

International Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance in the Healthcare System in the Zarafshan Oasis, 1998–2005

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Abstract: This article analyzes the development of the sector based on international cooperation and humanitarian assistance implemented in the Zarafshan oasis (on the example of Bukhara and Navoi regions) within the framework of the reform of the healthcare system of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1998–2005. The article provides evidence that the material and technical assistance provided by the world community has led to an increase in the quality of medical services in the regions, a decrease in diseases, and positive changes in the health of the population. International organizations, foreign countries, grants and in-kind assistance have made a significant contribution to the modernization of the healthcare sector.

Keywords: Healthcare, Zarafshan oasis, Bukhara, Navoi, international cooperation, humanitarian assistance, Presidential decree, in-kind assistance, screening center, TORCH, medicine, “Heart to Heart”, UNICEF, World Bank, healthy generation, investment.

Introduction

The “State Program for Reforming the Healthcare System”, adopted by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-2107 dated November 10, 1998, served as the main legal basis for a radical renewal of the healthcare system in the country. In particular, in the Zarafshan oasis regions - Bukhara and Navoi, on the basis of this program, the material and technical base was strengthened by attracting international organizations, foreign countries and in-kind assistance to the sector, and practical work was carried out to improve the quality of medical services. This study is aimed at analyzing the essence, directions and socio-economic results of cooperation in this direction.

Literature Analysis and Methodology

The works devoted to the history of international relations of Uzbekistan include the books of N. Tokhliyev, A. Tokhsanov, A. Rasulov and others. The essence of the selected problem is revealed using materials from republican and local state archives, periodicals and popular science publications. In the process of studying international cooperation and humanitarian aid in the health care system in the Zarafshan oasis from 1998 to 2005, economic, logical, scientific abstraction, induction, deduction, dynamic learning, comparative analysis, and other methods were used.

Result and Discussion

In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated November 10, 1998 No. PF-2107 “On the State Program for Reforming the Healthcare System of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, on December 3, 1998, the Resolution of the Bukhara Regional Governor No. 205 “On the State Program for Reforming the Healthcare System” was adopted. Under this program, the leadership

of the regional health department, together with the international organization “World” Concern, provided the regional branch of the Republican Scientific Center for Emergency Medical Care with a free-of-charge first stage: on August 3, 1998, necessary medical equipment was delivered in one truck. In the second stage, on August 5 of this year, a 40-ton container delivered health equipment and some medicines to the region[1]. The Bukhara regional “Dori-Darmon” joint-stock company purchased glucose, sodium chloride, and injection solutions for 1 million 292 thousand soums from the SP “Korform Sanoat”, medicines such as streptomycin and penicillin for 555 thousand soums from the Samarkand Dori-Darmon association, 1 percent brilliant green alcohol solution for 160 thousand soums from the AOOT “Bioform”, and medicines for 36,809 US dollars from the Hoffman Lya-Rosh company, a pharmaceutical enterprise of a distant foreign country[2].

20 of the republican pharmaceutical enterprises of the Bukhara regional “Dori-Darmon” joint-stock company signed a contract with the “Yelli-Lilli” company for 20 thousand US dollars[3]. In 1998, UNICEF brought 50,000 units of REGNDRON powder as a goodwill aid to prevent infectious intestinal diseases in adolescents in the Bukhara region and distributed it to all institutions of the region. The Bukhara region's foreign pharmaceutical enterprise "KRKA" (late) signed a contract with the Slovenian company for 79,900 US dollars and transferred it to the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations (MVES)[4].

In order to strengthen the material and technical base of the regional branch of the Republican Scientific Center for Emergency Medical Care and meet the requirements for medical equipment, 18 intensive care beds were imported from Finland, 2 anesthesia machines from Germany, 48 laboratory analysis machines from Switzerland, 2 operating tables and a baste lamp, a hemosorption machine, a leniomat and other medical supplies[5]. In order to bring medical services closer to the population in health institutions, 18 new rural medical stations were built in Bukhara region in 1999. All newly built rural medical stations were provided with 90-95% medical equipment and 100% medical supplies[6]. During the first 9 months of 1999, the stock of medicines from the USA, England, Denmark, Germany, Austria and other countries was replenished. A large amount of medicines were supplied to the region through loans, KES and tenders for the treatment of tuberculosis, tumors and mental (social) diseases. As a result, some good opportunities for the treatment of diseases were created[7].

In order to attract foreign investment to the healthcare system in Bukhara and attract the attention of international and public organizations, 23 times during the first nine months of 1999, humanitarian aid was provided to the population of the region. Available medicines were provided by Countport International, international organizations such as UNICEF, the USA, Germany, Denmark, and England. Most of the foreign humanitarian aid was provided for the newly established regional branch of the Republican State Scientific Center for Emergency Medical Care, and efforts were made to strengthen its material and technical base[8]. The development of foreign relations has led to a 33.5 percent decrease in the number of infectious diseases among the population of the region, and a 4-fold decrease in the number of viral hepatitises, and hepatitis "C". A decrease in brucellosis, tuberculosis, skin and venereal diseases, and tumors has also been observed[9]. Due to this, since 1999, the work on regional healthcare has become somewhat more noticeable.

As a result of the development of mutual relations, at the ceremony of handing over humanitarian aid allocated by the US organization “Heart to Heart International” at the Samarkand airport, medicines and various medical equipment worth 6 million US dollars were distributed to hospitals in Samarkand, Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions. The organization “Heart to Heart International”, supported by the US Department of State, has been operating since 1992. Until 2002, it provided assistance worth about 200 million dollars to different countries of the world. From 1998 to May 2002, the organization’s charitable assistance to medical facilities in the Republic of Uzbekistan exceeded 13 million dollars. The ceremony of handing over humanitarian aid was attended by the US Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Uzbekistan John Hyorbst[10].

Despite the budget deficit in the Zarafshan oasis, the regions have taken measures to strengthen the health of the population, especially mothers and children. In 2001, great attention was paid to the protection of the family, motherhood and childhood in Navoi region. During 2001, a total of 2.8 billion soums were spent from the regional budget on the work carried out under the “Mother and Child” program. A number of works were also carried out to equip medical institutions of the region with modern equipment. In particular, the maternity hospital complex of the Nurota district central hospital was overhauled. It was equipped with modern medical equipment worth 1.2 million US dollars through the Finnish company “Mediko-Medical” and began its activities[11].

In Bukhara region, in order to provide women at risk with reagents and consumables for screening tests for specific infectious diseases (TORCH) in women, medical equipment worth 9.2 thousand US dollars in 2002 and 2.4 thousand US dollars in 2003 was purchased from foreign countries. During 2004-2007, 442 women were tested for TORCH infection. Reagents worth 96,408,344 soums were purchased for testing specific infections. In 2002-2007, 889 children born with congenital defects and hereditary diseases were registered, and these families were trained in medical and genetic patronage by a geneticist from the regional “Mother and Child” screening center. 69,6 thousand US dollars were spent to modernize the screening center. The center received a grant from Japan and received 80 million soums from the Resp-ka Screening Center. A Doppler ultrasound scanner worth 100,000 soums was provided in 2006, and 2,006 pregnant women underwent ultrasound examinations that year, and 86 fetal anomalies were identified and directed for termination[12].

In 2001, 15 rural medical stations were newly built and put into operation in the region[13], the 25th special treatment and prevention institution on the territory of the Narpay joint-stock company in Navoi district, additional inter-district neurology, pulmonology, neurosurgery, and otolaryngology departments were built within the district central hospital, a 30-bed emergency medical ambulance department was built within the Khatirchi district central hospital, and all the district central hospitals and the laboratory functional diagnostic departments of the 3rd medical and sanitary unit were repaired, and modern medical equipment was installed and put into operation with the help of a World Bank loan. Also, the US charitable organization "Counterpart International" brought medical equipment worth 655 thousand US dollars, which provided invaluable services for the health of the region's population[14].

In order to improve the implementation of the Health System Reform Program for 1998-2005, approved by the regional governor's resolution No. K-322 dated November 23, 1998, in the treatment and preventive institutions of the Navoi region's health system. Ministry of Health

Conclusion

International cooperation and humanitarian assistance implemented in the healthcare system of the Zarafshan oasis during 1998–2005 played an important role in the development of oasis medicine. Medical equipment, medicines and retraining of specialists brought from countries such as Germany, the USA, Finland, Japan, Slovenia, Russia, Ukraine helped to improve the quality of medical services. Foreign grants, including programs implemented in cooperation with international organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, Heart to Heart International, Counterpart International, reduced the incidence of infectious diseases, and created the basis for raising a healthy generation. Improvement of external relations ensured significant positive changes in the well-being and health of the population of the Zarafshan oasis.

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