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ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Relevance. By the 21th century Alzheimer's disease (AD) has encompassed all continents and became an integral part of modern society. According to WHO statistics, about 10 million new cases are recorded around the world every year. Every fifth person, over 65 years old, is diagnosed with early stages of this disease. However, it is important to note that the malady is getting younger every decade. The latest research suggests Alzheimer's disease also occurs in young adults, the first symptoms appearing as early as at the age of 17. Such an age-related variation of the disease makes it possible to name this ailment a "social disease".

Aim: to study the specific and non-specific symptoms of Alzheimer's disease by making an overview of scientific literature. To demonstrate the connection between sleeplessness and the development of AD. To analyze the attitude of different strata of society in Belarus to people suffering from this disease and to develop advice for the younger generation how to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Materials and methods. The latest scientific research and articles on the Alzheimer's disease and the features of the brain were analyzed. Three experienced practitioners in the field of gerontology and therapy were interviewed. An anonymous online questioning of 408 people from 16 to 70 years old (including 280 students of BSMU, BSU, BSEU, BARSU, GRSMU, BSTU) was carried out.

Results and their discussion: The overview of scientific literature has shown that sleeplessness, lack of brain activity, obesity, problems with the cardiovascular and nervous systems (high blood pressure, reduced oxygen level in cells, stroke, raised cholesterol) lead to Alzheimer's disease. If patients don't get enough sleep, their brain won't have time to drain away harmful substances, which will be accumulating through life giving rise to dementia.

The brain of people suffering from Alzheimer's disease is slowly destroyed. Brain changes associated with AD lead to increasing memory troubles, difficulty making judgments and decisions, thinking, reasoning, planning and performing familiar tasks, changes in personality and behavior.

According to the survey of 408 respondents the following results have been obtained:

78,2% of respondents are aware of symptomatology of Alzheimer's disease.

7% have relatives or acquaintances suffering this malady.

More than 40% of young people have already experienced such implicit symptoms of the disease as learning difficulties and assimilation of new information, difficulties in performing everyday tasks, speech disorders, problems with abstract thinking. 52% of respondents sleep from 6 to 8 hours every day, while 29% devote from 4 to 6 hours to sleep.

About 80% of questioned people find this disease rather important to be covered, but about 20% of people don't realize the relevance of the problem.

About 60% of interviewed feel sympathy for the people who are ill with Alzheimer's disease and for their relatives. 10% don't single them out as a special group of society. 8% feel aggression and annoyance when meeting people suffering from AD. 22% don't know how to deal with these people.

Conclusion: the analysis of the results of the survey has shown that Alzheimer's disease has become younger. In the 21st century young people are already suffering from the first non-specific symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Currently, there is no treatment for Alzheimer's disease, however the development of dementia can be prevented by training the brain, doing physical exercises, having a rest, sleeping not less than 6 hours per day and trying to avoid stressful situations.

It's important to accept the fact that Alzheimer's disease is the part of our society. We shouldn't feel annoyance when meeting people who are ill with Alzheimer's disease and do our best to show patience and sympathy to them and their relatives. We should remember that each of us can face this problem.