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DENTAL CARE IN PUBLIC MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN UKRAINE: DYNAMICS OF SERVICES AND MODERN PROBLEMS

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Introduction. The results of special epidemiological studies show a very high level of dental morbidity in Ukraine, which is much higher than in Europe [3]. At the same time, in Ukraine there is a reduction of the network and insufficient funding of state (public) dental institutions, commercialization of dentistry and impoverishment of the population, which leads to reduced access to dental care and negatively affects the health of the population [1, 2, 3]. Poor dental health, especially in children, has a negative impact on their overall health throughout life. In addition, there are currently strong pathogenetic links between dental and chronic noncommunicable diseases. That is why, according to current WHO documents, oral health is a mandatory component of comprehensive prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases, which in the European region and in Ukraine, in particular, are the leading cause of premature death and disability. Thus, ensuring the availability of dental care can be considered not only as a medical, but also a significant medical, social and socio-economic problem of Ukraine, which needs to be urgently addressed.

The aim of the study: to analyze the dynamics of dental services rendering in public medical institutions in Ukraine.

Materials and methods. Analysis of the dental care provided to adults and children in Ukraine in institutions of public ownership is carried out on the basis of reporting forms and materials produced by the "Center for Medical Statistics of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine"[4, 5, 6]. Methods of statistical grouping, tabulation, generalization and comparison were used. To assess the dynamics of indicators, the growth rate in % was determined (GR, %).

Results

The analysis of statistical data of the "Center for Medical Statistics of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine" showed that the Ministry of Health has a strong network of medical dental institutions. In 2020, dental care was provided by 1.355 public health care facilities, including 168 independent dental clinics and 1.187 treatment and prevention facilities, which include budget and selfsupporting dental departments or offices. In recent years, the number of independent public dental clinics has decreased significantly due to their reorganization into dental units of central district or city hospitals. A significant decrease in the number of facilities that consisted of dental

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departments (offices) was mainly due to rural outpatient clinics, which were part of the Centers of Primary Health Care and other institutions as structural units, while previously they considered as independent. This merger led to a reduction in the positions of dentists. In recent years, the volume of dental care in privately owned institutions has increased. In 2020, 617 independent dental clinics and 4467 privately owned dental offices provided dental care to the population of Ukraine. The ratio of dentists in the public health sector to doctors working in the private sector in 2020 was 59.7% to 40.3%.

It is established that according to the state statistical reporting, public-owned institutions, despite the reduction of their network and positions of dentists in them, continue to play a leading role in providing dental care to the residents of Ukraine, especially to privileged categories and children. In 2020 they provided 68.4% of all visits of Ukrainian residents to dentists, 63.1% of visits of adults and 88.7% of visits of children (tabl 1).

Table 1.

Share of visits to dentists in institutions of public property in Ukraine (%)

	2008	2012	2017	2018	2019	2020
Among the entire population (y%)	89.9	87.6	83.8	81.7	78.3	68.4
Among the adults (y%)	87.3	84.4	79.8	77.3	73.4	63.1
Among the children (y%)	97.5	97.4	96.0	95.3	93.6	88.7

Over the last decade, there has been a clear trend to reduce the share of visits to dental institutions of public ownership due to the outflow of patients, primarily aged 18 and older, to private dental institutions.

The study found that despite the existence of a strong network of dental institutions in the system of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, during 2008- 2020 in Ukraine there was a significant reduction in the volume of dental services received by the population in public institutions. Thus, the dynamic analysis of the average number of visits per capita of Ukraine revealed a significant reduction of this indicator, both among the total population (by 63.6%, from 1.1 in 2008 to 0.4 in 2020) and among the adult population (by 70.0%), and children (by 70.6%, from 1.7 in 2008 to 0.5 in 2020). The main reason for the sharp decline in the number of visits to the dentists in 2020 is COVID-19 pandemic. But the downward trend in this indicator was formed before the pandemic and it indirectly indicates a decrease in the availability of dental care and due to reduced number of dental offices, positions of dentists, lack of budget funds to finance dental care, absolutely scanty dental services covered by the national budget (National Health Service of Ukraine), the lack of costs for free prosthetics and increased prices for orthopedic and other dental services.

The leading activity of the dental service has always been the implementation of its preventive strategy aimed at maintaining the dental health of the population. The main ways of carrying out preventive work are sanitary education, planned preventive examinations and dental rehabilitation of the general population.

The analysis of preventive work of dental institutions of public property showed that during the last decade there was a significant reduction in the volume of preventive services, especially provided to the adult population. During 2008-2020, the share of those examined in the planned rehabilitation decreased among the adult population by 70.1% (from 22.1% in 2008 to 6.6% in 2020), and among children by 75.7% (from 70.9% to 17.2%), respectively. The share of those rehabilitated in the order of planned rehabilitation and on appeals decreased by 65.6% among adults (from 22.1% in 2008 to 7.6% in 2020), and among children by 82.2% (from 70.9% to 12.6%), respectively.

Defects in the organization of preventive dental care cause unsatisfactory state of dental health of the Ukrainian population, that's why the main reason for going to the dentist is the treatment of caries. The share of appeals for the treatment of caries is consistently more than half of all appeals of adults and children to the dentist (in 2020, 52.1% and 51.5%, respectively).

Untimely receipt of dental care due to reduced availability leads to an increase in the proportion of cases of caries treatment at the stage of complications. Thus, in 2020, every fourth (27.7%) case of caries in adults and children (23.9%) was treated at the stage of complications.

In addition, in Ukraine more than half (in 2020 -58.2%) of cases of malignant neoplasms of the oral cavity are detected in neglected stages (III – IV), which indicates the need for annual examinations of the oral cavity in order to detect precancerous conditions and cancer of the oral cavity.

Over the past decade, the volume of not only therapeutic but also all types of dental care provided to residents of Ukraine in public-owned institutions has significantly decreased. Thus, the number of persons who received dentures decreased by 64.3% (from 1.4 per 100 persons in 2008 to 0.5 in 2020), and the number of children who completed orthodontic treatment decreased by 60.2% (from 66.1 in 2008). to 26.3 per 10,000 children in 2020).

Conclusions

Health of Ukraine has a strong network of medical dental institutions. It has been established that over the last decade the network of institutions and subdivisions in public -owned dental institutions has been reduced and the network of private dental institutions and offices has been expanded.

It is shown that public dental institutions, despite the reduction of their network and positions of dentists in them, continue to play a leading role in providing dental care to the people of Ukraine.

There is a negative trend to reduce the number of visits to dentists per capita in public institutions, as well as a significant reduction in all types of dental care, including preventive, provided to the population in these institutions, associated with low level of logistical and medical support of state health care institutions and high cost of dental services in the commercial sector of dentistry.

This indicates the need to develop and approve a guaranteed level of free dental care for the population of Ukraine, especially for its vulnerable groups, in particular children and persons of retirement age. Another way to solve the problem of ensuring the availability of dental care is to create socially oriented dental structures with joint

responsibility of the public and private business, in particular on the principles of public-private partnership.

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