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Problems of Alienation and Stigmatization in Psychiatry

M.P. Dutkin

ABSTRACT

The article considers the problem of increasing the number of depressed patients worldwide. The main reason for this phenomenon is the phenomenon of “alienation”. The author lists three main types of alienation. The main problem in Russian psychiatry is the stigma - hanging shameful labels on people seeking help from a psychiatrist or psychotherapist. Social measures to combat depression and anhedonia are considered.

Keywords: suicide, depression, alienation, mass media, stigma in psychiatry, struggle with depression and anhedonia.



Worldwide there is a growing number of peoples suffering from mental illness. The main reason for this negative process, we consider the phenomenon of “alienation”. Alienation when this takes place in three different planes: 1) the alienation of modern man from his own nature; 2) alienation from people and society; 3) alienation from oneself.

“Alienation from nature” leads to the fact that people begin to depend on technology. “The technologization of the spirit”, “technologization of mind” can result in a loss of spirit and mind. The technique separates the person from the ground and stabs his religious and spiritual values and is changing the biological organization of people’s life. “Alienation from nature” leads, for example, to that in the world there is a growing number of homosexual couples.

“Alienation from the peoples” leads to loneliness, even sociophobia, the reason of which is the passion of young people playing computer games, Internet communication, at which live communication between people disappears.

“Alienation from oneself” or “self-alienation” is manifested in the loss of meaning of life. The loss of meaning of life in modern humans is confirmed by the data of world statistic on suicides die men are 3-4 times more often than women. Most women have the meaning of life in the presence of their own children. Therefore, the peak of suicides in women occurs at the age of 65, when grown-up children and grandchildren leave her house, and she feels abandoned and useless.

Negative phenomenon “alienation” leads modern people to anhedonia and depression, neurotic disorders.

According to the World health organization, up to 20% of the population in need of specialized mental health care, and in the Russian Federation, this figures reaches 25% [1]. Among mental disorders in the world leads depression – it affects more than 350 million people. According to expert estimates, the number of people who have one or the other light neurotic disorders in our country reaches 9 million. According to various sources, from 18 to 39% of cancer patients and up to 20% with ischemic heart disease suffer depression.

According to the head of the Department of mental and behavioral disorders, Moscow Institute of psychiatry, doctor of medical Sciences A. Avedisova, in Russia up to 50% of somatic and neurological patients suffer depressive disorder [ibid].

Directly with depression related to the problem of suicide, the frequency of which exceeds in Russia some who critical level of 20 suicides per 100 thousand population. In the world the average frequency of suicide is 14 cases on 100 thousand population.



According to the gradation of the World health organization, in Yakutia, the suicide rate is estimated as critical. In our country the number of suicides was (in recalculation per 100 thousand population): 2010 – 40.8 (in Russian Federation – 23.5). 2011 – 39.7 (RF – 21.7), 2012 – 40.1 (RF – 20.2). In 1995, Russia was recorded 42 cases of suicides per 100 thousand populations. Dynamics of suicides in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has no tendency to decrease and three times the global figures, two times higher than likely to be national figures.

In the Russian Federation a major problem in the treatment of depression is the stigma of psychiatry in society and the associated social consequences.

The word “stigma” in translation from Latin means “open wound” and comes from the Greek word “stigma”. From the second half of the XIX century, the word began to be used figuratively as “a label”.

In the modern world the concept of “stigma” is used in sociology as a specific feature, when a person is ascribed to some negative traits, the person seeking help from a psychologist or psychiatrist, afraid that society will consider it for “crazy”.

First, the most common stigma associated with conviction of the majority of Russian people that mentally ill people are dangerous. When “the dangerous” no matter what disease they have and how this disease in a particular patient manifests. Therefore they should be avoided, even to isolate from society.

The second common stigma associated with conviction of the people is that mental illness is a chronic disease, and therefore it is impossible to get rid of it.

The third stigma is to persuade people that all mentally ill people are mentally retarded people, fools. Hence all these are common in our society taunts like “idiot”, “imbecile”.

Ultimately, the above stigma prevalent in society stamp, labels prevent people suffering from depression and other neurotic disorders to seek help from a psychiatrist, the psychotherapist, the psychologist. These patients are forced to seek the help of sorcerers and witch doctors that in our society is not objectionable. This “aid” does not help, but only confuses judgments and inferences in the psyche of the patient, leading to irrational thinking.

Psychiatrists must take responsibility for the stigmatization of mental disorders, because nobody else is going to solve a social problem. We must become active advocates for people with mental disorders, to try to improve the quality of life of patients, to monitor cases of discrimination against them in society.



The mass media can be an important source of knowledge in the coverage of mental health issues and become a source for the formation of new social relation and attitudes. TV programs should be alive, vibrant, and dynamic, in order to stay for long in the memory, like they give information in channels “Discovery” and “National Geographic”.

Recently available source of knowledge is the Internet, therefore, psychiatrists should provide easy to understand information about mental disorders, to be weighed the facts and to refute incorrect information.

The most important task of the medical community and the state is the organization of effective and humane care to patients with mental disorders, including depression. Patients need psychological support and social protection, therefore, knowledge about mental health should be disseminated in society.

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