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The effectiveness of vitiligo treatment is increasing in Kazakhstan

From June 26 to 28 in Kostanay and Petropavlovsk, the Kazakh Scientific Center for Dermatology and Infectious Diseases (KSCDIZ) of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan jointly with the NGO Society of Dermatovenerologists, Dermatocosmetologists and Leprologists organized the Republican educational scientific and practical conference "20 regions of dermatovenerologists, Dermatocosmetologists and leprologists".

The event was held as part of the continuing medical education program and timed to coincide with World Vitiligo Day. 160 delegates from all regions of Kazakhstan took part, including leading domestic specialists, scientists and young doctors. The conference has been held annually since 2015 and has become a significant platform for professional exchange of experience. It was here that the methods of treating skin diseases were first presented, which later became recognized as advanced. For example, at one of the previous forums, for the first time, an innovative method of treating vitiligo was presented - narrowband phototherapy, which is now successfully used in practice.

KNCDIZ specialists, together with the Center for Vitiligo and Skin Health, have become leaders in Central Asia in the use of epidermal cell transplantation in the treatment of vitiligo.

- Thanks, among other things, to these advanced methods, the incidence of vitiligo in Kazakhstan has decreased by almost 1.2 times over the past five years. In 2023, 1,843 patients were registered with a diagnosis of vitiligo, while in 2024 it was 1,417. There has also been a decrease in new cases of syphilis and gonorrhea. To improve the situation in the country, a Standard for the organization of medical care for patients with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) was developed in accordance with the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On the Health of the People and the Healthcare System". The clinical protocols have been updated and the algorithm for the diagnosis of syphilis has been changed. A new clinical protocol for the diagnosis and treatment of vitiligo is being prepared, with various treatment tactics, said the acting director of the KNCDIZ U. The Medeubeks.

Specialized offices in medical institutions, where related specialists of the dermatovenerological service - podologists, trichologists, dentists - work, also demonstrate positive results. Offices of dermatosurgery, dermatooncology, psychodermatology and sexual health are becoming more and more in demand.

Significant changes have also taken place in the medical education system. A specialized residency program in dermatovenerology was opened, based on international standards for STI management. A distance learning program for medical professionals is being developed and a specialized web portal is being created. Modern approaches to STI diagnosis and treatment have already been integrated into secondary, post-secondary, and higher medical education programs.

At the conference, the participants got acquainted with new scientific research on skin diseases. The discussions focused on topical issues of diagnosis and treatment of vitiligo, leishmaniasis, gonorrhea, dermatoses, psoriasis and Hansen's disease. There was a school for a young specialist with the participation of residents of the KSCDIZ, where clinical cases and features of diseases were considered. Patients with vitiligo and severe dermatoses were also consulted, and organizational and methodological support was provided to local specialists.

Vitiligo is a chronic autoimmune disease in which discolored spots appear on the skin. It is not fatal and does not cause physical harm, but it can seriously affect the psychological state of the patient and his family. The disease can develop at any age, more often - up to 20 years. In Kazakhstan, more than 15,000 people seek medical help for vitiligo every year, but the actual number of patients is probably 2-3 times higher. Lack of awareness, social stigma, and fear of judgment become barriers to timely access to a doctor.