

## Research Article

### Population's Attitude to Health: A Multicenter Study

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**Citation:** Rogovskaya SI, Radzinsky VE, Zamotina, Mashovets SP (2018) Population's Attitude to Health: A Multicenter Study. J Oncol Res Ther: JONT-160. DOI: 10.29011/2574-710X. 000060

**Received Date:** 28 June, 2018; **Accepted Date:** 19 July, 2018; **Published Date:** 27 July, 2018

#### Abstract

In the Russian Federation, the incidence of female genital cancer has recently increased, which requires a higher level of women's responsibility for their health. The results of the All-Russian educational project "Women of different ages between oncological negligence and phobia: how to prevent cancer?" started in 2015 have been published while the study is still ongoing. The research was initiated by the Russian Association for Genital Infections and Neoplasia (the "RAGIN") and conducted with the support of medical organizations and public organizations including the Association of Medical Journalists. In particular, to learn the awareness of the female population and health workers with respect to preventive measures and hormonal drugs, 4846 women aged from 18 to 65 living in 32 Russian cities were asked to answer a special questionnaire. It was discovered that many women are not sufficiently alert concerning their health: the behavioral reaction of almost half of the respondents varies from negligent to phobic, including their attitude towards taking hormonal drugs. This may be the reason for failing to attend screening examinations when there is a possibility of a free test as well as for the late seeking of medical help.

#### Introduction

Based on a questionnaire, an educational project has been developed, including the interactive lectures "Oncoprotol" and master classes. The project has already covered 34 cities in Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Active participants of the seminars are managers of health care, researchers, teachers, doctors, cytologists, laboratory diagnostics practitioners, patients, teachers, and psychologists.

The incidence of cancer in Russia has no tendency to decrease for the most of localizations [1-9]. Cancer of the reproductive organs (breasts, a body and a cervix) of women is the leader in the list of oncological diseases with the rate of 38.9% [1], and the level of negligence in the Russian Federation (diagnostics in stages III-IV) is very high [1]. At preventive tumor examinations, visual localizations of stages I-II are detected only in half of the cases (49.8% (in 2015 - 47.7%)) [3]; and cervical cancer in stages I-II of prevalence was detected only in 65.6% of the patients in 2015, in a stage III - in 23.5% [1] of the patients, which resulted in expensive

treatment, increased health care costs and a significant decrease in the quality of life of the patients.

The study is supported by the RAGIN, the Interdisciplinary Association of Specialists in Reproductive Medicine, by the Far Eastern Institute for the Advancement of Community Development, the Association of Medical Journalists and a number of other medical and non-medical organizations in more than 30 regions of the country.

**Purpose of the study:** To increase the effectiveness of prevention and early diagnosis of malignant neoplasms for female reproductive health; to develop an informational and educational project for practitioners and patients to improve the level of reproductive health.

#### Materials and Methods

For 18 months, a questionnaire was presented to 4846 women aged from 18 to 65 living in 32 cities of all the federal districts of the Russian Federation. Sampling: stratified bivariate random

sample. The obtained data represents the female population of Russia at the age of 18-65 according to their age groups, level of education, type of residence localities.

To conduct a comparative analysis, the supplied questionnaires were divided into two groups: for medical workers (physicians) and for those not engaged in the medical sphere (not physicians). The first group comprised 1524 (38.1%) women, the second group - 2473 (61.9%) women. The main study parameters of the respondents of both groups were comparable.

## Results

In the group of the medical respondents, the position of reasonable vigilance (77.0%) is significantly higher in comparison to non-doctors (49.8%), ( $p < 0.05$ ). The proportion of women who generally trust their doctors is high in both cohorts (81.0% and 85.1%), including in the choice of hormone therapy and contraception (79.3% and 74.2%, respectively).

Only 6.2% of women interviewed in the healthcare sector and 1.3% of non-medical workers expressed an unequivocal positive attitude to menopausal hormone therapy. This is consistent with all-Russian indicators and confirms the need to increase motivation for informed, competent advice on hormone therapy to enhance the acceptability of hormonal therapy and contraception, improving health and the quality of life of women. A high level of trust in doctors (79.3% and 74.2% among doctors and non-doctors, respectively) was noted in the choice of hormonal treatment, despite the prevailing prejudice of doctors regarding hormonal contraceptives and preparations for menopausal hormone therapy. It was shown that there were no hormonal contraceptives for reasons of oncophobia - 28.8% of the doctors, because of fear of thrombosis -34.0%, side effects -27.2% etc.

## Discussion

It was discovered that many women are not sufficiently alert concerning their health: the behavioral reaction in almost half of the respondents varies from negligent to phobic, including the attitude toward taking hormonal drugs. This may be the reason for failing to attend screening examinations when there is a possibility for a free test, and for the late seeking of medical help.

## Conclusions

The obtained data made it possible to develop and to present in 32 regions of Russia an educational project for patients and doctors that helps to form a competent, reasonable attitude to health and to reduce the level of negligence or oncophobia. Representatives of the Ministries of Health or the Administration of the Regions, heads of departments, heads of perinatal centers, teachers, psychologists, journalists take part in the project. The implementation of the project contributes to raising the awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and visits to screening examinations.

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