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Psychiatric Education in Uzbekistan: Impact on the Mental Health System and Directions for Development

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This paper examines the evolution of psychiatric education in Uzbekistan, covering the bachelor's, master's, residency, and doctoral levels. Particular attention is paid to ongoing reforms aimed at improving the quality of training of mental health specialists, introducing international standards and innovative approaches to the educational process. The impact of educational initiatives on improving the mental health of the country's population is also analyzed.

Key words: psychiatric training, mental healthcare, healthcare reforms, medical education, innovative approaches in medical teaching.

Development of the mental health workforce is a key element in ensuring quality health care and improving public health. In modern conditions, the need for qualified mental health professionals is becoming increasingly urgent. Mental disorders are one of the leading causes of temporary disability and disability of the population. According to the World Health Organization, every fourth person in the world faces mental or neurological disorders during their lifetime. In this regard, investments in education and training of specialists in this field are strategically important for any country. [5,6,7]

In the United States, about 20% of the adult population suffers from various forms of mental illness each year. This means that more than 45 million Americans need specialized mental health care. However, the shortage of personnel in this area remains an acute problem: there are only 12.2 psychiatrists per 100,000 people. [3] The situation in Russia is also worrying. The country has registered about 3.5 million people with mental disorders. At the same time, there are about 16 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, which, although more than in the United States, is still not enough to cover all health care needs. In Uzbekistan, the number of registered patients with mental disorders is about 1.2% of the total population. In recent years, the country has been actively developing its mental health care system, but the personnel shortage is still significant. There are about 6 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, which is insufficient to provide full and timely assistance to all those in need. [2]

Psychiatry education in Uzbekistan. Since independence, Uzbekistan has been actively working to improve the health and well-being of its population. In recent decades, significant reforms have been carried out in the healthcare sector to improve its efficiency and accessibility. It should be noted that significant progress has been made in domestic medicine, due, in particular, to the strengthening of the regulatory framework in this area. [1] Particular attention is paid to the development of mental health services, as evidenced by a number of legislative acts, including the Resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. [2] In addition, much attention is paid to the development of science, which is confirmed by the adoption of relevant decrees and concepts aimed at the widespread use of the country's scientific and innovative potential and the training of qualified personnel in various fields of science.

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In recent years, Uzbekistan has undergone significant changes and modernization in the field of psychiatric education in order to improve the quality of training of specialists in the field of mental health. The educational system in this area includes four main levels: bachelor's degree, master's degree or residency, basic doctoral studies and doctoral studies or independent research. Training is conducted in Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian and English for foreign students.

Undergraduate. During the undergraduate program, medical students study general subjects such as anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry, before moving on to specialized courses in psychiatry in the 4th and 6th years. They study psychiatric nosologies at a deeper level, devoting 150 to 200 hours of lectures, seminars, and practical classes to them. As part of their practical training, students observe patients and participate in diagnosis and treatment under the guidance of experienced psychiatrists.

Master's degree. In accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including the Decree of the President and the Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Master's degree is a stage of higher education aimed at training specialists in a certain field with a duration of study of at least two years after completion of the Bachelor's degree. [2] Studying in the Master's degree program, which includes the areas of "psychiatry" and "narcology", is focused on mastering modern methods of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental disorders. The 3-year Master's program includes about 1000-1200 academic hours, and also provides for the study of related disciplines, such as public health, clinical pharmacology, information and communication technologies, foreign languages. Master's students are actively involved in research work, developing the skills of analyzing scientific literature and conducting their own research in the field of mental health. In addition, they acquire teaching skills necessary for a future career in the scientific and pedagogical field.

Residency. Residency is a separate educational program specialized in training future psychiatrists, narcologists, and medical psychologists. Clinical residency is part of the system of retraining doctors and is described in the relevant regulation approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers (No. 319 of December 18, 2009). The residency program is designed for 2 years and includes more than 3,000 hours of practical work in clinical conditions under the supervision of experienced teachers. Residents undergo training in various psychiatric departments, where they master the skills of therapy, working with patients and their families, and interdisciplinary interaction. The program also provides for related disciplines, including valeology, neurology, pathological anatomy, and clinical pharmacology. According to the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan (No. 196 dated 19.06.2023), admission to clinical residency and master's degree programs in the specialties "Psychiatry", "Medical Psychology" and "Narcology" from the 2023/2024 academic year is carried out exclusively on the basis of a state grant, taking into account the actual need for these specialties.

Postgraduate education. The training of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel at the level of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Science (DSc) is carried out through several forms of postgraduate education, including doctoral studies, basic doctoral studies and independent research. The regulatory framework for this education is determined by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-4958 dated February 16, 2017 "On further improvement of the postgraduate education system" and the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 304 dated May 22, 2017.

Basic doctoral studies are a form of postgraduate education aimed at training highly qualified scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel. It is organized for applicants for the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and includes in-depth study of the specialty, conducting scientific research

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for the purpose of preparing and defending a doctoral dissertation. Funding for basic doctoral studies is provided by the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Doctoral studies are a form of postgraduate education aimed at training highly qualified scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel to obtain the academic degree of Doctor of Science (DSc). Within the framework of this program, applicants study their specialty in depth and conduct scientific research in order to prepare and defend a doctoral dissertation, completely freed from production activities. Financing of doctoral studies is carried out at the expense of the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Independent search is also a form of postgraduate education for highly qualified scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel. [4] In this form of training, applicants study their specialty in depth and conduct scientific research in order to prepare and defend a doctoral dissertation, while maintaining contact with production and work. Specialty code - 14.00.18 "Psychiatry and Narcology". Approved by the Resolution of the Presidium of the Higher Attestation Commission under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 217 / 12 dated June 30, 2015.

Conclusions. In Uzbekistan, there is a desire to integrate psychiatric education with international medical standards, which is reflected in the introduction of new educational methods, such as simulation training and online courses, to deepen the knowledge and skills of students and specialists. Particular attention is paid to the development of scientific research in the field of psychiatry, aimed at studying the characteristics of the spread and treatment of mental disorders in the region. In the future, the development of psychiatric education in Uzbekistan is associated with further integration into the global medical community, exchange of experience and knowledge with leading foreign educational institutions and research centers. This contributes to the training of highly qualified specialists who can effectively solve problems of protecting the mental health of the population of Uzbekistan.

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