in Estonia - 11.6 liters, in Poland - 11.6 liters, and in the Russian Federation - 11.7 liters [6].

However, despite the positive results achieved, the

republic maintains a high mortality rate from accidental alcohol poisoning (in 2016-2019 - 15.4 - 17.2 cases per 100 thousand population).

This is facilitated by the following objective factors:

maintaining a high share of strong alcoholic beverages (over 50%) in the structure of alcohol consumption by the population;

an annual increase in quotas for the production of certain types of alcoholic beverages (natural fruit and berry wines, strong alcoholic beverages, etc.);

insufficient implementation of measures aimed at limiting the availability of alcoholic beverages for the population (no uniform time has been established for the sale of alcoholic beverages in retail outlets; there is no complete ban on advertising of low-alcohol drinks and beer in the media, on radio and television; a standard for the number of stores selling alcoholic beverages has not been introduced, no more than one per 5000 population);

low cost of strong alcohol in terms of 1 degree of pure alcohol (the cost of one degree of pure alcohol in low alcohol drinks and beer is higher than the cost of a degree of pure alcohol in strong alcoholic drinks (\$ 0.16 versus \$ 0.09, respectively);

high affordability of alcohol for various categories of the population;

socio-economic problems in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic;

the lack of a unified state strategy of anti-alcohol policy.

To increase the effectiveness of measures to reduce alcoholization of the population, the State Program provides for the development of a concept of anti-alcohol policy of the Republic of Belarus aimed at reducing alcohol consumption and reducing socio-economic damage associated with social negative phenomena due to alcohol abuse.

As part of limiting the affordability of alcohol, it is planned to increase the marginal minimum prices for spirits in an amount exceeding the forecasted level of core inflation by 20-40 percent.

As a result of the implementation of the measures of the State Program, the following targets are planned to be achieved by 2025:

decreasing in the volume of consumption of registered alcohol per capita of people 15 and older (up to 9.8 literes);

decreasing in mortality from suicides (up to 16.8 per 100 thousand);

increasing the coverage of rehabilitation measures for persons suffering from dependence on psychoactive substances (up to 10% of the number of patients with dependence on psychoactive substances under the dispensary supervision of a psychiatrist-narcologist).

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