

Chandrasekaran T., Kishor A.

**ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS TO THE NEW RUSSIAN
LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

Tutor: assistant Sazonov E.

*Department of Outpatient therapy
Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk*

Relevance. The shift to Russian-only instruction for international medical students in Belarus poses significant adaptation challenges. This study examines how foreign students cope with this change, focusing on their prior language skills, current difficulties, and perceived support.

Aim: to evaluate the adaptation level of international medical students to the mandatory Russian language requirement and to suggest practical improvements based on survey data.

Materials and methods. A questionnaire was completed by 72 foreign medical students (mostly aged 18–24, mixed gender, predominantly Asian nationalities). Questions covered pre-arrival Russian proficiency, workload, use of translation tools, stress sources, out-of-class practice, medical terminology preparation, overall adaptation, and preferred learning aids.

Results and their discussion. Before arrival, 68% of students had no or only basic Russian proficiency. The mandatory Russian course was seen as "heavy" or "very heavy" by 44% of respondents relative to their medical subjects. Confidence in working with medical documentation was low: 52% of students felt "slightly confident" or "not very confident," while only 18% felt "confident" or "very confident." Consequently, 61% rely on translation apps or dictionaries "frequently" or "very frequently." University support was described as "minimal" or "none" by 49% of students. The main stressors were "understanding lectures" (67%) and "mastering medical terminology" (58%), followed by "clinical communication" (43%). Over half (54%) practice speaking Russian outside class only "rarely" or "sometimes." Most students (63%) feel the language course does little to prepare them for medical terminology, leading to persistent difficulties. Overall self-rated adaptation was "slightly" to "moderately" adapted (71%). When asked what would help most, students selected: "more focus on medical terminology" (78%), "smaller class sizes" (65%), and "more interactive practice with native speakers" (72%).

Conclusion. Almost all foreign medical students experience significant adaptation difficulties due to the language barrier. The initial level of Russian language proficiency among incoming students is mostly low, and even by higher courses, the final level remains inadequate for comfortable studying and clinical practice. To cope with these difficulties, students themselves suggested practical solutions: a stronger emphasis on medical terminology, smaller class sizes, and more interactive practice with native speakers.