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No new cases of leprosy have been registered in Kazakhstan for six years

January 28 is World Leprosy Day. Today, there is a decrease in the incidence of leprosy (Hansen's disease) in Kazakhstan. There are no children or teenagers among the patients. Leprosy affects exclusively the elderly population, which is typical for the fading foci of this infection.

The decrease in the incidence of leprosy in the country is steady. In recent years, the registration of isolated cases of leprosy has continued, 3 cases have been identified in 10 years, 2 patients with relapse of the disease. At the beginning of 2024, 246 patients and 222 contact persons live in Kazakhstan.

- In our country, leprosy is virtually eliminated. Kazakhstan belongs to the countries with a low burden of the disease. Today, the prevention of the disease plays an important role all over the world. The priority task remains secondary prevention, treatment of the consequences (complications) of leprosy, prevention of relapses of the disease, - says Bauyrzhan Baiserkin– Director of the Kazakh Scientific Center for Dermatology and Infectious Diseases of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In Kazakhstan, leprosy began to be treated almost a hundred years ago, since 1929, when a decision was made by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR to organize a leprosarium in the Kazakh SSR. Today, the Kazakh Republican Leprosarium is a specialized medical institution of a special type that provides not only specific treatment, but also rehabilitation of its patients. The leprosarium is located in the Kyzylorda region and has two dispensaries. In addition to special treatment, patients receive all necessary medical care (surgical, ophthalmological, dental, therapeutic, etc.) and rehabilitation.

- A leprosarium is not a place to isolate leprosy patients. Registered patients have the opportunity to receive health and rehabilitation services in other medical organizations of the country. Among the patients there are people with disabilities who need constant medical care, the homeless, the abandoned, patients without relatives and without a fixed place of residence, and those in need of social shelter. The medical examination of patients with leprosy is carried out for life due to the risk of recurrence, - says the chief physician of the Kazakh Republican Leprosarium Moldagali Seitaliev.

Throughout the history of leprosy treatment, the country's doctors have used various tactics. At first, the activities were mainly aimed at identifying and isolating patients. Then the task of chemotherapy came to the fore. Currently, the prevention of leprosy is relevant – the prevention of disability and rehabilitation of patients.