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FIRST AID: ISSUE OF UNAWARENESS

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Relevance. Today's world is full of danger. There are multiple factors that threaten our lives everyday, from transport in the streets to people's unhealthy lifestyles. People seldom tend to think that anything unpleasant or even bad may happen to them, because they have other routine problems to solve. It is important to remember that neither we, nor our relatives and friends are immune to getting into health-threatening situations. We entrust our health and lives not only to the ambulance doctors, but also to strangers and passersby, who will be on the spot to give first aid. All the consequences, including the future of the victim, may depend on people he or she knows nothing about. At the same time any of us may all of a sudden get in place of a rescuer. So when you consider all these points, basic knowledge of first aid skills turns out to be vital for everybody, not only for people with medical education.

Aim: The study was carried out to find out if the problem of inability and unawareness in the field of first aid provision exists; to evaluate the level of people's first aid skills; to work out a solution to this problem including possible changes in governmental policy as to first aid skills public education.

Materials and methods. Sociological and statistical methods were used to assess a general level of first aid skills of the population. 219 respondents of different age and activities were asked to estimate their skills of giving first aid considering different medical cases. Some scientific resources and medical websites were explored to find out topical information about first aid guidelines. In addition, some legislative documents were studied.

Results and discussion. The results of the survey showed that 1st year medical students possess much better awareness and knowledge of first aid comparing to the other groups questioned. Absolute majority of the respondents (97%) find the issue of discussion topical, but only 66% of the questioned know how and where they can acquire necessary skills. The condition of heart attack was revealed to be the hardest (only 17% can recognize and provide first aid), whereas the condition of choking turned out to be the easiest (84%). The survey showed that a lot of the respondents do not demonstrate deep knowledge in the field of giving first aid. The obtained data also suggest that people are not very well aware of the facilities they could use to get these skills. The governmental policy on this issue is defined quite clearly. There are the Ministry of Health resolutions to establish a unified state system of teaching the population how to provide first aid. The coordination of this system lies mainly on the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education. Besides, plenty of private organizations are offering facilities and courses for teaching people first aid skills. A vast diversity of online resources are available for free. Nevertheless, common understanding of importance and being ready to study remain the most crucial points.

Conclusion. In today's world, having good knowledge and skills of first aid is of great importance. All people regardless of their occupation or social group should possess them and be ready to apply them in practice when needed. Unfortunately, acquiring these skills is not popular these days. However, as soon as the authorities and activists concerned about the state of the matter start working together, significant progress will be certainly achieved.