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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Włodzisław Kuliński

PROBLEMS IN PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT IN PATIENTS WITH AN IMPLANTED CARDIAC PACEMAKER	71
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Irena Ponikowska, Przemysław Adamczyk, Robert Wojciechowski, Krzysztof Jarosz

BALNEOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH LONG COVID-19 SYNDROME IN HEALTH-RESORT CONDITIONS	75
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

Małgorzata Grzejszczak, Łukasz Kikowski

THE ROLE OF ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF SKIN PROTECTION AGAINST ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION	82
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

Nataliia Vasyliieva, Lidiia Drozd

RESTORATION OF MOTOR AND PSYCHOMOTOR SPHERES IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM	87
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

Anna Kushta

METHOD OF CORRECTING NONSPECIFIC IMMUNITY IN PATIENTS WITH ORAL CANCER	94
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

Serhiy Maksymenko, Ksenia Maksymenko, Svitlana Yalanska, Nina Atamanchuk, Valeriy Zhamardiy, Viktoriia Donchenko

PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL UNLOADING WITH COMPLIANCE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT: AEROAPIPHYTOTHERAPY RESOURCE	98
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

Grygoriy P. Griban, Olha S. Zablotska, Iryna M. Nikolaeva, Olha Yu. Avdieieva, Mykola V. Tymchyk, Yuliia V. Kozeluk, Oksana P. Kanishcheva

THE IMPACT OF SMOKING ON DISEASES OF THE ORGANS AND SYSTEMS OF THE FEMALE BODY	105
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

Ivan M. Okhrimenko, Natalia A. Lyakhova, Olha M. Pasko, Valentyna V. Horoshko, Liudmyla M. Prudka, Tetyana V. Matiienko, Inha A. Serednytska

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL STATE AND HEALTH LEVEL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN THE PROCESS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	111
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

Nadiia M. Havrylova, Svitlana M. Uskova, Viktor V. Nazymok, Serhii A. Abramov, Anatolii V. Lukachyna, Nataliia V. Ivaniuta, Nataliia Liakhova

INDEPENDENT PHYSICAL EXERCISES AS THE MAIN MEANS OF MAINTAINING STUDENTS' HEALTH DURING THEIR DISTANCE LEARNING	115
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

REVIEW ARTICLES

Ivan S. Mironyuk, Hennadiy O. Slabkiy, Rostislav L. Kartavtsev

INTRODUCTION OF THE PACKAGE OF MEDICAL SERVICES «COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN STATIONARY CONDITIONS» IN HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE: MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	120
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

REPRINT

Pavlo I. Tkachenko, Serhii O. Bilokon, Natalia M. Lokhmatova, Olha B. Dolenko, Yuliia Popelo, Nataliia M. Korotych

EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES IN THE INACTIVE COURSE OF CHRONIC PARENCHYMATIC MUMPS IN CHILDREN	125
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL STATE AND HEALTH LEVEL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN THE PROCESS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Ivan M. Okhrimenko¹, Natalia A. Lyakhova², Olha M. Pasko³, Valentyna V. Horoshko³, Liudmyla M. Prudka³, Tetyana V. Matiienko³, Inha A. Serednytska³

¹NATIONAL ACADEMY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, KYIV, UKRAINE

²POLTAVA STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, POLTAVA, UKRAINE

³ODESA STATE UNIVERSITY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, ODESA, UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

Aim: To investigate the level of psycho-emotional state and health of newly certified law enforcement officers in the process of their professional training.

Materials and Methods: The research involved first-time certified police officers of different categories (n = 104) who studied at the initial professional training courses in 2019. In addition, we investigated the dynamics of police officers' health indicators during their initial professional training courses and in the process of their service for one year, depending on the type of previous professional activities (2019-2021, n=112).

Results: It was found that newly certified police officers of the 3rd category (police officers of a body, establishment, institution) have the worst level of psycho-emotional state and health indicators. Most police officers are characterized by a high level of anxiety and a low to below average level of health. At the end of the research, 58.1% of police officers had a below average level of health, 21.4% had a low level of health, and no police officers of the 3rd category had a high level of health. It is important to note that the level of health of police officers involved in the research has not changed in the course of one year of their service.

Conclusions: The negative impact of the new conditions and peculiarities of training and service activities during the initial professional training courses on the psycho-emotional state and health of newly certified police officers has been proved.

KEY WORDS: police, law enforcement officers, professional training, psycho-emotional state, health, initial professional training

INTRODUCTION

According to the Law of Ukraine "On the National Police" (2015), the formation of skills and abilities necessary for law enforcement officers to effectively perform their duties is carried out during professional training (vocational education). Professional training of law enforcement officers is carried out in stages and includes the following components: initial professional training; training in higher educational institutions with specific learning environment; postgraduate education; service training [1].

The initial stage of professional training i.e. initial professional training is the most important in the service activities of each law enforcement officer [2, 3]. The initial professional training courses have been organized for law enforcement officers to ensure the effective completion of this stage [4]. The Law of Ukraine "On the National Police" (2015) stipulates that persons who are first recruited to the police are required to undergo the initial professional training courses (lasting up to 6 months). The initial professional training of police officers is aimed at developing special skills and abilities necessary to perform the tasks of a particular position. Mastering the course takes place in accordance

with the developed and approved in the prescribed manner professional program of the initial professional training of police officers who are first recruited to the police. According to the scientists [5], the initial professional training is the foundation of further professional activities of a police officer.

The analysis of the origin of initial professional training courses showed that newly recruited law enforcement officers have a great information overload during this period, restructuring the daily regime in accordance with the requirements of service activities. It was found that it is difficult for newly certified law enforcement officers to adapt to the new conditions of service in the police, because yesterday's civilians find themselves in new conditions of training and service activities, new life situations, accompanied by a significant restructuring of mental and physiological states. Another drawback that reduces the effectiveness of the initial professional training courses for newly certified law enforcement officers is the low level of health of candidates for service [6, 7]. All this negatively affects their psycho-emotional state and health during their professional training.

AIM

The aim is to investigate the level of psycho-emotional state and health of newly certified law enforcement officers in the process of their professional training.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the aim of the research, we organized and conducted research in two stages. At the first stage (2019) we analyzed the psycho-emotional state and the level of health of first-time certified police officers of different categories ($n=104$) who studied at the initial professional training courses of the National Academy of Internal Affairs (Kyiv, Ukraine) in 2019 (the first initial professional training courses in 2019 for 6 months). Depending on the nature and specifics of service, all permanent personnel of the National Police are divided into three categories: the 1st – police officers of the special police unit ($n=32$); the 2nd – police officers of the territorial (separate) unit of the police body ($n=37$); the 3rd – police officers of the structural executive office of the National Police, executive offices of territorial (interregional) bodies of the National Police, the Main Directorate of the National Police, institution (establishment) ($n=35$).

At the second stage (2019-2021) we studied the dynamics of physical health indicators of police officers of the 3rd category during their initial professional training courses (the second initial professional training courses in 2019 for 6 months) and in the course of their service activities (for 1 year) depending on the type of previous professional activities ($n=112$): the 1st group – persons who served in the Armed Forces of Ukraine before certification ($n=49$); the 2nd group – persons who were certified immediately after graduation from civilian higher educational institutions ($n=41$); the 3rd group – persons who served in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but worked in various industries for some time before being certified to the police ($n=22$). Police officers of the 3rd category ($n=35$) who took part in the first stage of our research, did not participate in the second stage.

Research methods: analysis and generalization of literature sources, pedagogical observation, testing, methods of mathematical statistics. The psycho-emotional state of police officers was determined according to the following methodologies: "WAM" (well-being, activity, mood), "Assessment of situational anxiety". The physical health of police officers was assessed according to the express method by H.L. Apanasenko, which is based on

anthropometric indicators (body length, body weight, vital lung capacity, hand dynamometry) and the functional state of the cardiorespiratory system (heart rate, arterial blood pressure, duration of recovery processes) [8].

The procedure for organizing the study was previously agreed with the committee on compliance with Academic Integrity and Ethics of the NAIA. The topic of the study was approved by the Academic Council of the NAIA (No. 7 dated 29.07.2019). Informed consent was received from all participants who took part in this study.

RESULTS

The analysis of the indicators of well-being, activity and mood using the "WAM" methodology showed that the police officers of the 3rd category have the worst indicators. The analysis showed that on a 9-point scale, the level of emotional states of police officers of the 3rd category is insufficient for the effective performance of training and service tasks at the stage of their initial professional training (Table 1). The study of situational anxiety in newly certified police officers during their preparation at the initial professional training courses showed that the worst value was found in police officers of the 3rd category (47.05 points), but no significant difference between the indicators of all three categories was found ($p>0.05$). At the same time, the indicators of anxiety in police officers of the 3rd category are assessed as "high level of anxiety".

The analysis of the health status of police officers of different categories who entered the training showed that the lowest value was found in law enforcement officers of the 3rd category (-3.41 ± 0.42) points. The level of health of officers of the 2nd category is higher by 0.74 points and amounts to (4.15 ± 0.37) points, but no significant difference was found between them ($p>0.05$). The highest level of physical health was recorded in police officers of the 1st category – it is (7.02 ± 0.39) points and is significantly higher compared to the level of health of police officers of the 2nd category by 2.87 points ($p<0.001$), and of the 1st category – by 3.61 points ($p<0.001$) (Figure 1).

According to the express methodology by H.L. Apanasenko, the level of health of law enforcement officers of the 3rd category is assessed as "low"; the 2nd – as "below average"; the 1st – as "average". The study of the health status of newly certified law enforcement officers showed that the worst initial level of health was found in police officers of the 3rd category, which indicates the

Table 1. Indicators of psycho-emotional state of first-time certified police officers of different categories ($n=104$), points

Studied indicators	Categories			Significance of the difference		
	3 rd ($n=35$)	2 nd ($n=37$)	1 st ($n=32$)	p3-p2	p2-p1	p3-p1
Well-being	5.06 ± 0.28	5.23 ± 0.26	5.89 ± 0.25	>0.05	>0.05	>0.05
Activity	6.27 ± 0.26	6.32 ± 0.25	6.82 ± 0.27	>0.05	>0.05	>0.05
Mood	6.14 ± 0.26	6.20 ± 0.27	6.95 ± 0.24	>0.05	>0.05	>0.05
Situational anxiety	47.05 ± 1.54	46.80 ± 1.46	46.32 ± 1.48	>0.05	>0.05	>0.05

Legend: p3-p2, p2-p1, p3-p1: the significance of the difference between the indicators of police officers of different categories, determined by Student's t-test

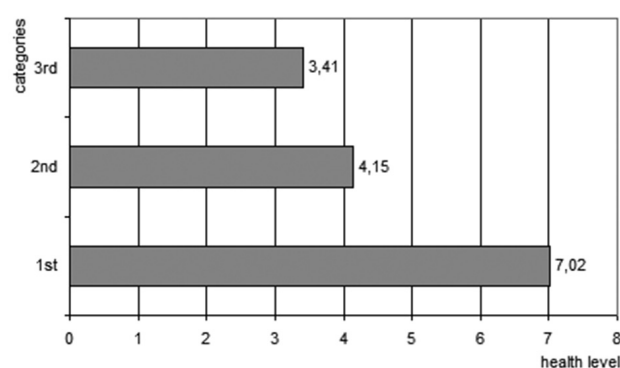


Figure 1. Health level of first-time certified police officers of different categories (n=104), points

Table 2. Initial level and health level of police officers after the first year of their service depending on previous type of professional activities (n=112), points

Groups of police officers	n	Initial level	After the first year of service	p
1st group	49	4.28±0.33	4.36±0.37	>0.05
2nd group	41	3.75±0.41	3.81±0.44	>0.05
3rd group	22	2.84±0.62	3.02±0.65	>0.05

Legend: n – number of police officers; p – the significance of the difference between the indicators of police officers of different groups before and after one year of their service, determined by Student's t-test

need to find ways to improve it in the process of initial professional training in order to accelerate the process of their adaptation to new conditions of training and service, improve their health, and increase the efficiency of their further service activities.

The analysis of the health status of police officers of the 3rd category depending on the previous type of professional activities revealed that the initial level of police officers of the 1st group is the highest and makes 4.28 points (Table 2). This value is higher than that of police officers of the 2nd group by 0.53 points ($p>0.05$) and by 1.44 points ($p<0.05$) than that of police officers of the 3rd group. The difference between the health levels of police officers of the 2nd and the 3rd groups is 0.91 points, but is not significant ($p>0.05$). The studies of the dynamics of physical health have shown that the values of police officers of all groups have improved, but remain virtually unchanged during the initial professional training courses and service activities during the first year of their service. No significant difference was found between the initial and final data ($p>0.05$).

Such a state of health of police officers is insufficient for the effective performance of the tasks of service activities and requires finding ways to improve it.

DISCUSSION

The scientists [9-11] consider the process of training police officers to effectively perform their professional

activities as a gradual and consistent transition from theoretical knowledge and understanding of the basic patterns in interactions, rules and conditions of activity to the formation of appropriate skills and abilities. The scientists [12-14] note that professional training (vocational education) of future police officers is a social and pedagogical process through which the social order for a specialist i.e. a law enforcement officer capable of effective performance of the tasks and functions assigned to him or her as a representative of the law is indirectly manifested.

However, according to many scientists [15, 16], the low or insufficient level of health of candidates for service in the National Police does not allow to fully ensure the effective progress of the stages of professional training. The analysis of literature sources [3, 17] made it possible to determine that the main reasons for the low level of health of candidates for service in the National Police are: a decrease in living standards in the country; insufficient efficiency of the functioning of the system of physical education in higher educational institutions; increased nervous and psychological stress as a result of hostilities in Ukraine and socio-economic instability of society; insufficient motor activities; the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy and others.

The scientists [18] argue that the service activities of police officers of the 3rd category is accompanied by a significant number of negative factors, including: irregular duration of the working day and week, hypokinesia and physical inactivity, nervous and emotional tension, mental overload and stress. The influence of these negative factors causes a complex of functional disorders that affect the functions of the cardiovascular, nervous, respiratory, musculoskeletal systems and leads to metabolic disorders. The systematic action of these factors can cause various diseases of the main systems of the body and deterioration of the health of police officers in this category.

The results obtained in our research significantly complement the findings of our previous researches [3, 5, 6, 11] and the works of many scientists in this field [8, 12, 13, 19].

CONCLUSIONS

According to the results of the conducted research, it was found that the level of psycho-emotional state and health indicators of the first-time certified police officers of the 3rd category is the worst. Most police officers are characterized by a low and below average level of health. At the end of the research, the level of health was below average in 58.1% of police officers; low – 21.4%; average – 16.9%; above average – only 3.6%; no police officer had a high level of health. It is important to note that the level of health of the respondents remained virtually unchanged in the course of one year of their service. The research shows a significant negative impact of new unusual conditions and peculiarities of training and service activities on the psycho-emotional state and health of newly certified police officers in the course of

their initial professional training courses. Moreover, the current program of initial professional training courses is not effective enough to improve the health of newly certified police officers, which necessitates finding ways to improve it in order to accelerate the process of their

adaptation to new conditions of training and service, to increase the efficiency of their further service activities.

Prospects for further research. It is planned to study the psychophysical state of newly recruited police officers.

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ORCID AND CONTRIBUTIONSHIP*

Ivan M. Okhrimenko – 0000-0002-8813-5107 ^A
 Natalia A. Lyakhova – 0000-0003-0503-9935 ^F
 Olha M. Pasko – 0000-0001-9555-1101 ^B
 Valentyna V. Horoshko – 0000-0003-1141-1975 ^B
 Liudmyla M. Prudka – 0000-0001-5440-2361 ^C
 Tetyana V. Matiienko – 0000-0001-9695-2222 ^D
 Inha A. Serednytska – 0000-0002-8839-2453 ^E

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Ivan M. Okhrimenko
 National Academy of Internal Affairs
 1 Solomyanska Square, 03035 Kyiv, Ukraine
 e-mail: ivango-07@ukr.net

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

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A – Research concept and design, B – Collection and/or assembly of data, C – Data analysis and interpretation, D – Writing the article, E – Critical review of the article, F – Final approval of article