

## Concept “Medical Museum” as a Sociocultural Phenomenon

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### ABSTRACT

The article examines the concept “medical museum” as a sociocultural phenomenon. The register of medical museums in Russia makes the material of research. The complex methods of analysis of the concept “medical museum” are used. The philosophical, historical, cultural, structural, communicative and semantic analysis is carried out. Polycentric approach shows the medical museum as an integral system that consists of autonomous fields with their own aims and tasks. In article, we realize the aim of the study. We identify medical collections, preserve historical and medical heritage of Russia to organize works to support and develop further these activities in the Russian Federation. The ways of analysis are useful for development of museology, history of medicine, communication theory, conceptology, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics.

### KEYWORDS

Communication, concept, conceptology, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics, museology, history of medicine, medical museum

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## Introduction

Nowadays it is very important to view museums as a whole. A medical museum is a unity of regularly arranged and connected with each other parts. This point of view guarantees the existence and reproduction of different forms and areas of social and cultural practice. On the base of this approach a

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polycentric medical museum model is being formed. There are three interrelated and interdependent aspects of the concept polycentric medical museum model (Janeke, 2014):

1) Artifacts. This aspect guarantees the recording of historical processes and includes the medical museum activity connected with collecting, keeping, saving and investigating museum objects and collections, which includes funds acquisition, keeping process, research and fund work, restoration, etc. The leading role will be played to laws and regulations determining the turnover of cultural relics.

2) Images. This aspect guarantees direct cooperation with a visitor and society. This will provide the opportunity to perform and interpret medical museum collections in a new way using the most popular in the society informative component of medical museum objects. Together with this process, it will be possible to actualize the new meanings of medical museum objects as well as a gradual re-thinking of medical museum collections and the creation of a new medical museum image.

3) Missions. This aspect is to decide the issues proposed by different institutes, visitors and the medical museum itself. The realization of medical museum missions with the help of the fields of images and artifacts initiates a very special medical museum process. This process we can characterize as a creation of performance standards.

Polycentric medical museum model unites the medical museum structure and function, promotes to extend the framework of a medical museum stereotype dealing with it in its new capacity. This model helps the medical museum to adapt naturally and successfully in the changing world.

### Literature Review

A concept “medical museum” as a sociocultural phenomenon is an institution or structural unit of the organization that uses exhibition, accounting stock, cultural, educational and research technologies to shape attitudes of the target audience towards life and health as the greatest social values and knowledge about scientific and practical activities for the preservation and strengthening of health, about the historical and modern diagnostic tools, treatment and prevention of diseases (Pashkov, Slyshkin & Chizh, 2014; Zheltukhina, 2015; Zheltukhina et al., 2016). Functional-axiological basis of medical museums is to focus on the solution of public health problems. Medical museums are different from medical collections in museums composed of other types, where they are not only a part of the collections and exhibitions, without performing the main functions of the medical museum.

This article continues the series of publications (Pashkov & Chizh, 2014; Pashkov, Slyshkin & Chizh, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Pashkov et al., 2015; Chizh, 2016; Pashkov et al., 2016), dedicated to a medical museum as a unique sociocultural phenomenon that has arisen as a result of the integration of health care and cultural and educational activities.

An example of a medical collection in a non-core museum is a collection of anatomical specimens and medical instruments of the XVIII century in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography named after Peter the Great, Russian Academy of Sciences. Anatomical and medical collections are kept and exhibited in the museum as part of the historical heritage of the museum that

was the beginning of its collection. In XVIII - XIX centuries, the museum would form the collection at the expense of academic expeditions fees and would solve the problem of supplying the Academy of Sciences with the samples of Russian and foreign ores and minerals; here the flora and fauna of Russia were studied; here there were brought from expeditions everyday objects, beliefs of different peoples of Russia, and later the whole world, finds from the "ancient tombs" that is everything that initiated the development of the sciences of ethnography and archaeology. This radically changed the profile of the museum; its anatomical and medical collections have become only history (Cullen, 1894; Cole, 1914; Stephens, 2008).

In the contemporary environment of national museums there are a few medical museums with the status of an autonomous organization (for example, the Military Medical Museum). Museums which are a subdivision of medical profile organizations dominate. The following types can be distinguished among them:

- 1) museums - structural subdivisions of educational medical organizations;
- 2) museums - structural subdivisions of medical research organizations;
- 3) museums - structural subdivisions of medical organizations;
- 4) museums - structural subdivisions of health authorities.

Abroad, there are a number of large medical museums with the organizational autonomy. The most important category of classification of museums is a museum profile, which determines the composition of collections, display themes, the contents of scientific research and has an impact on all areas of museum activity. Medical museums are not included in the scope of a single profile of the museum. From the point of view of a profile classification among medical museums there can be distinguished branch museums in medical science and health services, natural science museums (anatomical, histological, etc.), historical and household museums (e.g. the Museum of county medicine named after V.M. Bekhterev). In addition, as part of medical museums there are elements of an art museum (e.g., collections of art of the mentally ill in the museums of psychiatry, works of art, dedicated to the patron saints of the medical art in the museums of the history of medicine). Most medical museums are complex, i.e., combining several traditional profiles.

From the point of view of the classification according to the type of stored historical, cultural and natural heritage, the following museums are distinguished in museology: collection, ensemble and environmental. Among medical museums there dominate collection museums, i.e. museums, in which the collection of movable material objects is the bedrock of the activity. Ensemble museums are also presented (e.g. The Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna, San Servolo Insane Asylum Museum, Old Operating Theatre Museum and Herb Garret).

From the perspective of the target audience, among medical museums there can be singled out the ones aimed at the general public (as a rule, these are independent museum organizations), the limited non-specialized audience (for example, the target audience of the museum of medical institutions includes patients of the institution), specific audience (the target audience of museums of research institutions is experts in specific scientific field).

The formation and optimization of the network infrastructure of the specialized establishments are the most important factor that ensures consistency of approach in any field of activity. Therefore, a significant step in the development of the Russian museum studies should be considered to be the emergence of the Register of medical museums in Russia, compiled in accordance with the Work Plan of the Council on the development of historical and medical museums under the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation. The Council was formed by the order of the Ministry of Health of Russia № 527 of August 5, 2013 (The Chairman of the Board is the Deputy Minister of Health of the Russian Federation I.N. Kaghramanyan).

### ***Aim of the Study***

The aim of the study is to identify medical collections, to preserve historical and medical heritage of Russia, to organize works to support and develop further these activities in the Russian Federation.

### ***Research questions***

The overarching research questions of this study were as follows:

Is the concept “medical museum” a sociocultural phenomenon?

How can we analyze the concept “medical museum” with its social functions in changing societies?

How can we identify specific Russian characteristics of the concept “medical museum” that might have universal application?

### ***Methods***

The register of medical museums in Russia makes the material of research. For achievement of a goal of research, we use complex methods of analysis of the concept “medical museum”: the philosophical, historical, cultural, structural, communicative and semantic analysis. Concept approaches towards medical museum activity in use till nowadays have interpreted not a medical museum but only separate elements or the reasons of its existence, which are used by different not even related to each other fields of science and cultural practice. Analyzing a concept “medical museum” as a sociocultural phenomenon we focus on one or several aspects of admitted importance. This approach in its essence is an overweighted one and forms a monocentric museum model that does not allow viewing a phenomenon of a modern medical museum with all its changing social functions. As a result, the crisis of museums as a social institution is being talked about. In the cultural sphere medical museums tend to be reserve and self-sufficient that prevents them from the necessary adaptation to the changing conditions of the “one time” world. Our time demands a culturological and philosophical approach to the medical museum fundamental nature perception. Polycentric approach shows the medical museum as an integral system. This system consists of autonomous fields with their own aims and tasks (Janeke, 2014).

### ***Data, Analysis, and Results***

The Register is the first official anthology in which, on the basis of application forms developed by K.A. Pashkov et al. (2016), the head of the Department of History of Medicine MSMDU named after A.I. Yevdokimov, and

N.V. Chizh (2016), the head of the Museum of the History of Medicine MSMDU named after A.I. Yevdokimov, on personal will of the founders, the collectors and keepers there is formed the preliminary pattern of existing in the Russian Federation museums and historical collection assemblies of historical medical focus.

To be included in the Register (a letter from the Russian Ministry of 13.12.2013 № 16-1 / 10 / 2-9377) all medical museums and collections, the museum room, constantly operating expositions in the structure of medical, scientific, educational institutions as well as those whose activities are carried out on a voluntary basis were suggested. Corresponding letters were sent to the heads of health authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation, health care institutions of the Russian Federation, directors of scientific institutions and university rectors within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health of Russia.

At the moment, the Register has recorded 168 museums from 64 subjects of the Russian Federation. As a primary principle of structuring the information base the regional principle has been elected, which allows to see the geography of representation of medical museums in the Russian Federation.

The official placement of the Register on the Internet in accordance with the decision of the Council for the development of historical medical museums under the auspices of the Ministry of Health of Russia is set at the historical and medical portal "historymed" (Pashkov, 2002-2016), which includes a special section "the Register of medical museums of Russia". Additionally, the printed version of the Register was published in 2014.

Updating of the Register is regularly conducted by the staff of the Development Centre of historical medical museums in the Russian Federation, established by order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation of 15.02.2015, No. 48.

As already mentioned, at October 19, 2016 the information database includes information about 168 medical museums or museums that store medical collections from 64 subjects of the Russian Federation. About 97% of them are departmental subordinate to the Ministry of Health, the remaining 3% are the museums and exhibition centers within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture.

The Register provides extensive information about the history of the formation of medical museums in Russia. The register presents the medical museums, which appeared in pre-revolutionary Russia, for example, The Museum of macropreparations of the Department of pathological anatomy with sectional course of State budget educational institute of higher education Perm State Medical Academy named after Academician E.A. Wagner attached to the Russian Ministry of Health.

After the revolution of 1917 a number of museums of history of medical fields were established. Among them there is the Museum "History of pharmacy in St. Petersburg" founded in 1919 and renovated at the beginning of 2004, and the Museum of the Federal state budget institution "Russian Scientific Centre of Radiology and Surgical Technologies" of the Ministry of Health of Russia, opened in 1919.

The majority of medical museums represented in the Register were founded in the period from 1980s to 2000s. It should be noted that construction of



museums continues at the present. An example of this can be established in February, 2014 "the Museum of medicine of the Kaluga region" and opened in June, 2016, "The Museum of the History of Irkutsk State Medical University."

80% of Russian museums are museums established on the basis of educational institutions (universities, colleges), and the museums established in health care institutions (hospitals, clinics, research institutes).

Among the museums of the universities such a traditional for medical educational institutions functional type as museums of textbooks has remained. Our database includes information about such museums. For example, there are two museums of such kind in Perm State Medical Academy named after Academician E.A. Wagner attached to the Russian Ministry of Health. They are The Anatomical Museum named after V.K. Schmidt and The Museum of macropreparations of the Department of pathological anatomy with sectional course.

The majority of medical museums represented in the register, are museums of specific institutions that reflect their history. These museums were created to anniversaries. Almost all the exhibits demonstrate portraits, personal belongings, scientific works of scientists who have contributed to the development of the institution and medicine in general. In some cases, the interior of outstanding scientists' memorial rooms is also displayed. An example would be the interior of Professor E.M. Lepsky's surgery set up in the Museum of History of Kazan State Medical Academy (M.D., Head of the Department of childhood diseases in 1921-1953): a desk, a chair, microscopes, a typewriter, a library with a personal stamp, foreign books, with the translations made by the owner in the margins. There can be some displays of this kind in the university. So, the Museum of the History of Medicine of Altai represents memorial rooms of such professors as Y.M. Dederer., Z.S. Barkagan, I.I. Neimark.

Among the medical museums included in the register, 4% are of a memorial character, and are dedicated to a specific scientist. For example, The Memorial Museum of V.M. Bekhterev attached to the Federal state budget institution "Saint Petersburg scientific research psychoneurological institute named after V.M. Bekhterev" of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation was organized in 1957 and reflects the biography of the scientist.

In nine regions of the Russian Federation there are museums of local history focus, demonstrating the history of medicine development in the cities and regions. These include the Museum of county medicine named after V.M. Bekhterev attached to State budget institution of culture of the Republic of Tatarstan, Yelabuga state historical-architectural and art sanctuary museum, The Museum of the history of development of health of the Republic of Dagestan, the Room Museum of the dermatological service of the Republic of Bashkortostan, and Museum of the history of medicine of the Altai Republic (Altai region, Rubtsovsk), etc.

Collections of about 77% of the museums represented in the database, range from 1,000 and 5,000 units of storage of basic scientific auxiliary fund. 3% of the museums have in their collections less than 1,000 museum objects, 18% - from 5,000 to 20,000 and 2% - more than 20,000 items. For example, 5,787 storage units are contained in The Museum of history of the Pacific state medical university in Vladivostok. 12,179 items (in fixed assets – 8,726 units) are stored in the Museum of the History of Medicine in the city of Chelyabinsk in

Municipal budgetary healthcare institution of the Order of the Red Banner city clinical hospital № 1 in Chelyabinsk.

The basis of museum collections comprises documents, photographs on the history and current state of companies, medical instruments, personal belongings, furniture of the offices of scientists, medical equipment, documents, books, photographs, and portraits of famous doctors, scientists. Peculiar kinds are museums of military and labor glory. There are 3% of them in our database. The basis of the collections of these museums is items, personal belongings, medical equipment of the employees who participated in the fighting during the Great Patriotic War or the home front workers.

All these items require different storage conditions. However, 97% represented in the database of museums do not have specially adapted rooms for the storage of museum objects by type and source types. All museum exhibits are stored in a single room of 30 to 80 square meters and under the same temperature and humidity conditions. The exceptions are the museums within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture to State budget institution of culture of the Republic of Tatarstan, "Yelabuga state historical-architectural and art sanctuary museum" (SBICRT YSHAandAS) and the Municipal cultural institution "Museum exhibition centre" in Zarechny in the Penza region, which comply with the requirements for storage of museum objects.

Saratov State Medical University is proud of possessing two museums – the History museum and the Human Anatomy museum. These museums house various exhibits and serve different needs of their visitors.

The History museum was founded in 1985 to display the exhibits presenting the information about the work of the University since the moment of its inception in 1909 up to the present time. One can see here original documents, photos of medical scientists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As well as personal belongings of the professors at the time, old medical equipment and tools, photo albums, awards, etc. The museum unfolds the story of the medical thought evolution through exhibiting real artifacts and names (Zheltukhina et al., 2016). Fresh students have a unique opportunity to create awareness about the place where they are going to be educated. The showcases of the museum contain the materials reflecting all stages in the development of medical education in the Volga region. The administration of the museum plans to open a special hall devoted to the new ways of treatment and the achievements of local medical workers (Saratov State Medical University named after V. I. Razumovsky. History museum, 2000-2016).

The Human Anatomy museum is located at the Department of Anatomy of Saratov State Medical University. The Human Anatomy museum started its history in 1909 and nowadays it is one of the biggest in Russia. Among the exhibits are the works of outstanding scientists-anatomists of our country and the exhibits that were created by the anatomists who worked for the University. The showcases are devoted to displays on a detailed structure of the human body, its variability, development and abnormal development, phylogenesis and ontogenesis; and also there are showcases that cover the history of the discipline (Zheltukhina, 2014b; Zheltukhina et al., 2016). The first museum exhibits, displayed to the present, were: the man-sized brain model, the model of a two week old embryo, the model of deep facial blood vessels, and the skeleton of a newborn. Besides, the museum features a series of oil paintings of individual



organs and systems. The most frequent visitors of the Anatomy museum are first and second year students who study the Anatomy discipline. However, senior students and postgraduate students also come to this place do their research work. This free-access museum is open to the general public and one can see there schoolchildren with their biology teachers, and all those who are interested in medicine and anatomy (Saratov State Medical University named after V. I. Razumovsky. Anatomy museum, 2000-2016).

About 80 % of the medical museums have one employee on the staff that is the Head (Director) of the museum, who ensures the fulfillment of basic social functions of the museum: documenting, storing objects from the museum collections, education and upbringing (museum communication) (Blumberg et al., 1967; Farr, 1995; Privalova, 2003; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Bates, 2008; Pellico, Friedlaender & Fennie, 2009; Silverman, 2010; Gauferg & Ray, 2011; Andres et al., 2012; Miller et al., 2013; Pashkov, Slyshkin & Chizh, 2014; Zheltukhina, 2014a; Evans, Johnson & Krucoff, 2016; Gooding et al., 2016; Pashkov, Slyshkin & Chizh, 2016a, 2016b; Zheltukhina et al., 2016). 10% of museums take two-three employees on the staff. Only 10 % have more than three people. Among institutions with a full staff of the museum there is the Museum of county medicine named after V.M. Bekhterev as part of Yelabuga state historical-architectural and art sanctuary museum and the Museum of the History of Medicine in the city of Chelyabinsk in Municipal budgetary healthcare institution of the Order of the Red Banner city clinical hospital № 1 in Chelyabinsk. Museum "History of medical education in Sakhalin" includes two parts – exhibition and excursion.

All museums represented in the database perform a communicative function. Both overall and thematic excursions are designed in museums. For example, a series of excursions of the Museum of history of the Pacific state medical university in Vladivostok includes thematic tours for students of PSDU "Medical Profession is a feat", vocational guidance excursions for pupils of secondary schools "Compassion and moral heroism of the doctor", etc.

Data processing of the information database of the Register of medical museums in Russia continues. We have presented only some preliminary results. The list of museums included in the database is increasing. However, we can already state that the establishment of a Register marks a qualitatively new stage in the development of the medical museum activities in the Russian Federation that is the formation of integrated communicative space of the medical museology.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Implications and recommendations for future studies are as follows. Based on findings of this study we can compare all medical museums in Russia. It should be noted that our future study could form integrated communicative space of the medical museology. It is recommended that linguistic, cultural, philosophical and historical development of research should include complex methods, which were integrated into research process and should be discussed by experts in their fields. The next step in the development of medical museology as an independent research direction will be the creation of the encyclopedia "Medical museology", which is currently being implemented by the staff of the



Development centre history of medical museums of Moscow state medical dental university named after A.I. Evdokimov.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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