

Kulikova V.V., Kutsevich O.N.

SPANISH FEVER

Scientific supervisor: sen. teacher Prostotina O.V.

Department of Foreign Languages

Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk

This work is focused on the worst pandemic in modern history, which killed nearly 50 million people in eighteen months. It also shows how closely this pandemic was connected to the World War I.

The biggest epidemic of influenza occurred in 1918. Earlier no one had suspected that there could be the most terrible pandemic in the mankind history, which took much more lives than the war. This fatal influenza was called "Spanish fever".

Firstly, the A virus serotype was noticed in August 1918, then mutated into H1N1 subtype. This mutation increased its existing high infectivity and the ability to penetrate into the lungs. Over 20 million people had died from the flu by 1920. According to some sources, this number reached 40-50 million or 2.5% of the world's population. The optimal condition for the spread of the virus was the environment densely packed with people (military barracks, troopships, troop trains and etc.). Therefore influenza is considered a disease of crowds and a social phenomenon which World War I created on a large scale.

The disease was developing with the speed of a lightning: a person was healthy in the morning, the temperature would rise during day and by the evening the patient would die. The symptoms were severe – impaired breathing, crackling sounds from the lungs, a racking cough and a pungent odour. The only effective treatment for "Spanish" influenza in 1918 was bed regime and good nursing. Also it was recommended to avoid physical overstrain and increase supportive therapy. In this case "get-up-and-go" position was extremely dangerous to the patient's life.

Spanish Flu killed from 50 to 100 million people in the world in less than 2 years. According to the statistics "Spanish fever" affected nearly a third of humanity.