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Teaching the language of medicine

Language as we know is a system of symbols (graphics, sound) that exists in the human society. The language of Medicine is a kind of literary language serving professional fields and the subject of a special study of the medical students focused on the acquisition of language as a means of professional communication.

By an old tradition the language of medicine represents the combination of Latin and English terms being the means of international communication and the basis of studying medical disciplines. The education of qualified medical professionals presupposes teaching fundamental elements as well as modern medical terminology and vocabulary.

At Medical College 4, Moscow, students study English and Latin starting from the first year up to the final fourth year of their education.

The course of education meets not only informative, but communicational needs of the medical students, promoting the formation of communicative and sociocultural competence. Communicative competence serves for the purpose of improvement of professional competence and broadens the framework of students' professional behavior.

Academic disciplines, English and Latin, belong to the general humanities and socio-economic cycle of the basic professional education program. The working programs of the disciplines are parts of basic professional educational programs in accordance with FGOS (Federal Government Educational Standard) for each specialty.

The vast scope of medical and paramedical terms makes up modern medical terminology. Each term is an element of subsystems, such as anatomical, histological and embryological, medical, surgical, gynecological, endocrinological, forensic, trauma, mental health, genetic, botanical, biochemical, etc. Terms interact and correlate with each other in course of medical education and professional practice. The study of Latin at Medical College is pursuing a professional goal - to prepare terminology competent medical personnel. Students learn vocabulary, phonetics and recognize Latin morphemes used in the medical language what helps them to develop deeper knowledge of the subject of medicine. Selected Latin aphorisms, sayings and medical deontological commandments apply to matters of life and death, health and doctor's behavior. Reading and translating Latin and English texts fosters language skills and forms professional speech patterns in future nurses, obstetricians and medical assistants.

At the initial stage of English, students learn the language of everyday communication, which does not provide acquisition of the language used in the special areas of communication. Students learn basic communication patterns and main rules of international and home speech etiquette what helps them to improve their own communication skills and follow the established norms of communication. Basic speech skills are important in case of professional communication. In medical practice it is vital to be able to speak with patients and engage them in communication. Sometimes a little chat with a patient helps more than a pill. Medical students study various basic topics including: Description of the character and personality, Healthy lifestyle, Social life and media, Climate and environment problems and their influence on people, Educational and Culture topics, Scientific and political issues.

Having acquired basic language skills students begin to learn professionally oriented English. Professional learning content of foreign language is achieved by forming a system of professionally relevant knowledge. Students learn advanced medical vocabulary and read authentic scientific articles. In the process of professionalization of foreign language the integration of medical disciplines deepens students' medical knowledge and prompts scientific research. Merging of professional and language knowledge systems, as well as their associated professional and linguistic skills enables students to enhance their professional abilities in practical training or in the hospital.

At Medical College 4, methodical complex and teaching materials are developed consistent with the Federal Educational standards for Postsecondary Education Institutions in the field of medical education. Specialized syllabus and academic programs are designed to help students in the formation of the knowledge and skills for effective consolidation of professional habits at the level of international standards

with the employment of modern teaching aids. The latest requirements for educational standard include use of computer and interactive equipment. Students always have computer equipment, multimedia systems and interactive whiteboards at their disposal.

Students take part in joint researches and scientific conferences devoted to the language of medicine. Best students participate in specialized competitions between educational institutions where they can show their skills in extreme situations.

It is important to teach students not only to know medical terminology but also to comprehend it. The proper use of the language may also facilitate the adaptation of foreign health professionals to a new social or working environment. Students of our college pay close attention to the language of communication with their colleagues and patients. The study of medical terminology may become one of the mechanisms to overcome problems occurring in the course of professional communication.