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Needs and development opportunities of pensioners in Ukraine

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Abstract

The article highlights the problems and needs of advanced age people. Their relevance is due to the progressive ageing and changes in socio-demographic structure of the population. The structure of social services is analyzed in the article. The author describes the main conditions and approaches of the advanced age people's needs solution; people's at an advanced age formal and informal support network of the needs in modern Ukraine is characterized.

Introduction

Today Ukrainian society is going through a difficult socio economic crisis, which entails a catastrophic drop of the population living standard (Луман, 2002). Particularly acute this problem is in relation to socially vulnerable layers of the population, namely the *aged people*.

The problem of the assistance to the aged people is recognized at the international level. Ukraine starts working in this direction following the recommendations of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the framework of the United Nations Population Fund (www.un.org/russian/document/declarat/ageing_program_ch1.html). However, there are more problems than achievements: the lack of qualified personnel, finance, the absence of the medical-social assistance state program to the pensioners.

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Ukraine belongs to the group of the countries in which the population ageing will take place (Осауленко, Новікова, 2003, p. 40).

The studies that conducted in different countries of the world over the last decade, state the problem of global aging. Today in the world about 600 million people are over 60 years old, and by 2050 they will be about 2 billion, every month more than a million inhabitants of the planet cross over the threshold of their 60th anniversary. Today every tenth inhabitant of our planet have more then 60 years.

According to the classification of the World Health Organization (WHO) the persons aged from 60 to 74 years belong to the category of the aged people, from 75 to 89 years belong to the old people, and from 90 years and older belong to the centenarians (<http://www.who.int/ru/>).

In Ukraine the concept «the person at an advanced age» is consistently associated with the onset of the retirement age (60 years for men and women) (<http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1788-12>). Often uses the term «aged people», which in most cases has the same meaning as «the people at an advanced age» (<http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3721-12>).

Every fifth Ukrainian is a person of advanced age. According to the State Statistics Service, in 2014, in Ukraine the share of the population aged of 60 years and older accounted 21.4% (<http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>).

According to forecast assumptions, in 2025 yr. their number will increase to 25%, and by 2050 yr. their number can increase up to 38%. It is quite high. According to ageing rating (share of population over 65 yrs old) Ukraine now occupies the 25th place in the world and has entered to the 30 oldest countries in the world (Kompleksnyy demohrafichnyy prohnoz...).

The progressive ageing of the population

Scientist, gerontologist I. V. Davydovskyi shared the concepts “old age” and “ageing”, and he emphasized that there are no specific definite dates of ageing, and the person’s calendar age and biological age may not coincide (Давыдовский, 1966, p. 302).

The majority of authors (M. Aleksandrov, O. Krasnov, E. Kholostov) come to the idea that the ageing process of different people occurs in different ways and depends on a number of factors – biological, physiological, psychological, environmental, social; lifestyle and standard of living; working conditions and recovery; family situation; personal relationships to age-related changes and the like.

In developed countries today is popularizing the concept of “successful ageing”, the main components that must accompany ageing according to this concept are: low probability of disease or disability; high learning opportunities and physical activities; active participation in society life.

The implementation of this concept due to the general situation in the country (the level of socio-economic development, political system, ecological conditions, tradi-

tions, mentality, etc.); and depends on each specific person (individual characteristics, lifestyle, past experiences, position in life, the willingness/unwillingness to maintain social connections with persons in the younger age groups).

The situation that exists now in Ukraine, is not conducive for implementation of the “successful ageing” concept’s main provisions. Of course, some of its elements partially implemented: for example, the persons of older-age contingent, as the rest of the population, have the opportunity to take an active part in the political life of society, to defend their social position. At the same time, there is no civil associations of the aged people in Ukraine which would provide them this opportunity.

Social policy is aimed at implementing of the aged people’s constitutional rights to social protection. One of the strategic goals for the nearest future is to achieve not only a tangible improvement in the material situation and living conditions for aged citizens, but enable them to live fully as long as possible for the benefit of society.

Analysis of the ageing persons and older persons’ conducted by Ukrainian scholars (Vlasyuk, Dzyuba, Shchets) situation suggests that they are the most socially unprotected categories of the population that requires special attention from the state (Дзюба, 2004, p. 68–73).

Aged people’s life in the modern difficult conditions in Ukrainian society has certain features. So we can speak confidently about the low material support of the aged person, which with retirement almost lose the opportunity of continued employment. With the transition to the category of elderly people, pensioners are often radically changed not only the relationship between man and society, but also such values as the meaning of life, happiness, good and evil, and so on. With age, the value hierarchy of self-esteem changes. Older people pay less attention to their appearance, but more – to the internal and physical condition.

Changes in the organization of social services and economic approaches associated with a significant increase in the proportion of elderly people in the structure of the population of Ukraine are inevitable. Already today, the system of social assistance and social work, working at maximum loads, is unable to fully meet the needs of the elderly, and about 7.5% of pensioners remain outside the scope of their attention and activities (Новікова, 2011, p. 136–140).

A special place among the problems of the older people in the aspect of social work is also the problem of discrimination and cruelty of the representatives of this age group from some members of society. The concept of “ageism” was introduced by American scientist Robert Neil Butler. Ageism assumes the perception of elderly people as intellectually insolvent, old-fashioned in their views, characterized by contempt of young and strong to the old and the weak. At the heart of this thought is the fear of a young woman before old age and death.

According to the world-famous American scientist Grace Kraiga, the association of all elderly people in one group leads not only to ignoring individual characteristics, but also does not take into account the state of physical health, factors of aging and

age-related regulatory factors. This is the cause of the occurrence of ageism, that is, a social setting in which unjustified highly appreciated youth and discriminates old age (Амосов, 2003, p. 130).

Ukrainian society is full of negative stereotypes of old age, and negative attitude to the aged people. According to a very popular belief, the people at advanced age cause irritation and contempt. Annoying the disturbing image of own future and the one who seems to have lost all that is usually considered valuable: strength, health, wealth, beauty, ability to care for themselves causes contempt. Breaking ties with the generations is an extremely important issue for our societies: it isolates advanced age people and impoverishes the human experience. The advanced age people are not a burden to the society, they can be the chance to improve the standard of living in the country, and the powerful factor of the society humanization.

According to the WHO, Ukraine takes the first place among the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries and the eleventh in the world for the spread of depression, especially among the aged people. This is a very scary statistic (Рибалко, 2008, p. 17–21).

Social protection of the aged people

At the present stage social protection of the aged people is carried out in two main directions – social support (social services; organization of the pension support) and social assistance (assistance of a single character) (Титаренко 2008).

Social institutions' network for the aged people who need constant care is functioning now in Ukraine. In particular these are: local centers for single disabled aged people; nursing homes of the public profile for aged citizens and disabled; geriatric pensions, special pensions for veterans of war and labor (Лукашевич, 2011, p. 368).

In recent years, the main trend is in the development of social services in the hospital became the new types institutions and today has already formed the network of mini-homes with a small number of residents, videlicet 334 in-patient units at regional centers. This gives the opportunity to bring the stationary social services for aged and disabled people who need them, and leave them in a familiar environment.

A new form of social services providing is the establishment of the specialized houses for single veterans of war and work, pensioners and disabled people in the regions, with the group of the social and medical services.

Today seven such houses operates in Ukraine, with the population of almost five hundred people (in Kyiv and Odessa, Donetsk and Lviv regions) (Рибалко, 2008, p. 17–21).

In view of the globalization to domestic social services sphere have been widely introduced foreign models of social services, which are more focused on the individual needs of the aged people.

It should be noted the penetration of international organizations on this market services, videlicet “Caritas”, “Doctors without Borders”, “Salvation Army” and others.

However, despite the existence the whole network of institutions, organizations and services that provide a range of services for the aged people in Ukraine, social work with this category of the population requires further improvement based on the experience of various countries around the world.

Needs of pensioners

Turning to the conclusions of the dissertation study by N. Ermak, we can identify the specific needs inherent in the elderly and divide them into two components: objective - material needs and subjective - spiritual (Єрмак, 2009, p. 95).

Considering the needs’ balancing problem and possibilities of their satisfaction for the aged people in Ukraine, we divided them into two components: the objective needs – physical ones and subjective spiritual needs.

In turn, the physical needs includes three components like: *physiological needs* (need for food, breath, physical activity and health); *needs in comfort environment* (desicion of the housing and environmental needs), *physical and social needs* (the need for labor, the satisfaction of the economic needs).

Spiritual needs include two blocks: *the interpersonal communication* (the need for belonging to a social group, in society, friendship, love, success, demand respect and recognition) and *self-actualization* (the need for self-realization, cognition, development, education, information, creativity).

The problem of self-realization in old age is not only scientifically relevant, but also vitally significant, because traditionally old age is perceived as the age of loss, sadness and loneliness.

In this regard, there is a constant search for new forms, methods and technologies of social work with the category aged people as possible in order to address problems of social adaptation and integration more effectively.

Needs assessment is seen as a foundation on which a successful policy of the national level or regional program is built.

In the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing proposed the ways of getting information that is organized according to three priority directions: the participation of the aged persons in the society development; health and well supporting; the creation of favorable conditions for individual development of the person throughout life. Such planning can serve as a basis for information gathering in the needs assessment process, regardless of what methods of needs assessment are selected (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/madrid-plan-of-action-and-its-implementation.html>).

Today in Ukraine the aged people require non-standard forms of employment. Therefore, in Ukraine since 2011 yr. is implemented the project “University of the third age”, which has one goal “Education throughout life”.

And informal education which helps to get new information through a variety of courses, hobby groups, clubs and other activities.

Education of the aged people is a structural element of lifelong education and has its own conceptual principles that require to consider of the personal physiological changes at optimally positive ageing.

Such changes include slowing of reactions in larger and more rapid fatigue and deterioration of the capacity for perception, narrowing the scope and reducing duration of attention concentration, difficulties of distribution and switching of attention, reduced ability to concentrate, increased sensitivity to foreign interference, some reduction of the memory possibilities, the weakening of the tendency to "automatic" remembering, the difficulty of reproduction of the received information.

Due to these features it is necessary to structurize the curriculum and take to attention psycho-pedagogical conditions of the learning process' organization for aged people

Conclusions

In the new socioeconomic realities of the society, the problem of targeted and differentiated approach to the organization of social services' work and providing support for the aged people becomes even more important.

The level of attention to the people at advanced age is an important indicator of the civilization level whole society.

Among the perspective directions of scientific and pedagogical search is the creation and expansion of the network of adult education centres on the basis of the higher educational institutions and other educational institutions, and centers of informal education for different categories of adults, cooperation with universities of the third age, the development of scientific and methodological support of adult education in Ukraine.

The definition of this problem specificity with taking into account characteristics and needs of the aged people in an ageing society conditions can be a direction for further research.

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