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

January 29 is the World Leprosy Day. Today, there is a decrease in the incidence of leprosy (Hansen's disease) in the country. There are no children and teenagers among the patients. Only the elderly population suffers from leprosy, which is typical for the fading foci of this infection.

There are 265 leprosy patients living in Kazakhstan today. The average age of those registered is 68 years, the youngest is 40 years old, the oldest is more than 90 years old.

- An important role is assigned to the prevention of the disease. However, the problems of early preclinical prevention of leprosy, unfortunately, are still under study. The priority task at the same time remains secondary prevention, treatment of the consequences (complications) of leprosy, prevention of relapses of the disease, - says Asylkhan Abishev, Director of the Kazakh Scientific Center of Dermatology and Infectious Diseases of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KNCDIZ).

In Kazakhstan, leprosy began to be treated almost a hundred years ago, since 1929, when the USSR Council of People's Commissars decided 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. Among the patients there are disabled people who need constant medical care, homeless, rejected, patients without relatives and without a fixed place of residence, and in need of social shelter. The medical examination of patients with leprosy is carried out for life due to the risk of relapse.

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

Doctors note stigma and leprophobia in relation to patients, not only among the population, but also medical workers. This has a negative impact on patients receiving full-fledged medical and social assistance.

According to the definition of international organizations, the leprosy-endemic areas of Kazakhstan belong to the territories of ecological disaster, where people with severe immune deficiency live. This creates an increased risk of the possibility of disease.

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