

Medical and social characteristics of families where children receive homeopathic help

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Medico-social characteristics of families, where children receive homeopathic treatment
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SUMMARY

The article presents the results of a scientific study on the study of the medico-social characteristics of families in which children receive homeopathic care. The information used was obtained by conducting an anonymous sociological survey of 361 parents, whose children received treatment at the Center for Homeopathy in St. Petersburg.

Key words: sociological survey, medical and social characteristics, families, parents, children, homeopathic treatment, St. Petersburg.

RESUME

Results of study of medico-social characteristic of families, where children received homeopathic treatment are presented. The study used for anonymous sociological survey of 361 parents of children treated in homeopathic center of Saint-Petersburg.

Keywords: sociological survey, medico-social characteristic of families, parents, children, homeopathic treatment, Saint-Petersburg.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades in the Russian Federation, the legalization of the homeopathic method has contributed to its spread and recognition among doctors of different specialties, pharmacists, patients; integration into public health [1, 4, 5, 8]. The main advantages of the method: safety and almost complete absence of age restrictions, are the most important for expanding the therapeutic capabilities of a doctor in the treatment and health improvement of children [2, 3, 6, 8, 9].

However, there are few scientific studies devoted to the study of the medico-social characteristics of families with children who receive homeopathic assistance.

Purpose of the study: to identify the features of the medico-social portrait of families in which children receive homeopathic care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

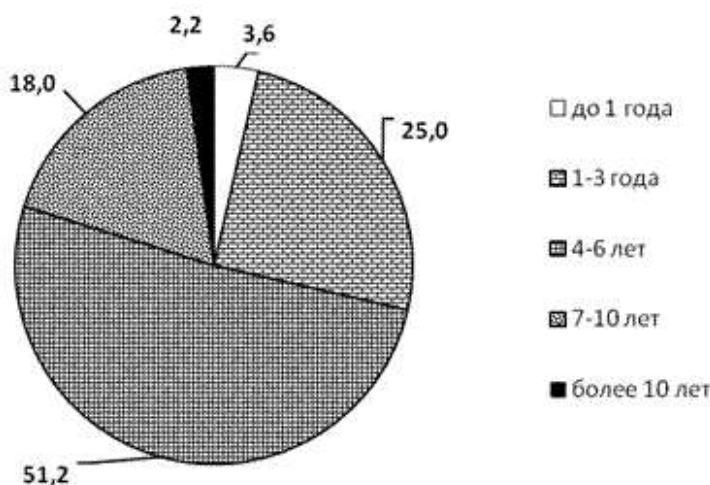
An anonymous sociological survey was conducted of parents whose children received treatment at the Center for Homeopathy in St. Petersburg. "Questionnaire for parents of children visiting a pediatrician practicing the homeopathic method" (hereinafter referred to as "pediatrician-homeopath") included 4 closed and semi-open questions. The following signs were studied: gender of the child, age of the child and parents, education

parents, the composition and financial situation of the family, the motives for seeking homeopathic care, the duration of homeopathic treatment of the child, the dynamics of the state of health, satisfaction with the medical service provided. A total of 361 respondents took part in the survey. The minimum required sample size was calculated using the formula of V.I. Yunkerov, S.G. Grigoriev. [ten].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Boys predominated among the visitors to the Homeopathy Center - 60.9%; there were slightly fewer girls - 39.1%. The results of the analysis of the age distribution of children who applied for homeopathic care are shown in Fig. 1.

As can be seen from the presented material, more than half (51.2%) of those who applied for homeopathic help were children aged 4–6 years. The next largest group (25%) were children from 1 to 3 years old. The share of children aged 7–10 years was 18.0%. The shares of children under one year old and after 10 years old are significantly less and amounted to 3.6% and 2.2%, respectively. Thus, the main patients of a homeopathic physician among the pediatric population are children in the age range from 1 to 10 years old, with the largest proportion of children aged 4 to 6 years.



Rice. 1. Distribution of children who applied to pediatric homeopaths of the Center for Homeopathy according to age (in% of total)

The main reasons for parents' appeal to a pediatrician-homeopath were the following diseases of children: 36.5% allergic diseases, frequent acute respiratory viral infections - 31.8%, ENT pathology - 27.1%, pathology of the nervous system - 8.3%, bronchial asthma - 7.1%, diseases of the digestive system - 4.7%, skin diseases - 3.5%, pathology of speech, urinary tract, synechia - 1.2%. As a preventive measure, only 4% of the parents surveyed turned to a homeopathic pediatrician (Fig. 2).



Rice. 2. The reasons for the appeal of children to pediatric homeopaths in the Center for Homeopathy (on 100 responding parents)

Noteworthy is the fact that 97.6% of children had a disease or condition (frequent acute respiratory viral infections), about which the parents decided to consult a pediatrician-homeopath, had a duration of 6 to 118 months. At the same time, the parents regularly sought medical help from state and commercial medical and preventive medical institutions, but no positive effect of the treatment was noted. A feature of homeopathic treatment is its duration, the discipline of the parents in fulfilling the doctor's prescriptions, which is not always done when treating a child.

In the process of homeopathic treatment, according to information received from parents, about a third of children (36%) visited pediatric homeopaths for less than 6 months; 25.2% - within 6-12 months; 20.4% - within 1-2 years. An insignificant part of children was observed by doctors from 2 to 3 years old (7.1%) and 11.3% of children - more than 3 years old (Table 1).

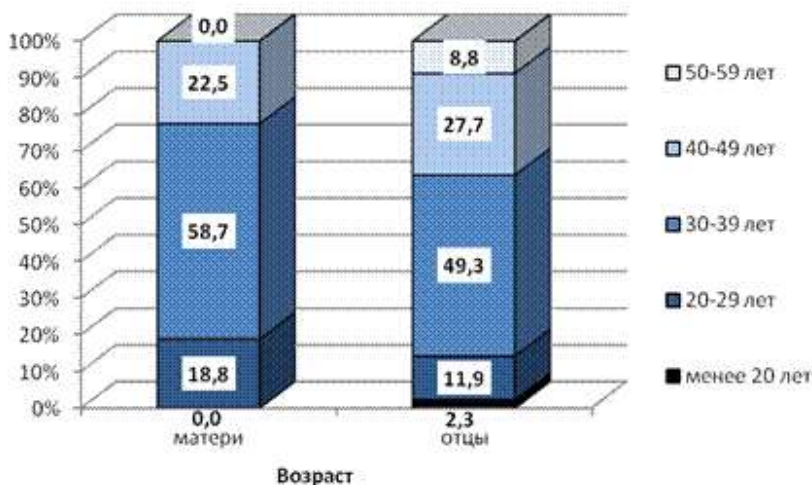
Table 1

Duration of observation of children by a pediatrician-homeopath (in% of the total)

Duration of observation	Specific gravity%
less than 6 months	36.0
6-12 months	25.2
1-2 years	20.4
2-3 years	7.1
3 years or more	11.3
Total	100.0

The study of the age distribution of parents, whose children sought homeopathic care, shows that the bulk of mothers (58.7%) were at the age of 30-39 years and 2.4% at the age of 40-49 years. The share of younger parents aged 20-29 was lower and amounted to 18.8%. Studies have shown that mothers under 20 and over 50 who applied for

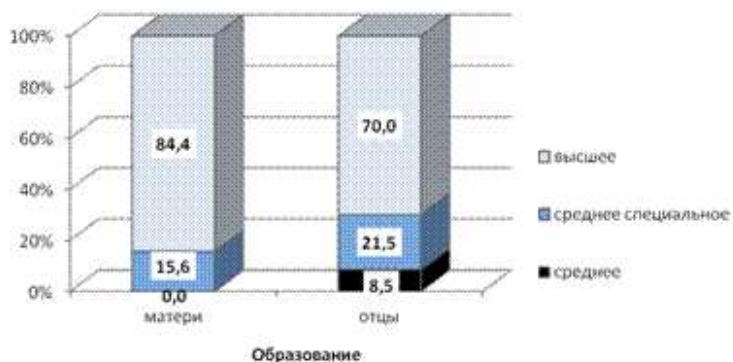
about the child's illness to a pediatrician-homeopath, was not noted (Fig. 3).



Rice. 3. Distribution of mothers and fathers by age (in% of the total)

The analysis of the age structure of fathers, whose children turned to a pediatric homeopath, repeats that of mothers. Thus, the largest share (49.3%) was at the age of 30-39 and 40-49 years (27.8%), 18.8% were fathers aged 20-29, 3% - at the age of less than 20 years and 8.8% are over 50 years old (Fig. 3).

The study of the level of education of parents of children visiting a pediatrician-homeopath shows that 84.4% of mothers and 70.0% of fathers have higher education. Mothers with secondary specialized education accounted for 15.6%, fathers - 1.5%. 8.5% of fathers of children who visit a pediatric homeopath have secondary education. There are no women with secondary education among mothers (Fig. 4).



Rice. 4. Distribution of mothers and fathers by education (in% of the total)

According to the results of a survey of respondents, it was revealed that 86.8% of children who applied to a pediatrician-homeopath live in St. Petersburg, 3.6% of children are residents of the Leningrad region. Children from other regions accounted for 9.6%. The main share of children who applied for homeopathic care were born in St. Petersburg (96%); 4% in other regions.

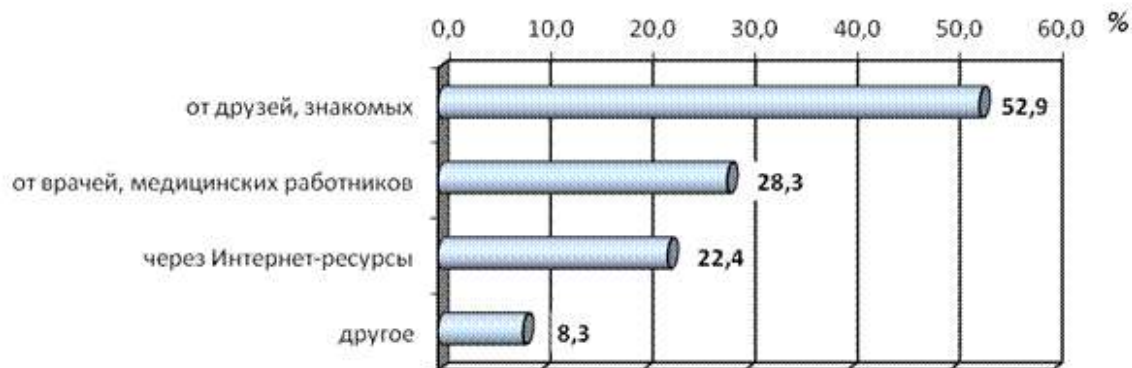
According to a sociological survey, 41.9% of mothers and 38.4% of fathers suffer from chronic diseases. Every second family has one child (51.8%),

every third has two children (38.8%), 9.4% of the parents surveyed have three children. The total number of members of the studied families ranges from two to six. Families of two made up 3.7%, of three - 47.7%, of four - 35.3%, of five - 6.0%, of six - 7.2%, therefore, families of three and four (83%) represent the bulk of families where children visit a homeopathic pediatrician.

Pricing policy of the Center for Homeopathy, carried out in relation to medical services, satisfied 88.4% of parents who visited the medical center with their children. Parents who were not satisfied with the cost of seeing a homeopathic pediatrician (11.6%) noted that an additional discount could be provided for two children.

The results of the survey showed that the low level of family income (8.8% of families have an income below the subsistence minimum per capita in St. Petersburg) is not an obstacle to seeking homeopathic medical services. All this suggests that parents have a high level of motivation for homeopathic treatment of their children. At the same time, attention is drawn to the fact that regardless of the level of family income, all parents (100%) use paid services in various fields of activity for their children. 84.0% of the respondents pay for various medical services, 54.0% - services in the field of additional education and 42.4% - in the field of physical education and sports. Thus, the presented data indicate that families in which the health and education of children are the top priority seek homeopathic care.

The study of information sources from which parents learned about the possibilities of homeopathic treatment and the appointment of a pediatrician-homeopath is shown in Fig. 5.



Rice. 5. Sources of information for parents

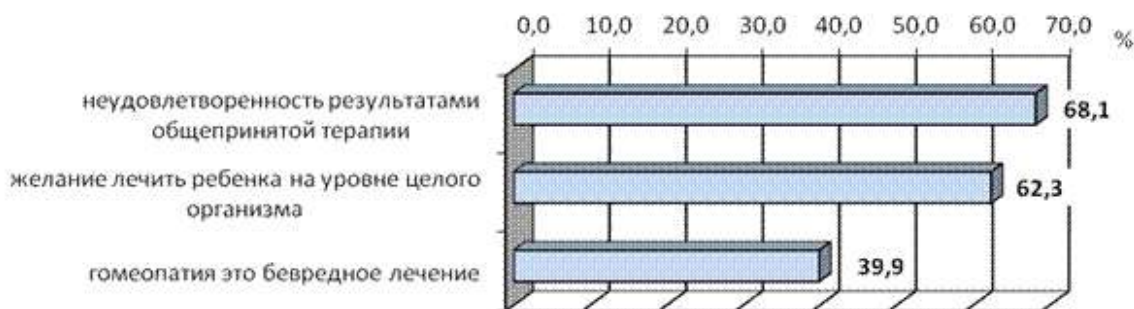
on the appointment of a pediatrician-homeopath at the Center for Homeopathy (per 100 responding parents)

As you can see from the material presented, more than half of the parents (52.9%) used word of mouth services, i.e. received this information from friends and acquaintances. 8.3% of parents learned from doctors and medical workers about the possibilities of homeopathic treatment, as an additional one to the generally accepted treatment; via Internet resources - 2.4%. Other sources (8.3%) are represented mainly by books and special literature. It should be noted that none of the parents interviewed received the desired information from the media - radio, newspapers, television (Fig. 5).

Noteworthy is the information that 63.1% of parents used homeopathy in their family before visiting a homeopathic pediatrician. Among the reasons

prompted to turn to homeopathic treatment, the respondents noted the following (Fig. 6): "homeopathy is a harmless treatment" (39.9%), "the desire to treat a child at the level of the whole organism" (62.3%), "dissatisfaction with the results of the generally accepted therapy" (68.1%). The parents' visit to the homeopathic pediatrician was deliberate, it was not a tribute to fashion: none of the respondents noted the reason "all my acquaintances are doing this," suggested in the questionnaire.

In the course of a sociological study, the dynamics of the state of health of children was assessed based on the results of homeopathic treatment in a specialized homeopathic institution. According to the parents (361 people), whose children received outpatient care from a homeopathic pediatrician at the Homeopathic Center, in most cases (81.9%) the child's health improved against the background of homeopathic therapy, significant changes in health did not occur in 18.1% children.



Rice. 6. Reasons that prompted parents to contact to homeopathic treatment of children (per 100 responding parents)

The parents did not notice any deterioration in the health of their children. According to the parents, there was a positive trend in the frequency and severity of acute diseases. 71.2% of children were less likely to suffer from acute diseases, 75.9% of the disease began to develop more easily. The severity of the course of acute diseases did not change in 4.1%, the frequency - in 8.8% of children. There was no increase in the frequency and severity of the disease. In general, the majority of parents are satisfied with the provided medical service (98.8%). In four cases (1.2%), dissatisfaction with the service of a pediatrician-homeopath was revealed. It is associated, in the subjective opinion of the parents, with the insufficient effect of homeopathic treatment during the observation period.

Thus, the conducted medical and social research revealed that children of predominantly early (25%) and preschool age (51.2%), living in St. Petersburg, seek homeopathic help. Parents of children are mainly between the ages of 30–49 and have higher education. Families where children visit a homeopathic pediatrician consist of 3-4 people. Every second family has one child (51.8%), every third family has two children (38.8%).

63.1% of parents who applied to the Homeopathy Center earlier used homeopathic remedies in their family. Homeopathic care is sought after by families in which the health and education of their children is a top priority. At the same time, the low level of family income is not an obstacle to seeking homeopathic care.

The main reasons for contacting a homeopathic pediatrician are allergic

diseases (36.5%), frequent acute respiratory viral infections (31.8%) and otorhinolaryngological pathology in children (27.1%). Parents consciously approach a visit to a pediatrician-homeopath's appointment, most of them are satisfied with the cost of the appointment.

According to the parents, in most cases (81.9%) the child's health improved against the background of homeopathic therapy; the parents did not notice any deterioration in the health of their children. 71.2% of children were less likely to suffer from acute diseases, 75.9% of the disease began to develop more easily. In general, 98.8% of parents are satisfied with the provided medical service.

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