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CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS (FROM PROBLEMS TO SOLUTIONS)

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Conflicts in medical practice in the conditions of health care reform take an important place in any medical team. That is why it is necessary to study the ways of formation of medical conflict, ways of preventing and eliminating the conflict, as well as ways of fighting its consequences. At the same time, the result of effective conflict management will be the formation of a mechanism for early prevention of conflict situations and mechanisms for resolving medical conflicts.

The aim of the study was conflicts in the field of healthcare in the system «medical personnel of a healthcare institution – patients and relatives of patients».

Materials and methods. The study of conflict in the team was conducted using medical and sociological methods using an anonymous questionnaire developed by us. The study involved 422 health workers. The age composition of medical workers: from 18 and older.

Results and discussion. A study was conducted to identify, on the example of medical personnel, the psychosocial causes of conflicts in health care organizations and approaches to conflict resolution. The main causes, frequency of occurrence and types of conflict situations in medical teams are analyzed. Based on the conducted sociological research, it was established that the largest number of conflicts occurs in the «doctor-patient-relatives» system, and about 25% – in the «doctor-patient» system. The behavior of medical personnel during the conflict was analyzed using practical examples. It was revealed that the majority of respondents (16,8%) choose cooperation when communicating with a colleague, and 13,7% choose compromise.

Conclusion. The study confirms the hypothesis that conflict management processes are more effective in the terms of the changes in the organization of the overall process in a healthcare facility.

Key words: conflict, conflict of interest in medicine, conflict management, patient, doctor, frequency of conflicts.

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КОНФЛІКТНІ СИТУАЦІЇ В МЕДИЧНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯХ (ВІД ПРОБЛЕМ ДО ВИРІШЕННЯ)

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Конфлікти в медичній практиці в умовах реформування охорони здоров'я посідають важливе місце в будь-якому лікарському колективі. Тому необхідно вивчати шляхи формування медичного конфлікту, шляхи попередження та усунення конфлікту, а також шляхи боротьби з його наслідками. При цьому результатом ефективного управління конфліктами буде формування механізму ранньої профілактики конфліктних ситуацій та механізмів вирішення медичних конфліктів.

Мета дослідження – конфлікти у сфері охорони здоров'я в системі «медичний персонал закладу охорони здоров'я – пацієнти та родичі пацієнтів».

Матеріали та методи. Дослідження конфліктності в колективі проводилося медико-соціологічними методами за розробленою нами анонімною анкетой. У дослідженні взяли участь 422 медпрацівника. Вік медичних працівників: від 18 років і більше.

Результати. Проведено дослідження, спрямоване на виявлення соціально-психологічних причин конфліктів та методів їх вирішення в організації охорони здоров'я на прикладі медичного колективу. Проаналізовано основні причини, частоту виникнення та види конфліктних ситуацій у медичних колективах. На основі проведених соціологічних досліджень встановлено, що найбільша кількість конфліктів виникає в системі «лікар-пацієнт-родичі», а близько 25% – у системі «лікар-пацієнт». На практичних прикладах проаналізовано поведінку медичного персоналу під час конфлікту. Виявилося, що більшість респондентів (16,8%) у спілкуванні з колегою обирають співпрацю, а 13,7% – обирають компроміс.

Висновок. Дослідження підтвердило гіпотезу про те, що процес управління конфліктом буде більш ефективним в умовах змін в організації процесів в цілому в лікувальному закладі.

Ключові слова: конфлікт, конфлікт інтересів у медицині, управління конфліктами, пацієнт, лікар, частота конфліктів.

Introduction. Conflictology is an integral part of the work of a doctor and the health care organization as a whole. The heterogeneity of the conflict structure makes its detection and resolution difficult and highly accurate skills are necessary for any organization of the medical staff work. All activity in a health care institution is strictly regulated

by regulatory documents and acts, which oblige the management to strictly adhere to them and to subordinate the activity to certain rules in order to fulfill work instructions.

The problem for healthcare organizations is the difficulty in choosing ways to manage and coordinate conflicts in complex structures. Regardless of the nature, conflicts affect the level of service provision, the reputation of individuals and institutions as a whole, cause staff turnover and reduce

work efficiency [1]. The nature of the work requires each employee to communicate with colleagues and patients. The model of behavior chosen in conflict situations depends on individual behavioral characteristics, such as temperament, communication skills, organizational skills, and the level of aggression in relationships. The ability to understand the nature of conflicts, distinguish their components and work on their solution is an important component of the professional education of managers in health care organizations and health care management bodies [2; 3].

People who work in organizations are different from each other because the workforce is a formal community. As a result, they perceive the situation differently. Differences in perception often lead to disagreements. These differences lead to conflicts. Conflicts in organizations are natural and inevitable. This is due to the fact that controversial situations often arise and develop into conflicts due to different goals and tasks facing people, as well as due to different levels of awareness among employees.

Like many other concepts and definitions in management theory, the term «conflict» has certain definitions and interpretations. Conflict is defined as a lack of agreement between two or more parties (specific individuals or groups). Each side does everything in its power to get its point of view and goals accepted, and prevents the other side from doing the same [4; 5].

Conflicts are quite often compared to attacks or arguments. As a result, conflicts are seen as inherently undesirable and should be avoided if possible or resolved as soon as they arise. These approaches to organizational effectiveness relied to some extent on the definition of tasks, procedures, rules and interactions between personnel and the development of a rational organizational structure.

The aim of the study is to determine the socio-psychological causes of conflicts in health care organizations and ways to resolve them.

Materials and methods. The survey involved 422 doctors and nurses from the Chernivtsi Regional Clinical Hospital, Kitsmanskaya and Storozhynetska central district hospitals, as well as primary health care centers in Sadgora, Khotyn, Vicno, Roshа and Novoselytsya of Chernivtsi region. The survey was conducted in 2021 with the aim of identifying conflict situa-

tions in healthcare facilities and effective ways to overcome them. To change the relationship between situational and effective work, a survey was conducted in the entire individual unlabeled questionnaire. Age of team members: over 18 years old. Education: secondary, professional and higher.

Used methods: epidemiological, medical and statistical.

Results. An analysis of 348 patient’s complaints received by the Department of Health Care of the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration in 2019-2021 shows the following distribution according to the main reasons of complaints (Fig. 1).

An analysis of the results shows that complaints (and conflict situations) related to the quality and accessibility of medical care dominates.

To the question “Do you consider yourself a conflicted person?” – 13,5% answered with an unconditional denial, 67,1% allow the possibility of being called conflicted persons in some situations and 19,4% in most cases find the opportunity to start a conflict for some reason (Fig. 2).

On the other hand, looking at the attitude of health workers towards the current conflicts, the following data were obtained: 65% have a negative attitude towards the conflicts, 26% rather negative than positive, and 9% have a positive attitude.

Based on the received data, the causes of conflicts were analyzed. Answers to the question «What are the causes of conflicts in your team?» (Fig. 3), «positional conflicts» was the most common reason (55,7%), “envy of each other” was slightly less common (48,8%), “high aspirations of individual employees” was mentioned by almost third part (29,6%), and “low professionalism of employees” was the least common reason. No one gave any other reason.

Analysis of the behavior of conflict participants in relations with managers shows that the majority prefers to adapt, and in relations with colleagues – to cooperate (Fig. 4).

As can be seen from the figure, in dialogue with leaders, 30,6% of respondents prefer concessions and try to avoid conflict. In communication with colleagues, 16,8% of respondents prefer cooperation, and 13,7% – compromise. However, in conflict resolution, cooperation, accommodation, and compromise are preferable to rivalry and avoidance.

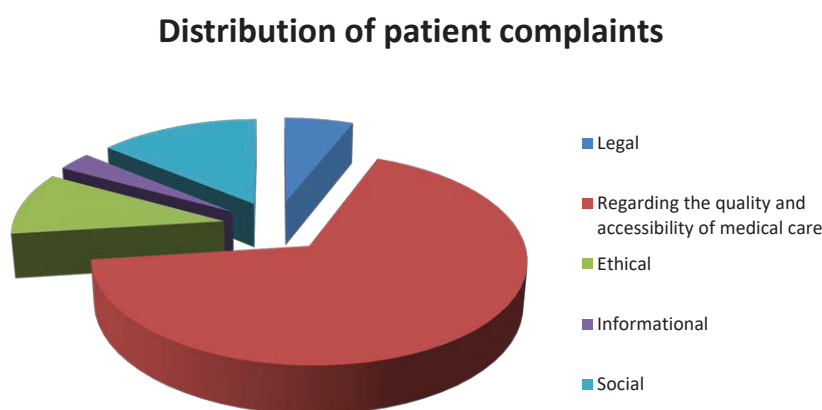


Fig. 1. Distribution of patient complaints to regulatory institutions by key aspects

Self-determination of conflict feature

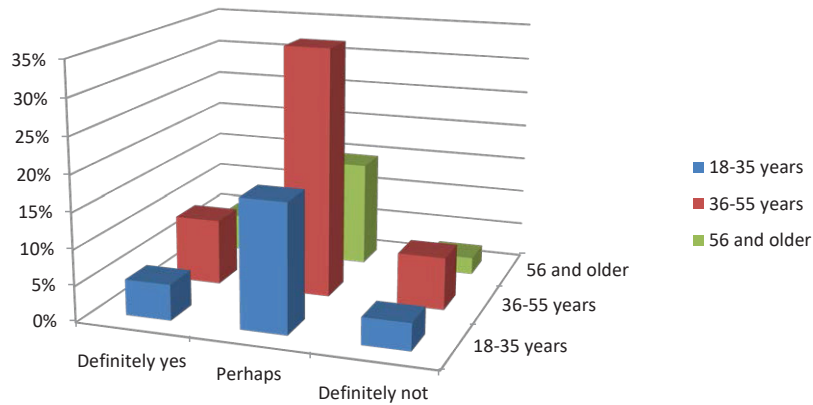


Fig. 2. Determining the level of conflict feature in relation to yourself

Causes of conflicts

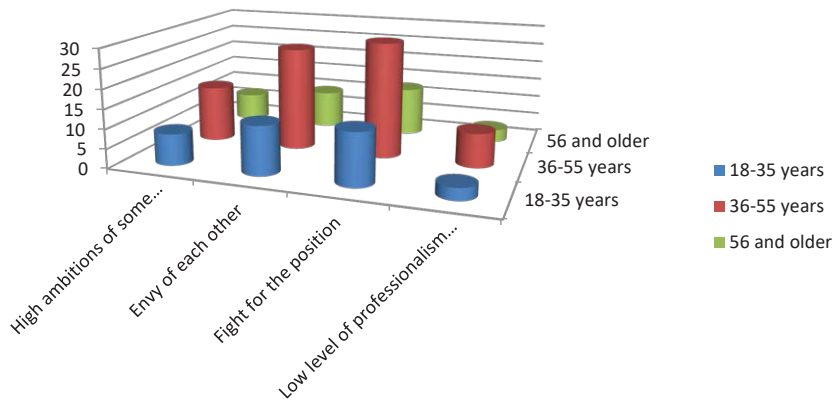


Fig. 3. The main causes of conflicts in the team of a medical organization

Conflict strategy

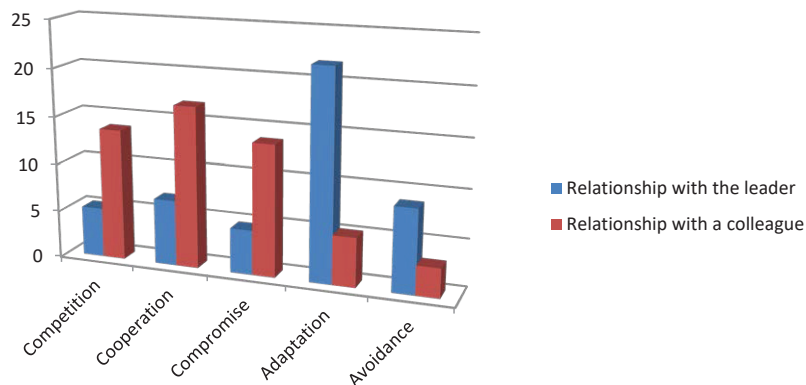


Fig. 4. Subjective assessment of the behavioral strategy of medical workers in a conflict situation

Conclusions. No organization at any level can exist without facing the problem of conflict. This is due to the fact that huge destructive forces are involved in the conflict. The task is not to prevent conflict in the organization at all, but try to prevent it from occurring spontaneously.

Our research clearly shows that change is needed in almost all areas of health care organizations, including work organization, management, and compensation.

Therefore, managers should always strive to resolve conflicts and eliminate their causes, rather than avoid them. There is no need to regret the fact that conflicts have arisen; they are inevitable companions of progress and change. It must be the manager who is responsible for preventing conflicts in the departments under his control, and therefore in the organization as a whole.

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