

DEVELOPMENT OF GERIATRIC DENTISTRY: REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Анотація: Стаття присвячена питанням розвитку гериатричної стоматології. Проаналізовано закордонний досвід у цій галузі. Авторами запропоновано “дорожню карту” розвитку вітчизняної геродонтології, що передбачає реалізацію низки завдань, як-от: укладання анкети й проведення опитування закладів вищої освіти, які здійснюють підготовку лікарів-стоматологів, щодо стану гериатричної стоматології в Україні; подальша рецелція передового європейського і світового досвіду; вивчення думки цільової аудиторії – пацієнтів похилого віку щодо задоволеності рівнем надання спеціалізованої стоматологічної допомоги; розроблення і впровадження міждисциплінарних / мультидисциплінарних освітніх програм, що будуть реалізовуватися на додипломному / післядипломному етапах стоматологічної освіти; розроблення довгострокових / короткострокових сертифікатних програм, які будуть пропонуватися лікарям-стоматологам у процесі безперервного професійного розвитку з метою збільшення частки геродонтологів у структурі лікарів-стоматологів України.

Ключові слова: старіння населення, стоматологічне здоров'я, гериатрична стоматологія, закордонний досвід, «дорожня карта».

Abstract. The article focuses on the evolving area of geriatric dentistry. The article examined international practices within this domain and proposed a “road map” for the development of domestic gerodontology, which provides the implementation of a number of tasks, namely: compiling a questionnaire and conducting a survey on the state of geriatric dentistry in Ukraine among higher educational institutions training dentists; further adoption of advanced European and world experience; studying the opinion of the target audience – elderly patients, – regarding their satisfaction with the level of specialized dental care; implementation of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary educational programs to be applied at the undergraduate/postgraduate stages of dental education; design of long-term/short-term certificate programs to be offered to dentists in the process of continuous professional development in order to increase the share of gerodontologists in the structure of dentists in Ukraine.

Key words: population aging, dental health, geriatric dentistry, international experience, “road map”.

Introduction.

The process of population aging is becoming one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century. According to the United Nations (UN), by 2030 the world population may increase to about 8.5 billion, by 2050 to 9.7 billion, and in 2100. – to 9.7 billion, in 2100. – 10.4 billion [1].

The UN report “World Population Prospects 2022” [1] notes that among the many factors that determine the process of population aging, a significant role is played by the decline in mortality associated with the continuous improvement of the quality of life. Thus, in 2019, the average life expectancy reached 72.8 years, which is almost 9 years more than in 1990. According to forecasts, further mortality reduction will lead to the fact that in 2050 the average life expectancy will be about 77.2 years [1].

Changing demographics due to the increasing number of older people around the world creates new challenges in all areas of life, and scientists consider the need to provide acceptable, accessible and equitable healthcare for this population group to be the greatest challenge. Recognition of this fact has contributed to the focus of modern medicine on healthy aging – a paradigm shift from a pathology-focused approach to one that is focused on internal capacity and function [2]. It is natural that oral health, being an integral part of overall health, affects the physical and mental well-being and quality of life of older people [3]. At the same time, one of the main criteria for successful ‘dental’ aging is the preservation of a natural, healthy, functional dentition

throughout life, including all the social and biological benefits such as aesthetics and comfort, as well as the ability to chew, taste and speak [4].

Awareness that the oral health of the elderly is far from optimal, as the treatment needs of these patients are extremely high due to edentulousness, missing teeth, caries, periodontal disease and tooth wear, which leads to impaired oral function [4], has led to the active development of such a branch of dentistry as geriatric dentistry in many countries, because, according to Mohammad, Preshaw & Ettinger [5] dental schools should teach in such a way that dentists are competent and confident in the treatment of elderly patients.

The aim of the study.

To analyze the international experience of implementing educational programs in geriatric dentistry at different levels of higher dental education and to outline the prospects for the development of this field in Ukraine.

Main part.

Analysis of the literature on world practices in the field of dental education [2-11] shows that in many countries of the world, the awareness that the elderly currently constitute a large segment of the population, which tends to increase steadily, has contributed to the development and implementation of special training programs in geriatric dentistry in the process of dentists’ training, which has become a response to the challenges of the time to meet the needs of maintaining the oral health of the elderly. The authors inform about the implementation of curricula offered at the undergradu-

ate and postgraduate levels of higher education, as well as in the process of lifelong learning in the form of certificate programs or advanced training courses of various duration and in different learning modes – offline, online, mixed [3].

Despite this, the situation with the development of geriatric dentistry differs significantly from country to country and continent to continent. For example, in German-speaking countries [6] and Germany in particular, dental faculties do not have enough teachers specialized in gerodontology; therefore, financial and personnel prerequisites should be created in universities to meet the needs of patients and to develop the professional competencies of future dentists in the field of gerodontology [7].

Australian researchers [8] emphasize that formal recognition of the need to develop special programs in the field of gerodontology is not enough, so there is a need for more active promotion of this field and the development of educational and research programs in geriatric dentistry.

Representatives of the dental community in Latin America and the Caribbean argue that geriatric dentistry in this region is practically in its embryonic stage, so there is an urgent need for its active development and promotion [9].

According to Marchini and co-authors [10], in most countries, with the exception of Japan, there is a lack of a sufficient number of dentists trained in geriatric dentistry, as well as training programs, despite the fact that there is an increase in the number of studies related to geriatric dentistry.

The results of an international survey conducted by Kossioni and co-authors [11], which involved representatives of 29 countries, are worthy of note. Despite the fact that, in our opinion, the sample is not sufficiently representative, as a total of 123 responses were received, the information provided by the respondents and processed and presented by the cited authors can be used for future studies, for example, in Ukraine and for comparing the data obtained.

According to Kossioni, 43.9% of respondents to the survey said they had a dedicated program director for periodontics; as an independent subject, periodontics was taught in 37.4% of the surveyed schools; the most frequently covered topics in teaching periodontics were salivary disorders, conditions associated with dental prosthetics, and prosthetics in the elderly, in particular; age-related changes in the oral-facial system, epidemiology of oral health in the elderly; 33.3% of respondents reported that there are dentists in their country who specialize in gerodontology; national scientific associations of gerodontologists exist in 13 countries [11].

It is noteworthy that the survey conducted by Kossioni, McKenna, Müller, Schimmel & Vanobbergen [11] included representatives from Ukraine, who claimed that our country has developed programs in gerodontology, however, it is currently unknown which domestic higher education institutions represented our country in the study.

Conclusions.

In the national practice of training dentists, attention is traditionally paid to certain aspects of gerodontology, primarily to the sections presented in orthopedic dentistry and implantology, therapeutic dentistry, however, according to the authors of the article, there is no interdisciplinary course.

Given the importance of the issues raised in this study, we propose a “road map” for the development of domestic gerodontology: drawing up a questionnaire and conducting a survey on the state of geriatric dentistry in Ukraine; further analysis and adoption of best European and world practices on this issue; studying the opinion of the target audience – elderly patients on the level of satisfaction with the provision of specialized dental care; implementation of interdisciplinary/multi-disciplinary educational programs to be implemented at the undergraduate/postgraduate stages of dental education; design of long-term/short-term certificate programs to be offered to dentists in the process of continuous professional development in order to increase the share of gerodontologists in the structure of dentists in Ukraine.

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