

CONSTITUTION OF THE DEVELOPED SOCIALIST SOCIETY AND THE TASKS FACING MEDICAL SCIENCE

UDC 342(47+57):61

The new constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, adopted unanimously at an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the eve of the National Holiday to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution, lives and works.

The new constitution is the law of life of the developed, mature socialist society created in the USSR, the new social and international community of peoples – the Soviet people. One of its articles declares: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist people's state, expressing the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, the toilers of all nations and peoples of the country." The further development of democracy in the USSR, the widening of the rights of each citizen of the USSR to work, to recreation, to health care, to material provision in old age, in the case of illness, and loss of working capacity, to housing, to education, to the enjoyment of the achievements of culture, to freedom of scientific, technical, and artistic creativity, to participation in the management of state and public affairs, the discussion and adoption of legislation, have been reflected in the new constitution. The last of these items was clearly demonstrated during the preparation and adoption of the new constitution. As comrade L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and Chairman of the Constitution Commission said in his speech to the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, more than 140 million people had taken part in the public discussion and about 400,000 suggestions aimed at clarifying, improving, and adding to the draft formulations, were received. The Supreme Soviet, on the recommendation of the Constitution Commission, adopted many of these suggestions. "The discussion of the draft constitution," observed Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, "has shown once again how strong and active is the unity of all classes and social groups, of all the nations and nationalities, all the generations of Soviet society, rallying round the Communist Party."

An important step in the realization of the items of the new constitution and, in particular, of article 42, guaranteeing the right of citizens of the USSR to health care, was the adoption in October, 1977 of the Decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "on measures for the further improvement of national health care."

The right of the Soviet peoples to health care is satisfied at the present time by a State system of health care, embodying a widely developed network of therapeutic and prophylactic institutions, experienced teams of physicians and other medical workers, and with higher training and research institutes. It will suffice to recall that free medical aid is provided by 24,000 hospitals, containing more than 3 million beds, and 35,000 out-patient polyclinics. A vast army of physicians, numbering 865,000, fights for the life and health of Soviet citizens. The total number of workers in the health service exceeds 5.5 million. Despite all the great advances in this field, the Central Committee of the CPSU and Council of Ministers of the USSR, considering that care for the health of the Soviet people is a most important social task, have ordered the Ministry of Health of the USSR, the Councils of Ministers of the Union Republics, and other organizations to carry out a comprehensive program of measures for the further improvement of health care of the population. The new program is impressive in its completeness and scale. In fact, in the course of a few years a sharp increase in the number of district physicians is envisaged (this means a reduction in the number of adults and children served by one district physician), well equipped polyclinics are to be set up in rural districts and in regions of new development, methods of rehabilitative treatment will be more widely used, the protection of work will be improved, the network of sanatoria and preventive establishments will be widened, and the output of medical equipment and drugs will be considerably increased.

To carry out this program and to ensure that the proposed measures for health care are effective, research work must continue on an intensive scale. The decree outlines a broad program of work in this field also. In accordance with the decisions of the 25th Congress of the CPSU the basic directions for the develop-

Translated from *Byulleten' Éksperimental'noi Biologii i Meditsiny*, Vol. 85, No. 2, pp. 131-132, February, 1978.

ment of medical science were defined. The progressive development of fundamental research into problems of theoretical, experimental, and clinical medicine is primarily envisaged. On the basis of the results of fundamental research new methods of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of some of the most widespread diseases will be developed. Intensification of research into medical aspects of protection of the environment, the basis of rational feeding, the search for physiologically active substances, and so on, will be intensified.

All-Union Oncologic and Cardiologic Centers, directing the research in these fields throughout the country, are now actively functioning. In 1979 an All-Union Research Center for maternal and child health care will be founded. The planning and coordination of scientific research will be considerably improved. The role of combined investigations undertaken by workers in different specialties will increase. Research carried out within the framework of international programs by scientists from different countries will receive a new impetus.

All the conditions are thus being created for a further upsurge in Soviet medical science. Scientists of all specialties, theoretical and clinical, are receiving fresh opportunities for creative activity, for the study of the most profound and complex problems, and for the introduction of their achievements into health care practice.

Under these conditions the role of medical journals, whose object is to supply their readers with the latest scientific information, will increase.

In 1936, I. P. Pavlov, in a speech from the tribune of the International Congress of Physiologists, remarked how generously the Soviet State provides for the development of medical science in our country and how much the scientist must do to pay off his debt to the Motherland. These words of the great physiologist are even more applicable at the present time. Medical scientists of our country, both experimental and clinical, will do everything within their power to match with their deeds the concern of the Party and Government for the development of medical science in the USSR and will make their own contributions to the realization of the basic principle of socialist society — all for the good of mankind, all in the name of mankind.