

On the results of a sociological survey of the population
(awareness of the methods and means of traditional medicine and their assessment
efficiency)

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The last decade all over the world is clearly characterized by the growing demand among the population for methods and means of traditional medicine. A number of statistical studies have been published showing that this trend is typical not only for the countries of South and Southeast Asia, where every second inhabitant regularly consults traditional medicine doctors, but also for most countries in Europe and America. So, according to published data in the United States, from 43 to 69 percent of the population turn to specialists in traditional medicine, which is called complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). (Michael Shermer, in his book *Why People Believe in Miracles*, believes that in the United States, up to 88% of the population prefer to be treated by alternative medicine).

More than 60% of medical schools offer KAM courses, 70% of family doctors are trained in KAM methods and use them in their practice, 67% of medical organizations offer at least one of the KAM methods.

Unfortunately, such targeted studies have not been conducted in our country. In a survey conducted in the mid-90s by employees of the Research Institute of Social Hygiene, Economics and Health Management. ON. Semashko RAMS, healers, healers, psychics and homeopaths were united in one group. According to the research institute, these "specialists" were approached by 3.5% of respondents (which, by the way, is not much less than those who applied for a paid medical care - 4.2%).

At the end of the 1990s, the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences conducted a sociological survey on the topic "Miracles in which people believe." According to its results, 62% of the country's population believe in traditional medicine.

To fill this gap, the Federal Clinical and Experimental Center for Traditional Methods of Diagnostics and Treatment in 2004 in polyclinics of 4 megalopolises (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don) conducted a survey in total complexity 2800 people. The survey was carried out using a specially designed questionnaire containing 34 questions.

In the age structure of the respondents, people of working age prevailed (46–65 years old - 23.4%, 36–45 years old - 23.1%, 26–35 years old - 22.5%). It should be noted that there were more respondents aged 19–25 years (11.1%) than in the age group 56–65 years old (9.5%). Women accounted for 59.5% of the respondents, men - 40.5%. More than half of the respondents are married - 53%, in a civil marriage - 8.1%, 18.4% are not married, the rest are divorced, widows.

Almost a third of the respondents (32.5%) have one child, 28.5% - two, 13.5% - three or more. Every fourth of the respondents (25.8%) has no children.

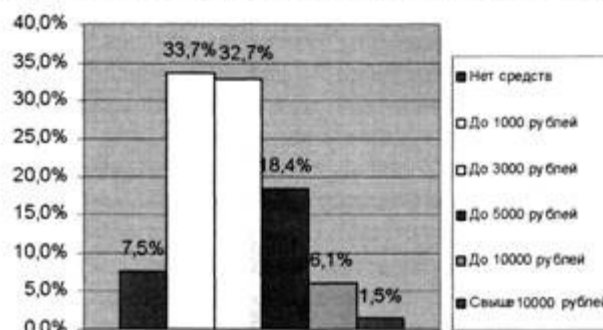
The educational level of the respondents to the questionnaire is quite high.

More than half of them have higher (46%) and incomplete higher (12.2%) education, 34.3% - secondary. 1.7% of the respondents have an academic degree.

The respondents' assessment of their financial situation is very interesting. More than half of them (50.2%) consider themselves middle-income people, a little less than a third (29%) - low-income, another 7.5% - poor and only a small part - well-off (12.6%) and rich (0, 7%). True, due to the fact that the question did not include quantitative indicators, the objective value of the answers is rather ambiguous.

Some clarity in this regard was provided by the answers to questions about the material opportunities associated with the cost of treatment and the availability of paid medical care.

Какую сумму из бюджета Вы тратите на лекарства в год?



As can be seen from the table, a third of the respondents can spend no more than 3 thousand rubles a year on medicines, which can hardly be considered a sign of average income. At the same time, only 1.5% have the opportunity to spend more than 10 thousand rubles a year on medicines. Paid medical services turned out to be inaccessible for 28.9% of the respondents, and 40.4% can pay for them only at the expense of other household expenses. Paid medical care is available to 12.3% of respondents, another 9.8% have the opportunity to receive subsidies for these purposes from their firms.

We were interested in the satisfaction of the population with various aspects of life. In general, most of the respondents were satisfied with the current situation. So, 64.4% are satisfied with their work (19.7% are not satisfied), 51.1% are financially satisfied (38.1% are not satisfied), 55.2% are satisfied with their health (29 are not satisfied, 6%), food - 70.3% (dissatisfied - 18.8%), housing conditions - 56.2% (dissatisfied - 36.5%), family relations - 72.2% (dissatisfied - 12, 7%). The attitude to the quality of medical care with which only 34.4% of respondents are satisfied (not satisfied - 33.1%, found it difficult to answer - 32.5%) stands apart.

Health as the main value in life was named by 68.5% of respondents. For 48.6%, this value is children, for 37.2% - family, for 36.4% - material wealth. More than 29% consider work to be the main value, 21.6% - friends and the opportunity to communicate, 13.3% - spiritual life, 5.5% - religion.

Since the questionnaires were distributed mainly among the patients of polyclinics, one of the questions in the questionnaire was devoted to their morbidity. It was found that among the respondents 18.4% suffer from hypertension, 16.1% - joint diseases, 12.9% - chronic gastritis, 11.4% - gynecological diseases, 11.0% - coronary heart disease, 9.9% - various types of allergies, 9.5% - cerebrovascular diseases, 7.9% - chronic bronchitis, 7.8% - chronic cholecystitis, 6.7% - kidney diseases, 5.8% - chronic colitis, 5.1% - gastric ulcer and 12 duodenal ulcer, 4.3% - diseases of the prostate gland, 3.2% - diabetes mellitus, 2.7% - climacteric syndrome, 2.3% - bronchial asthma.

Noteworthy is the relatively high percentage of people who self-medicate - 53.9 and those who actively take care of their health - 51.8. At the same time, every fifth (20.7%) does not see the need to take care of health, and every fourth (27.6%) does not know how to do it.

Having received a certain set of general information about the respondents, we moved on to questions directly related to the awareness of the population about traditional medicine and its demand among the population.

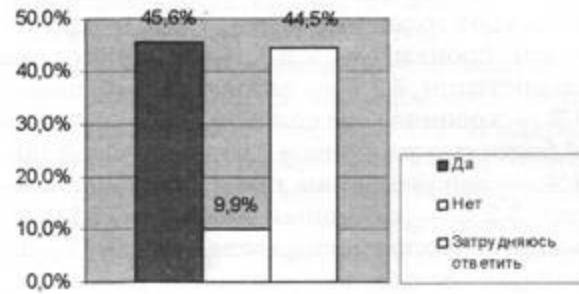
As for the awareness of the respondents about the types of traditional medicine, it is not surprising that 72.3% of them have an understanding of medical massage. At the same time, homeopathy unexpectedly came to second place in popularity - 61.2%, ahead of reflexotherapy (56.5%), manual therapy (55.9%), herbal medicine (55.4%), hirudotherapy (50, 4 %). A much lower percentage of awareness was found in the methods of traditional diagnostics (25.4%) and bioresonance therapy (23.0%).

The question of assessing the effectiveness of traditional medicine methods was of interest to us. Here's how the respondents answered this question.

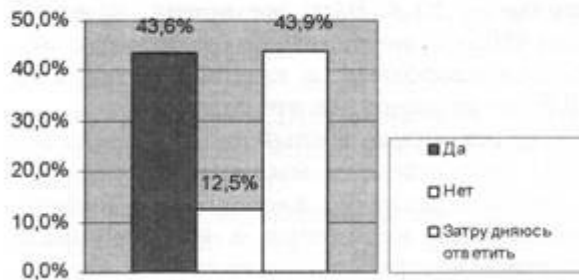
Noteworthy is the rather low percentage of respondents who do not believe in the effectiveness of these methods of treatment.



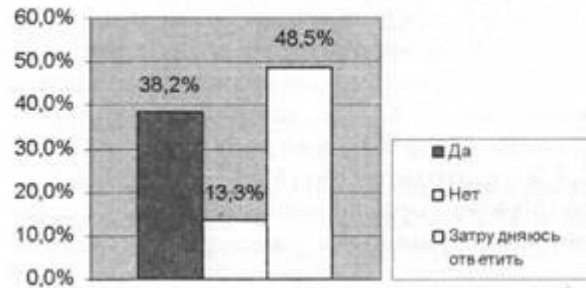
Верите ли Вы в эффективность мануальной терапии?



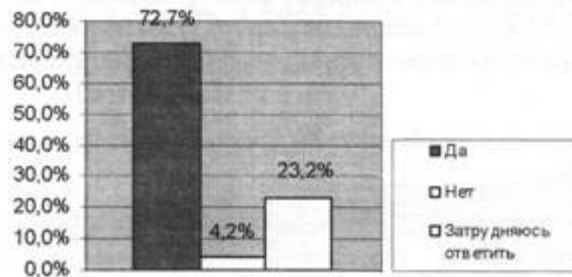
Верите ли Вы в эффективность гомеопатии?



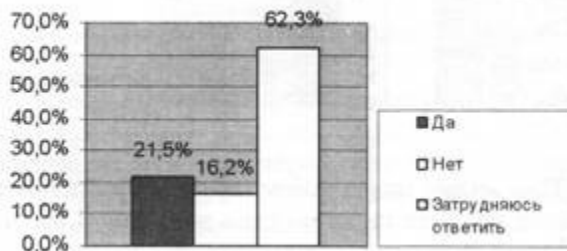
Верите ли Вы в эффективность натуротерапии?



Верите ли Вы в эффективность массажа?



Верите ли Вы в эффективность биорезонансной терапии?



Almost every fifth respondent (18.5%) believes that the mechanism of action of the means and methods of traditional medicine is unknown. The opinions of the rest about the main reason for the effectiveness of traditional means and methods were divided between those who preferred self-hypnosis (23.7%), the experience of many generations (21.8%), natural origin and affinity with the body (17.9%), mild action (17,4 %).

Speaking about traditional medicine, we could not ignore folk healing as well. The results of the survey indicate that 14.3% of respondents turned to healers for help, and another 12.2% do not exclude this possibility. Accordingly, only 43.7% of the respondents categorically do not believe in the effectiveness of the influence of healers, while 20.3% believe in it, and 36.0% found it difficult to answer. Of those who turned to healers, 20.7% noted positive changes in the state of health after the influence of healers, 77.0% - no changes were noted, 2.3% felt worse. More than a quarter of the respondents (26.4%) reported that they are aware of cases of the negative influence of the influence of healers on the health of people.

The last three points of the questionnaire contained questions concerning the direct attitude of the respondents to treatment with traditional methods and means.

More than two-thirds of the respondents (67.0%) expressed a desire for specialists of traditional medicine to work in their polyclinic, against - only 8.0%. Moreover, every fourth (25.0%) would like to be treated only by means and methods of traditional medicine. Only 3.3% of the respondents did not express a desire for traditional methods and means to be added to their treatment in the polyclinic, while 65.7% would like this.

The sociological survey data continues to be processed, and responses continue to arrive via the Internet. Nevertheless, the main conclusion can already be drawn: the population is sufficiently aware of traditional medicine, highly appreciates the effectiveness of its means and methods, and expresses a desire for specialists of traditional medicine to take an active part in the treatment and diagnostic process.

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