

The History of Ukrainian Medicine

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Summary

The concept of the term Ukrainian Medicine is examined and its history is summarised. There is a review of the beginnings of modern medicine in the period 1898-1910, and its development following the First World War. The effects of Russian influence are discussed, and progress since Ukraine's declaration of independence from the Soviet régime is described.

Résumé

Le concept de « *Médecine ukrainienne* » est ici examiné et son histoire résumée. Ce concept a émergé au début de la naissance de la médecine moderne, durant la période **1898-1910** et s'est développé après la Première Guerre Mondiale. Les effets de l'influence russe sur la « *Médecine ukrainienne* » sont discutés et les progrès enregistrés dans ce domaine, depuis la déclaration d'indépendance de l'Ukraine et la disparition du régime soviétique sont décrits.

Since Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991, mass media and scientific literature have increasingly used the term Ukrainian medicine. At first sight, this seems logical while terms such as German, American, Chinese, Polish and Russian medicine are generally accepted.

However, the attitude towards the concept of Ukrainian medicine is ambiguous. The objections to the term are grounded in the fact that medical knowledge is gathered for millennia by many peoples and nations and thus, is of international character. Besides, there isn't a clear definition of the concept of Ukrainian medicine, different authors interpreting it differently. Most frequently used is the term "*Medicine in Ukraine*", which carries the idea of geographical location. This term often constitutes a part of the titles of new magazines and editions.

The prime reason for this state of affairs is that Ukraine was, for centuries, deprived of its sovereignty and various fields of science and practice were subordinated to the ruling states. Ukrainian territories were divided between Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the oppressors often prohibiting or hindering the development of national culture and science. Under these conditions, medicine in Ukraine developed as a part of Russian, Austrian or Polish medicine. As a result, both in Soviet and Russian literature and sometimes even in new Ukrainian publications, the activity and success of Ukrainian doctors are portrayed as achievements of a foreign medicine.

The origin of Ukrainian medicine may be traced back to the folk medicine of the Kyiv Ukraine-Rus epoch. It developed as monastery medicine and medicine of the Kozak state. Its development slowed down for a long time after Ukraine lost its independence. The first steps towards modern Ukrainian medicine as a science were made in 1898-1910, when the first scientific associations of Ukrainian doctors were established, (the Ukrainian Scientific Society in Kyiv and the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Lviv), the first works on medicine in Ukrainian

were published, (by Yevhen Ozarkevych, Martiryi Halyn, Oleksander Cherniakhivskiy and others) and the first disease prevention and treatment institution of clearly Ukrainian orientation, Narodna Lichnytsia (People's Clinic) was established. At the same time, Ukrainian doctors made themselves heard at European medical forums in Paris, Madrid, Prague and Belgrade and the formations of Ukrainian Sichovi Stril'tsi and the Ukrainian Halyts'ka army health service established the new Ukrainian military medicine.

The term Ukrainian medicine, or the equivalent Ukrainian national medicine, came into use only after the collapse of the Russian empire and the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic. In January 1918, the first medical journal in Eastern Ukraine, "*Ukrains'ki Medychni Visti*" was published. In its editorial "Our Tasks Today" Ovkseinty Korchak-Chepurkivskiy, the oldest Ukrainian professor-hygienist, the founder of social hygiene, wrote the following; "*Our main task is to develop Ukrainian national medicine as a science and a practical field of knowledge*" To achieve this he thought it was necessary to "*open our scientific and educational medical establishments; draw upon the experience of folk medicine; promote unification of nationally aware doctors- social figures, avail ourselves of support from doctors and other medical workers of non-Ukrainian origin, return all Ukrainian medical resources that have been spread out all over the distant lands to the home country.*"

Korchak-Chepurkivskiy organised and headed the first Ukrainian medical university department. He was one of the founders of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science, where he established a medical section to serve the functions of a centre of Ukrainian medical science development, and organised a health research department, a prototype of later academic institutes. He also researched Ukrainian medical terminology as well as the health and demography of the Ukrainian population.

At the same time, the Ministry of People's Health and Care of the Ukrainian State, the Medical Department of the Ukrainian Army, the Ukrainian Red Cross and a number of clinics were established.

Ukrainian scholars began lecturing at medical schools in Ukraine and took an active part in organising scientific and medical institutions. Medical educational establishments created in the following years were clearly Ukrainian in their form and content. These were the Pathologo-anatomical Institute headed by Professor Pavlo Kucherenko, Kyiv Bacteriological Institute headed by Professor Marko Neshchadymenko, the Institute of Microbiology of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science headed by Professor F. Omelchenko, the Kharkiv Institute of Experimental Medicine, the Kharkiv Psycho-neurological Institute and others.

Centres of Ukrainian scientific medicine also developed in this period. These were scientific schools of major medical specialties that researched problems of medicine, educated doctors, post-graduate students and scholars, published Ukrainian dictionaries, textbooks, scientific monographs and collections with work that was of a European standard. Among the first national scientific schools were those of surgeons (by Yevhen Cherniakhivskiy), obstetrician-gynaecologists (by Oleksandr Krupskiy), physician-gerontologists (by Ivan Bazylevych), otolaryngologists (by Oleksandr Puchkivskiy), ophthalmologists (by Mykola Levitskiy), dermatologist-venereologists (by Oleksiy Tyzhnenko), specialists in occupational medicine (by Volodymyr Pidhayetskiy), pathologists (by Pavlo Kucherenko), microbiologists (by Marko Neschadymenko), physiologists and biochemists (by Valentyna Radyzmovska) and pathophysiologicalists (by Mykola Vashetko). Surgeons Borys Andriyevskiy, Hryhoriy Ivanytskiy, Petro Shydlovskiy, psychoneurologist Mykhaylo Mishchenko, phthisiatricians Vasyl Plushch and Antin Sobkevych, radiologist O Bohayevskiy, clinical physiologist and physician-gerontologist Ivan Bazylevych, histologist Oleksandr Cherniakhivskiy, sanitarians Ovkseintiy Korchak-Chepurkivskiy and Volodymyr Udovenko, anatomists Arsen Starkov and Oleksiy Ivakyn and microbiologist Fedir Omelchenko also began developing their schools. These scientists prepared dozens of specialist textbooks, monographs, collections of scientific articles and brought up many specialists.

A real contribution to the development of Ukrainian medicine was made by Yevmen Lukasevych and Borys Matiushenko, the authors of works on medicine and medical terminology and by editors and publishers of the first Ukrainian medical journals. These included Martiryi Halyn, the author of the first scientific medical dictionary and first Ukrainian publications on surgery, Maryan Panchyshyn, the founder and dean of the Medical

Department of the underground Ukrainian University in Lviv (1921-1925), as well as Andriy Zhuravel, Mykola Kudrytskiy, Mykola Herashchenko, Mykola Sysak and many others. It is important to mention the first Ukrainian scientific medical journals that published research, methods and synopses of international achievements of medicine and news of Ukrainian medicine. These are "*Ukrayins'ki medychni v/ist*" (Ukrainian Medical News), Kyiv 1918, 1925-1931) "*Ukrayins'ki medychni arkhiv*", (Ukrainian Medical Archive), Kharkiv, 1927-1932) "*Profilakytchna medytsyna*" (Preventative Medicine), 1929-1937 and "*Likars'kyi visnyk*" (Doctor's Herald) Prague, 1923-1925). Another "*Likars'kyi visnyk*" was published in Lviv from 1921-1939. It was later resumed in Diaspora from 1954 and continues today.

Practical medicine and health care also turned to the language of the indigenous population; they were brought closer to people and reorganised on the basis of doctors' achievements, both in Ukraine and internationally. Thus from the start, Ukrainian medicine consisted of Ukrainian scientific medical institutions, Ukrainian medical schools and Ukrainian health care establishments and it led to the development of scientific, educational, practical and popular scientific literature.

In the 1930s, when there was severe suppression of Ukrainian resistance by the totalitarian regime, with Ukrainian villages wiped out by famine and Ukrainian intellectuals exiled to Gulags, the founders of the Ukrainian scientific schools were done away with or dismissed from their work, pro-Ukrainian tendencies were hindered by administrative means and scientific and educational establishments, as well as health care institutions, became Russian orientated.

Ukrainian officials were replaced by international specialists and works by Ukrainian scholars were seized and it was forbidden to mention them. This was all an attempt to erase the period of the development of Ukrainian medical science, medical schools and health care establishments from our history. In their place Soviet higher schools, (universities absolutely deprived of world tradition) and Soviet scientific institutions and health care establishments, based almost exclusively on the traditions of Russian imperial medicine, began to develop under the leadership of the Communist party. This was a period of russified and ideological Soviet medicine in the Ukrainian SSR. a time when it blew its own trumpet, while hushing up or neglecting achievements of medicine elsewhere in the world. Party leaders rudely interfered in the development of medicine, sometimes preventing, by their decisions, the establishment of whole branches of medical science such as social medicine or genetics. The achievements of Ukrainian medicine of the Ukrainian Renaissance period, in

particular text books, monographs, medical terminology and Ukrainian lectures of the Kyiv Medical Institute, were claimed by Communist authorities to be "nationalistic" and thus hostile and counter revolutionary, and they were excluded from the history of Soviet medicine.

During the years of the highly promoted, so called "prosperity of Soviet Ukraine", when in reality thousand of Ukrainians were exiled to Solovki, Siberia and Gulag camps and when millions died of artificially created famine, only a few doctors and scholars in scientific, educational and health care establishments of the Ukrainian SSR dared not to deny their language and culture, faith and traditions of their people and presented speeches, publications and theses in their native tongue.

During this period, doctors in the Ukrainian diaspora made a great contribution to Ukrainian medicine and its history. A number of essays on the history of Ukrainian medicine and health care were published in "*Likars'kyi visnyk*" (Doctor's Herald) New York- Chicago, 1954-2000, and edited in the last 30 years by Pavlo Dzhul. "*An Encyclopaedia of Ukraine*" was edited by the Shevchenko Scientific Society both in English and Ukrainian. The works of Professor Vasyl Plushch "*Outlines on the history of Ukrainian medical Science and education*" (Munich-1970 Part I 342 pp.) and "*Outlines on the history of Ukrainian medical Science and education (19th and 20th century)*", (Munich-UVAN 1983, Part 2 372 pp.) are of great importance. "*The materials on the history of Ukrainian medicine*" was also produced under Vasyl Plushch's editorship (Vol I New York-Munich 1975 and Vol 2 Chicago 1988).

Ukraine's declaration of independence marked the beginning of a new stage in Ukraine's medical revival. It brought about a shift to the native language in scientific, educational and health care establishments. In the Western region, this shift was practically complete and has resulted in the establishment of several new periodicals and the publication of many medical dictionaries and textbooks. Some medical meetings were held almost exclusively in Ukrainian (eg I (XV) Congress of Surgeons of Ukraine. Some traditions of Ukrainian medicine are also reviving, the Ukrainian Physicians Society in L'viv (O. Kitsera) has resumed its operations and in Kyiv the All-Ukrainian Physicians Society (L Pyrih) has been established. These processes were promoted by six Ukrainian Congresses of the World Federation of Ukrainian Medical Associations, (A Khreptovskiy, P Dzhul, and L Pyrih).

However in many scientific and educational institutions and health care establishments, we often hear the language of our neighbour state. Ukrainian publications are still in the minority in most new medical literature. New periodicals are either non-Ukrainian or bilingual, with only a small percentage in Ukrainian and they often contain

chauvinistic, anti-Ukrainian material. Quite a few scholars and doctors demonstrate their neglect of the state language when speaking for the mass media. After a number of years, the scope of Ukrainian language in many medical institutions and health care establishments has not widened, on the contrary it has often narrowed. Nowadays, there are many doctors and scholars in Ukraine who would like to see Ukrainian medicine in the Russian language, based on the achievements of mostly Russian scholars and on traditions of Russian imperial autocracy that have always had anti-Ukraine colouring. Thus they want to leave everything as it was during the tsar and totalitarian regimes. Unfortunately, the presidium and institutes of the Academy of Medicine in Ukraine are not an exception to this paradox.

It is clear that the continued ideological influence of the communist regime explains the fact that there is still no objective textbook on the history of medicine for medical schools. This course is read from books of the Soviet times according to a somewhat corrected old programme.

Thus, a lot has to be done for our modern medicine (including health care) to become Ukrainian in form and content. Our task, and the task of Ukrainian (in the essence and not only in the citizenship) intellectuals and the Ukrainian scientific and medical elite (either of Ukrainian or other origin), is to develop Ukrainian medicine intensively as a part of European and world medicine. This includes reassessing the achievements and traditions of Ukrainian doctors, Ukrainian scientific medical schools in the 1920s and 1930s and later, condemning and getting rid of the deformations created during the totalitarian regime, giving up the language imposed on us and returning to the language of our people, as well as using the sources of world and Ukrainian culture and science. Ukrainian medicine can and should become an important part of world medicine.

In future, the Ukrainian state, just as other states, should have its own medicine, Ukrainian by roots, traditions, language and content, worthy of becoming a part of international medicine.

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