

REVIEW ARTICLE

ON THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM OF PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION AMONG SERVICEMEN OF THE DEFENSE FORCES

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The aim: Analysis of the legal framework for the development of scientifically sound measures for the prevention and detection of drug addiction and substance abuse in the Armed Forces of Ukraine as an important element of the system of medical support for combat readiness of troops.

Materials and methods: The normative documents on carrying out obligatory preventive narcological examinations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other power ministries and departments are considered.

Conclusions: Today in Ukraine it is necessary to improve the legal framework and strengthen control over the work of military commissariats to study conscripts, collect the necessary information about alcohol and drug addiction of citizens who are called up to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

KEY WORDS: alcohol dependence, drug addiction, preventive medicine, military medicine

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INTRODUCTION

Today, in some parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, the state authorities of Ukraine do not exercise their powers, which significantly affect the drug situation not only in these regions but in the country as a whole. Events in the area of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (from April 14, 2014 to April 30, 2018) in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions necessitated the announcement of mobilization to increase the number of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter – the Armed Forces). In the first six waves of mobilization of the Armed Forces alone, 210,000 servicemen were recruited, and some of them signed a contract and today continue their military service in the Joint Forces operation (from April 30, 2018 to the present), mostly in the newly formed military parts.

The modern army is a part of society, and all processes, both positive and negative, are reflected in military service. The prevalence of alcoholism and drug addiction among the civilian population determines the presence of these phenomena among the military.

Alcohol and drug addiction as dangerous phenomena penetrate the military environment, especially with young people who have become addicted in school and adolescence. The consequence of alcohol and drug addiction is deviant behaviour, which in combat significantly increases the risk of non-combat losses.

In total, since the beginning of the Anti-Terrorist Operation, the number of servicemen whose deaths were not

directly related to the fighting has exceeded 1,300. Some non-combat casualties are related to alcohol and drug abuse among military personnel. For example, in the first half of 2017, drug-related crimes accounted for 5.6% (78) of the total. In the anti-terrorist operation zone, during the same period, they accounted for 15% (42) of the total number of crimes.

The above became the basis for the generalization of the modern regulatory framework on the organization of prevention, in particular the detection of alcoholism and drug addiction among servicemen of the Defense Forces.

THE AIM

Analysis of the legal framework for the development of scientifically sound measures for the prevention and detection of drug addiction and substance abuse in the Armed Forces of Ukraine as an important element of the system of medical support for combat readiness of troops.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An analysis of publications related to problematic issues in the field of detection and prevention of alcohol and drug addiction among servicemen. The normative documents regulating the procedure for conducting obligatory preventive narcological examinations and examinations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other power ministries and departments are considered.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Monitoring of the drug and alcohol situation in Ukraine is carried out in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of July 10, 2019 № 689 “Issues of monitoring the drug and alcohol situation in Ukraine” [1] and the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 06.02.2019 № 56-r “On approval of the action plan for 2019-2020 for the implementation of the State Drug Policy Strategy for the period up to 2020” [2].

Public information on the results of the annual monitoring is available on the website of the state institution “Center for Mental Health and Monitoring of Drugs and Alcohol of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine”. According to the latest state monitoring of drugs and alcohol of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, at the beginning of 2019 in Ukraine were registered more than 9 thousand people who were diagnosed for the first time in their lives with mental disorders related to drug use, among their share of persons aged 15 to 35 was 75.1%. The main users of drugs are men (85.2%); the share of women - 14.8%; residents of cities - 83.7%, rural areas - 16.3%. The highest prevalence of drug addiction (per 100 thousand population) was recorded in Zaporizhzhia (364.61), Kropyvnytskyi (262.2), Odessa (235.47), Mykolaiv (213.93), Dnipropetrovsk (210.3), Kherson (181.7), Chernihiv (165.93) regions and the city of Kyiv (293.87). Among the most consumed drugs, opioids account for 65.5%; cannabinoids - 9.7%; cocaine - 0.02%; hallucinogens - 0.08%; simultaneous use of several drugs and other psychoactive substances - 24.2% [3].

Thus, according to official data, at the beginning of 2019, more than 100,000 drug addicts were registered across the country. However, according to experts of the international project “European survey of students on alcohol and other drug use - ESPAD”, given the hidden nature of this phenomenon, drug latency, researchers believe that the idea of the number of drug addicts in Ukraine is 450-500 thousand people is more than 1% of the total population. According to opinion polls conducted within the framework of this project, 35% of freshmen in colleges and 25% of university students have experience of drug use. Experts believe that the number of Ukrainians who cannot live without drugs is increasing by almost 8% every year [4].

In 2017, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Concerning Strengthening the Responsibility of Servicemen and Certain Other Persons” [5]. The law stipulates that the consumption of alcoholic, low-alcohol beverages or the use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or their analogues by servicemen, conscripts and reservists during gatherings on the territory of military units, military facilities, or the appearance of such persons on the territory of a military unit while intoxicated state, in a state of narcotic or other intoxication, or their performance of military duties in a state of intoxication, in a state of narcotic or other intoxication, as well as the refusal of such persons to undergo an examination for alcohol, drug or other intoxication entail the imposition of a fine of seventy to one hundred and forty-five non-taxable minimum incomes or arrest with detention on guard duty for up to five days. It is provided that the participation of chiefs (commanders) and other leaders in such actions entails the imposition of a fine of one hundred forty-five to two hundred and fifteen tax-free minimum incomes or arrest with detention on guard duty for a period of five to seven days. Such acts committed during a special period

or by a person who during the year was subject to an administrative penalty for the same violations, entail the imposition of a fine of two hundred and fifteen to two hundred and eighty-five non-taxable minimum incomes or arrest with detention on guard duty for a period of seven to ten days.

Analysis of crimes related to drugs and psychotropic substances among servicemen shows that in the structure of seized drugs and psychotropic substances were most often found: products of cannabis processing in the form of crushed parts of this plant (hashish, anasha, marijuana) or related to bouquet; hemp resins (black or brown tablets); products of opium poppy processing in the form of raw opium; heroin; synthetic drugs (methadone, amphetamine, opium alkaloids); pharmaceuticals; precursors (acetic anhydride, ephedrine, lysergic acid, etc.) [6, 7].

In Ukraine, in order to timely identify patients with alcoholism and drug addiction, and establish medical contraindications to certain activities, a preventive drug test has been introduced.

The procedure for drug examination is determined by:

- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 1238 of 06.11.1997 “On mandatory preventive narcological examination and the procedure for its conduct” (hereinafter - Resolution № 1238) [8];

- Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine № 339 of 28.11.1997 “On improving the system of preventive anti-alcohol and anti-drug measures and mandatory preventive drug examinations” (hereinafter - Order № 339) [9];

- Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine №1296 of 04.11.2003 “On medical care in health care facilities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine” [10];

- Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine №1340 of 11.12.2014 on amendments to the order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine of 04 November 2003 № 1296 [11];

- Order of the Security Service of Ukraine №310 of 17.07.2012 “On the procedure for drug and psychiatric examinations in the Security Service of Ukraine” [12].

Regulatory documents provide for the passage of primary, periodic and extraordinary drug examinations. The initial examination is carried out by persons who are employed in a certain position. Periodic review is conducted at regular intervals (different ones for different professions) throughout the period of work in his position. The issue of extraordinary examination is decided individually.

A narcologist who has a certificate in the specialty “Narcology” has the right to conduct a narcological examination. Specialists who have undergone special training according to the program approved by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, testing and received a Certificate in the form № 146/0 are allowed to work. Training on modern drug testing should take place every three years. Unauthorized narcologist cannot perform preventive examinations.

In case of detection of signs of narcological disease or in case of disagreement with the results of preventive narcological examination, a citizen has the right to undergo additional narcological examination, psychological testing and medical laboratory examination in an inpatient department of a narcological hospital within ten days.

The procedure for preventive narcological examination was prescribed in the order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine “On approval of clinical protocols for medical care for “Addic-

tion” from 21.09.2009 № 681. According to this order, the final conclusion on the suitability or unsuitability of the person to perform certain work is carried out by the medical-consultative commission consisting of 3 narcologists; the examination procedure lasts up to 10 days [13]. However, this order expired, according to the order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine dated 28.02.2020 № 590 [14].

After the preventive narcological examination and additional examination in the hospital, the citizen is issued a certificate of the results of the narcological examination (form № 140-0 (registration)). Certificate a single document (according to the Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine № 339 of 28.11.1997), certifying the presence or absence of contraindications to the performance of functional duties and activities for which the passage of primary and periodic preventive drug testing is mandatory [9].

According to paragraph 17 of the “List of professions and activities for which primary and periodic preventive drug testing is mandatory” approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 1238 of 06.11.1997 [8], in order to timely identify patients with alcoholism, drug addiction, drug addicts, Persons entering the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, including those called up for military service, are subject to preventive narcological examination. The Ministry of Health of Ukraine has identified narcological establishments as the venue for the preventive narcological examination. The list of state health care facilities where a narcological examination can be performed is approved by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. The list of public health facilities where a drug test can be performed is approved by local government administrations [10].

A significant part of Ukrainian citizens undergo this procedure in a narcological institution at their place of permanent residence, except for employees of: the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Security Services of Ukraine; Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine; State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. Persons working in the above structures undergo drug examinations in departmental medical institutions.

Thus, narcological examinations in the Security Service of Ukraine are conducted by narcologists of medical and preventive institutions of the Security Service of Ukraine, narcological examinations during medical examinations are conducted by narcologists who are members of the military medical commission.

Mandatory periodic and extraordinary narcological examinations of privates and officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, employees of bodies and subdivisions of internal affairs, regardless of subordination, are conducted by psychiatrists of medical centers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

It should be noted that the organization of mandatory preventive narcological examination of citizens and persons entering the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and serving in the military in departmental treatment and prevention facilities is not regulated.

In addition, if it is necessary to conduct extraordinary examinations of privates and officers, law enforcement officers, servicemen, employees of the National Guard of Ukraine and in case of impossibility of conducting such examinations in departmental medical institutions, these persons are sent for extraordinary examinations to state and municipal security health institutions, where an extraordinary examination of a person is carried out on a paid basis at the expense of the customer (department). If

a person has passed a narcological examination in a medical institution that is not included in the approved list, the certificate of the results of such examination is not valid.

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 1238 of 06.11.1997 [8] preventive narcological examination is carried out according to the mandatory program, which includes drug narcological examination, psychological testing and medical laboratory examination in the manner prescribed by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

According to the Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine № 507 of December 28, 2002 “On approval of standards for medical care and quality indicators of medical care” [15], laboratory (toxicological) analysis should consist of 2 stages: preliminary diagnosis (toxicological screening) and final diagnosis (chemical-analytical methods: thin-layer, gas-liquid, high-performance liquid chromatography with mass spectrometry).

Performing two stages of toxicological research increases the reliability of the final conclusion on the presence of a narcotic or psychotropic substance and meets international standards. Today, the procedure for the use of rapid tests for alcohol and drugs during drug examinations remains unregulated. Positive results of such tests, in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, are not considered grounds for termination of a person’s performance of official duties.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine do not have military medical institutions that have the right to conduct preventive drug examinations in full, namely, there are no laboratories that have the right to conduct medical laboratory examinations in the manner prescribed by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Therefore, to ensure compliance with current legislation on the procedure of drug testing, the medical service of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in case of need for special drug tests of servicemen during military service, organizes drug tests on a self-supporting basis in state and municipal health care facilities. The list of facilities where you can undergo a drug test is approved by order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, and at the regional level - by local state administrations.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study of the legal framework of Ukraine in the field of prevention of alcohol and drug addiction, in particular the procedure for organizing and conducting preventive drug examinations, it is established that certain issues of organization of prevention and detection of alcohol and drug addiction among servicemen of the Defense Forces are finally unresolved.

Based on the data obtained, we consider it necessary: development and approval of an interdepartmental order on the procedure for conducting narcological and psychiatric examinations in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; development and approval of an interdepartmental order on coordination of actions of specialists of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine in providing psychiatric and medical-psychological assistance to participants of the Anti-terrorist operation/Joint Forces Operation; strengthening control over the work of military commissariats on the study of conscription contingents, gathering the necessary information on alcohol and drug addiction of citizens who are called up to the Defense Forces.

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Conflict of interest:

The Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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