

## THE RESOCIALIZATION PROCESS OF ELDERLY AND DISABLED THROUGH CLUB ACTIVITIES IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The article presents the results of sociological research on the issues of the re-socialization of elderly and people with functional limitations and health problems through club activities, based on the example of five institutions (boarding houses for the elderly and disabled) located in Belgorod region.

**Methodology:** The study was conducted in 2019 and included two stages: (1) the survey of elderly and disabled, living in institutional care (n = 60) and (2) the expert survey (n = 30), including employees and the administration of boarding houses for the elderly and disabled.

**Result:** The research found that the successful re-socialization of the elderly and disabled living in residential institutions depends on a combination of factors: the social infrastructure of the institutional care, health status, interpersonal relations with the staff, the range of social connections, as well as the diversity of leisure facilities and their own activity. The results of the study suggest that the involvement in the club activities of the elderly and disabled, living in residential institutions will become a significant resource for their re-socialization process.

**Applications:** This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

**Novelty/Originality:** In this research, the model of The Resocialization Process of Elderly and Disabled through Club Activities in Institutional Care is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

**Keywords:** *Re-Socialization, Elderly, People with Disabilities, Club Activities, Boarding Schools.*

### INTRODUCTION

Currently, the growth of aging and disability of the population is the global problems of mankind. The complexity of solving these problems is due to the incompletely resolved social, economic, cultural, and medical issues for creating optimal living conditions for the elderly and disabled.

The elderly is a rapidly growing socio-demographic group of the population, not only in Russia but also in many countries of the world, which is associated with the process of rapid aging of the population. In 2018 in our country there were 37,362 thousand people over working age or 25.4% of the total population (compared to 2017 - 36,685 thousand (25.0%), in 2016 – 35,986 thousand (24.6%). According to Rosstat, in 2018, 12.1 million disabled people were registered in Russia (8.2% of the country's population), of which 5.2 million men and 6.9 million women; 5.6 million have the second group of disability, the third group – 4.4 million people, the first one – 1.47 million people ([Federal State Statistics Service, 2019](#)).

Thus, the relevance of the study is due to the increase in the number of people with disabilities and the elderly and the severity of problems that need to be addressed. In this context, elderly and disabled, living in institutional care deserve special attention, in particular, the process of their re-socialization in boarding schools' conditions, including the assimilation of new social roles, skills, habits instead of the former ones, due to fundamentally different social situation.

The possibility of active participation and integration into social processes is an important part of the process of re-socialization of the elderly and people with disabilities living in institutions, which directly affects the quality and satisfaction with the life of this social group.

Italian researchers identified a number of factors affecting the life satisfaction of people with disabilities in Italy. Among others were household structure, health, education and the type of disability; less important were income and personality characteristics. The stress was given to the social support of people with disabilities in everyday life, which increased the level of life satisfaction with economic conditions and leisure time; older disabled people were on average more satisfied with life than their younger counterparts ([Addabbo, Sarti & Sciulli, 2016](#)).

The study, made by D. Anaby, W.C. Miller, T. Jarus, J.J. Eng, L. Noreau, based on the research of 200 elderly with chronic diseases in Canada, confirmed that active participation in social life, the necessary social support had a significant impact on the level of life satisfaction ([Anaby, Miller, Jarus, Eng & Noreau, 2011](#)).

Based on a content analysis of 58 articles on the management of residential care institutions for elderly and disabled in Finland, A. Hujala, K. Kokkonen, S. Rissanen concluded that efforts should be directed to solving the problems of integrated care, productivity, information and communication technology and division of labor; to enhancing the role of

science in the process of developing and implementing social policies; to increasing the competence and proficiency of professionals, leaders and politicians ([Kokkonen, Rissanen & Hujala, 2012](#)).

Nowadays, the issues related to the elderly and disabled are actively discussed in modern Russian scientific literature: the analysis of social adaptation mechanisms ([Kornilov, 2011](#); [Shanina, 2015](#)); the features of the socio-psychological problems of elderly and people with disabilities living in boarding schools ([Barsukov, 2016](#); [Kiseleva & Bobik, 2015](#)); the use of social therapy methods with these categories of clients ([Volkova, Naberushkina, Bystriantsev, Baharev, Nadutkina & Sadvoski, 2016](#)); the organization of free time as a factor of their socio-cultural adaptation process ([Elyutina & Chernyshkova, 2010](#)); the identification factors, contributing/impeding to the social integration of individuals into the socio-cultural environment ([Volkova, Chefonova, Mozgovaya, Besschetnova, Zhirov, & Nadutkina, 2017](#)).

## METHODS

The case study was conducted in January-April 2019 in five residential institutions for the elderly and disabled in Belgorod region. The research included two stages. On the first stage semi-structured interviews with elderly and people with disabilities living in institutions (n = 60) were conducted. In the second stage the expert survey was held; the experts were chosen among the staff and the administration of institutional care for elderly and disabled (n = 30).

During the semi-structured interview, we investigated the main aspects of the institutional elderly and disabled care that had a great influence on their well-being and re-socialization process: the quality of social services, relationships with residents and staff, leisure opportunities, the participation in club activity, social and psychological problems.

The methodological basis of the study was: (1) the concept of disability as a limitation of the ability to carry out activities that were considered normal for a healthy person ([International Classification of Functioning, 2019](#)); (2) the concept of health-dependent human life ([World Health Organization, 2019](#)); (3) the concept of the mediated influence of the type of activity and the broaden specter of the social integration of disabled on his/her subjective well-being ([Green & Vice, 2017](#)).

## RESULTS AND ITS DISCUSSION

The case study involved 60 residents of institutional care aged 65-80; there were 32 women and 28 men. The results of the study showed that 28 % of respondents had general secondary education, secondary professional education – 36 %, incomplete higher education – 12 %, and complete higher education – 24 %.

The research showed, that 82 % of participants gave a positive assessment of social services in institutions, 16 % of them were satisfactory, and only 2 % were unsatisfactory. In addition to that, 82 % of respondents noted a high level of safety and comfort of living in the institution, 12 % rated it as low and 6 % could not answer.

In our opinion, physical, psychological, social and economic well-being as well as the re-socialization process of the elderly and disabled was closely interrelated and largely depended on their health, frequency, and intensity of socio-cultural activity. According to the research, 43 % of informants rated their state of health as “satisfactory,” 57 % – “unsatisfactory”. The majority of respondents (76 %) are generally satisfied with the quality of social services and professionalism of the staff. At the same time, the survey helped to reveal the most vulnerable areas related to the vital activity of the elderly and disabled as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Actual issues of residents’ life satisfaction in institutional care

N	Measurement parameters	Score, %
1	Relationships with staff	28
2	Relationships with other residents	35
3	Quality of treatment, medical care	16
4	Food, living conditions	18
5	Leisure time	22
6	Insufficient technical equipment	24

The majority of those living in institutional care stated that the main issues for newcomers were interpersonal relations with other residents as a result of conflict situations, misunderstanding, and poor communication skills. At the same time, 77 % of them expressed readiness to make efforts to adapt to new living conditions, despite these difficulties.

At the same time, 68 % of respondents characterized the institutions’ staff as polite, friendly, and attentive to clients’ needs; however, 32 % of the elderly and people with disabilities noted the difficulties in communicating some specialists.

Nevertheless, 65 % of respondents tended to avoid conflicts, believed that they needed to foster “patience and endurance”; 40 % of them stated that mutual and moral support, cohesion was the bases of the communication of residents in institutional care.

An important factor in the re-socialization of the elderly and disabled was the possibility of fruitful leisure activities and the realization of their professional abilities. The residents claimed that the greatest pleasure they got from the leisure,

complete rest – 56 %; independence from other people – 46 %; respect, caring for others – 43 %; communication with like-minded people – 38 %; being necessary and useful – 29 %, doing usual things – 28 %, and having good health – 24 %.

In all surveyed institutions for elderly and people with disabilities, 67 % of respondents highly appreciated leisure opportunities while 26 % of them gave it a negative assessment. There were some clubs: “Learning to draw”, “Making clay”, “Entertaining cooking”, “Puppet theater”, “Fishing in our pond”, “Wicker weaving”, “Beading”. In addition, there were libraries, board games (chess, checkers, billiards), as well as knitting and sewing. According to the research, 39 % of the elderly and people with disabilities living in institutions took part in one or other club activities. However, watching TV and reading books were the most common leisure activities according to 62 % of respondents; 38 % of them were engaged in gardening, floriculture, growing vegetables. The main motives of participation were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The main reasons for the participation of elderly and people with disabilities living in institutional care in club activity

N	Motives	Score, %
1	Awareness of their usefulness, need for people	43
2	Interests, the satisfaction of aesthetic needs	38
3	The manifestation of ability, talent	32
4	Pastime, memories of the past	23

However, almost half of the respondents (49 %) had opportunities to spend their free time outside the institutional care. The rest did not consider such a possibility for the following reasons: the lack of financial resources, poor health, difficulties in movement due to the lack of a barrier-free environment in most localities.

Information on various aspects of life is an important part of the social adaptation of the elderly and people with disabilities living in institutions. According to this, 24 % of residents indicated that they received up-to-date and timely information, 32 % and 28 % of respondents referred to limited access and one-sided information respectively, 12 % said they had incorrect and outdated information. In most cases, older people and people with disabilities needed information about health, medicine updates – 36 %, upcoming cultural events – 34 %, educational and entertainment information – 27 %, pensions – 28 %, and public and religious organizations – 4 %.

In order to obtain an objective opinion on the quality of life of the elderly and people with disabilities in the conditions of institutional care, an expert survey was conducted at the second stage. The experts were the staff and the administration of five residential homes located in Belgorod region (n = 30).

Most experts (89 %) agreed that many forms of leisure required financial expenses; they indicated the fact that the institutions were in dire need of acquiring a minibus for greater mobility of elderly and people with disabilities in order to expand their opportunities to attend cultural events in the place of living/ The experts drew attention to the necessity to develop a system of social partnership in addressing the problems of older people and disabled living in institutional care.

Almost half of the respondents (48 %) expressed their wish to diversify the forms of their leisure through participation in club activities. In particular, 29 % of residents suggested creating a fitness center or a health club, for example, a club for Nordic walking enthusiasts. In addition, 26 % of respondents declared their readiness to take computer literacy courses to get better communication skills on the Internet.

According to the expert survey, the most crucial issues of older people and people with disabilities living in institutional care were deterioration of health, loneliness, and social exclusion, loss of the meaning of life, poor interpersonal communication, and dependence of others. 89 % of experts emphasize the importance of the individual approach in social work with elderly and disabled, taking into account their age, psychological, social, socio-cultural characteristics.

More than half of experts (58 %) agreed that the re-socialization process of elderly and disabled would be more effective if the club activities were improved by expanding the range of its areas, including inviting interesting people; providing library and game activities (checkers, chess, cards, etc.); making discussions on different topics; activating of educational activity of residents, especially encourage them using Internet resources; making clients to do physical exercises (walking, breathing exercises, aerobics); participating in singing, theater classes and workshops (drawing, modeling, wood carving, painting on clay, sewing, and embroidery) as well as concert, festivals and exhibition activities outside the institutions.

According to experts' opinion, in order to improve the participation of elderly and disabled living in institutional care in club activities, it is necessary: first, to conduct regular independent research to find out clients' needs, interests, and targets (82 %); secondly, to increase funding for the residential institution (68 %); thirdly; to create the social infrastructure of these categories of people (47 %); fourth, to build a system of social partnership by establishing links with NGOs, charitable organizations and sponsors (34 %); fifth, to expand opportunities to participate in cultural and social life (12 %).

## CONCLUSION

According to the World Health Organization, 80 % of disabled (more than 400 million people) live in poor countries where there are not enough conditions to meet most of their basic needs.

Currently, in Russia, as in most countries, caring for the elderly and people with disabilities is the prerogative of family members, relatives, and other informal caregivers. At the same time, the creation of comfortable and safe living conditions for these categories of clients is a difficult problem due to the moving of young family members to cities and megalopolises for education, employment, starting a family, etc. This is one of the reasons for placing elderly and people with disabilities in specialized institutional care.

Estimation results show that the successful re-socialization of elderly and people with disabilities living in residential institutions depends on the social infrastructure of the institution, health, interpersonal relations between residents themselves as well as relations with the staff, social connections with family members or friends, the possibility of active leisure, and the involvement in social and cultural activities.

There are several ways to increase the level of the rehabilitation process of elderly and people with functional limitations and health problems in institutional care. Among them: gardening, occupational, art, and pet therapy; the involvement in new social, sports and cultural activities, which can significantly reduce the level of depression, anxiety, aggression as well as improve the inclusion of these categories of clients in the society.

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