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**CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION
OF FOREIGN MEDICAL STUDENTS IN BELARUS**

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Relevance. The problem of socio-psychological adaptation of foreign students to the process of learning in medical school remains extremely topical. Numerous factors contribute to the complexity of the adaptation process, for instance, language barriers, cultural differences, feeling of homesickness, social isolation, academic stress, and identity conflicts as they attempt to balance their cultural identity with the demands of the host culture.

Aim: to investigate the primary impediments encountered by Indian students in attuning to Belarus, comprising social conventions, lifestyle, and educational framework.

Materials and methods. The study of the adaptation mechanism involved 50 students from India (38% females and 62% males) aged between 19 to 27 years, pursuing studies in different universities in Belarus, namely Belarusian State Medical University, Vitebsk State Medical University, Gomel State Medical University. The observation was selective, one-time. Methods: sociological, statistical. A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions (Google form) was developed. The survey was conducted through the Internet.

Microsoft Excel, Statistica 10.0 software packages were used for statistical data processing, differences between the groups were considered significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results and their discussion. The study group was homogeneous in gender and age groups (Chi-square test = 0.77; $p = 0.94$). The outcomes of the investigation unveiled that the adaptability of students to the frigid climatic conditions of Belarus is not universal, as 60% of the students exhibited no trouble in doing so. 62% of participants felt homesick and missed their family/relatives. Moreover, nearly half of the students experienced some difficulty (55%) in mastering a new language in the beginning, with 51% of them still unable to speak Russian fluently while the students in senior years deny to this as they are fluent in Russian language; communication with Belarusian locals proved challenging for 46% of students. Effective communication with faculty members was also a hurdle for many, as 41% of students reported issues in that regard, as did 30% of students who had trouble navigating Belarusian rules and regulations. Making friends in Belarus was also an issue for approximately half the students (49%), as was food-related problems.

Investigating the proclivities of students, the study discovered that 47% of Indian students endorsed the idea of segregating themselves from other ethnic groups in academic settings, while a majority (53%) supported the notion of bringing together international pupils in the same class to promote cross-cultural exchange. Impressions of Belarus as a destination for higher education were generally optimistic, with 42% of students indicating that they had made the right selection by attending the university. Moreover, a considerable percentage of students (33%) expressed a willingness to stay in Belarus and pursue a career in healthcare, while 52% of students expressed a strong attachment to their homeland and an eagerness to return home and help their compatriots as physicians.

Conclusion: as per the study results, Indian students who were interviewed have not yet become accustomed to Belarusian cuisine. The study reveals that Indian students confront unfamiliar social environments in comparison to their culture of origin. Further, the social and psychological adjustment of Indian students is considerably arduous as Belarus possesses distinct customs, norms, and regulatory measures, which diverge significantly from India. Moreover, a majority of respondents still face difficulties communicating in Russian language, which they tend to avoid.