

# Features of Hospice Management as an Institution in the Social Sphere in Ukraine: Regional Aspect

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## Original Article

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### Abstract:

Our research is devoted to the problem of the management system effectiveness in the palliative specialized institutions of Ukraine. The current state of palliative care in Ukraine is in dire need of changes and reforming, but the issue is not lobbied beyond ardent speeches, speeches at authoritative meetings and in materials of congresses, conventions and magazine articles.

The article analyzes the factors, taking into account the experience of European countries, which can act as fundamental for improving the organization of hospice management. The conducted empirical research in the form of an expert survey was aimed at identifying the specifics of hospice management in Ukraine, and showed the existing problems in the hospice care system. The study dealt with the most significant issues to identify the main problems of functioning, management of hospices in Ukraine and the possibility of improving the management efficiency in the system of palliative and hospice care. It was proved that the regulatory framework needs to be improved at the state level for the development of palliative and hospice care, is an integral part of effective social security of the population. The survey showed that in order to increase government funding, change Ukrainian legislation taking into account the experience of European countries, improve the quality of personnel training and improve the methodology for collecting and storing information.

Ukraine faces important and difficult issues of introducing hospice care into medical and social work for a long time, almost from the first days of its independence. The post-Soviet model of trusteeship by the elderly and terminally ill operated in the country. For the elderly, who already had a whole bunch of chronic diseases with age, special boarding schools and the so-called „nursing homes“ functioned in which they lived their lives and died under the supervision of a team of social and medical workers. Tuberculosis patients were engaged in anti-tuberculosis dispensaries at the local, regional and republican levels.

In Ukraine, in recent years there have been significant changes in the organization and functioning of hospice care. About 30 institutions providing palliative care have been created and are functioning and operate on various bases - state, communal, charitable (Lyashchenko AI 2009; Knyazevych VM 2009). In recent years, it has begun to become clearer, multi-level structure for the provision of palliative-hospice care in Ukraine has begun to take on. It provides for the creation of new, repair, re-equipment and provision of qualified personnel of those institutions that need it. A network of Children's Hospices (Gonchar MO 2016) and hospice establishments is also being created. In some regions of Ukraine, visiting departments and brigades for rendering palliative-hospice care have already been formed and are working. The idea of creating home hospices is gradually being discussed and put into

practice (Volgin NA 2002; Lyashchenko AI 2009).

We carried out a thorough and comprehensive analysis of implementation problems in Ukrainian realities (Egorova O.Yu., 2007).

**Methodology** for conducting empirical research, an expert survey was selected aimed at studying the specifics of hospice management in Ukraine. In total 63 leaders, or their deputies of hospices of Ukraine were surveyed.

**Am of the study** to identify and analyze ways to improve the effectiveness of the hospice management system in Ukraine.

**Main objectives** of the study are:

- analysis of hospices in Ukraine;
- identification of the main problems of functioning and management of hospices in Ukraine.

Hospice managers, or their deputies, were asked to rate on a 5-point scale the effectiveness of the functioning of the hospice management system in Ukraine (5 - effectively, 1 - ineffectively).

The majority of respondents - 12, which is 52%, evaluate the system of functioning of hospices at 4 points, however, 48% of respondents (11) gave 3 points, and this is only „satisfactory“. That is, the effectiveness of the functioning of the system, according to the leaders of hospices, is in a medium-satisfactory condition. Unfortunately, not one of the hospices considers its management system to be fully effective.

As the study showed, the majority of hospices

in Ukraine (87%) store information partly on paper and partly in electronic form. In turn, 13% of the hospices surveyed generally save and process information only on paper, and this indicates an insufficient material and technical base and the lack of qualified personnel. None of the hospices surveyed stores information completely in electronic form for the same reasons and the lack of specialized software.

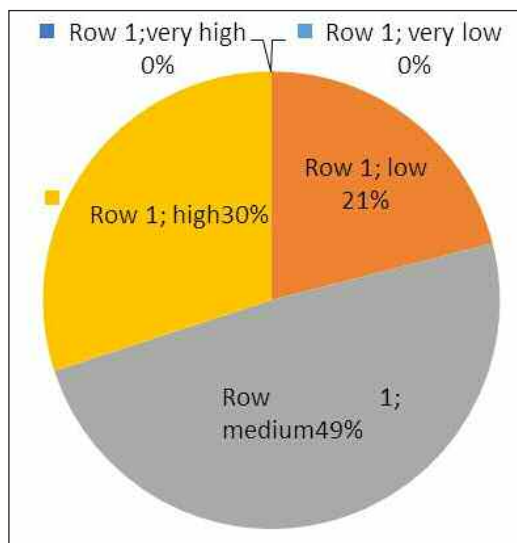
Quite interesting were the results of the analyzed responses on cooperation with charitable organizations and volunteers. Volunteers and charities play an important role in the functioning of hospices. Helping these institutions both financially and actively participating in social, psychological and spiritual care for patients. They comprehensively support the terminally ill in the last years and months of their lives.

The data shows that most hospices (66% answered „Yes rather“ and 17% answered „Yes“)

cooperate with charitable organizations and volunteers. This is a good result, although 17% gave a more negative answer: „More likely not,“ these hospices hardly cooperate with charitable organizations and volunteers. In our opinion, this is due to territorial remoteness, since in small towns the network of volunteer assistance is much less developed than in large ones. With villages and district centers, the situation is even worse. Therefore, cooperation and exchange of information between hospices and charitable organizations and volunteers should be established both with the help of the legislative system and in the field with the heads of institutions.

Further, respondents were asked to give their assessment of the degree of stability of the hospice management system in Ukraine. It is known that the stability of the system is affected by: cultural, socio-economic; political; factors associated with the person.

**Pic. 1.** Assessment of the stability of the hospice management system in Ukraine



As can be seen from Picture 1, a significant number of hospice leaders believe that in Ukraine the average is (49%) stability of the management system. However, there are respondents (21%) who rate the degree of stability as low. In turn, 30% of respondents highly appreciate the stability of the system.

When asked to rate each of the management functions on a five-point scale in the hospice,

managers were asked to rate each of the four levels of management: control; motivation; organization; planning on a five-point scale.

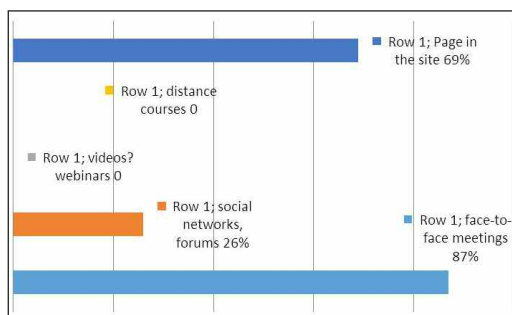
The research showed that according to the control function, seven managers gave 2 points, twelve 3 points, and four 4 points. The vast majority consider the controls to be satisfactory. **Motivation:** 4 experienced - 1 point; 13 - 2 points; 6 - 3 points. Based on the data, we state that this is a bad result - most employees are not motivated to go to work due to unsatisfactory wages and a high level of psychological stress in fulfilling their obligations. **Organization:** 6 respondents - 2 points; 10 - 3 points; seven - 4 points. As can be seen from the survey, the organization is at an average level. **Layout:** 3 managers - 2 points; 11 - 3 points; 9 - 4 points. This shows that the planning function in hospices is at a fairly good level.

Further, respondents answered the question about feedback from citizens.

**Pic. 2.** The diagram of the „feedback“ in the system of functioning of hospices

Picture 2 shows that most hospices in Ukraine maintain „feedback“ with citizens and other organizations through face-to-face meetings (87%), while some hospices have sites (69%), and some have a page on social networks and topics on forum (26%). It is significant that not one of the hospices, unlike European institutions, does not conduct distance courses, webinars and does not shoot video materials.

The next point gives a real indicators of whether hospice managers are mostly qualified once or twice a year (74%), and 26% do not attend courses, seminars or conferences at all.

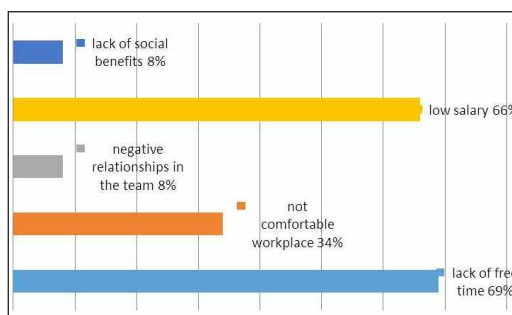


Further, respondents were asked to select factors that adversely affect their work (several options could be selected).

**Pic. 3.** What factors, in your opinion, adversely affect your work

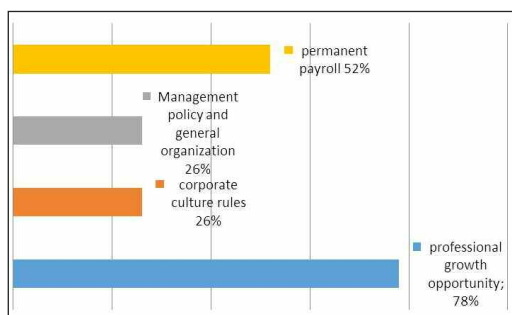
Among the most negative factors affecting hospice work, managers highlight the lack of free time (69%) and low wages (66%). To a lesser extent, there is an uncomfortable workplace (34%); lack of social benefits (8%); negative attitudes in the team (8%).

Executives rate the level of satisfaction with the management status in their hospice as average - 66% or below average - 34%.



**Pic. 4.** The leading motivational factors in hospice work

Respondents believe that the most motivating factor in their work is the opportunity for professional and personal growth (78%). The following are: salaries, benefits, social package - 52%, management policy - 26% and corporate culture - 26%.

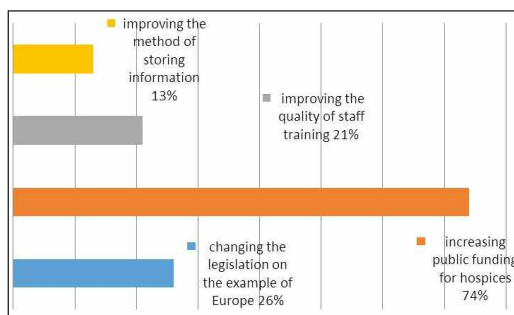


### Pic. 5. Options for improving the organization of hospice management

74% of respondents said that in order to improve the organization of hospice management in Ukraine in the near future, it is necessary to increase state funding; 26% - to change the Ukrainian legislation in the light of the experience of European countries; 21% - to improve the quality of staff training; 13% - to improve the methodology for collecting and storing information.

Most hospice managers believe that the most leading factors that influence the functioning of the system in the hospice are socio-economic (69%) and political (34%).

Hospice leaders generally believe that the



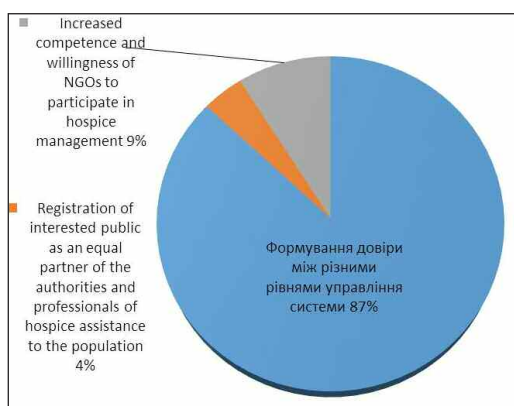
most problematic aspect of hospice management is the lack of coordination between levels of government (87%).

### Pic. 6. What is needed to make the harmonization & satisfaction of hospice patients more efficient?

As we see, in order to make the process of coordinating requests from patients of the hospice more efficient, it is necessary to improve the process of building trust between the various levels of system management (87%).

So, as can be seen from the results of the study, a number of problems associated with the hospice management system in Ukraine can be distinguished:

- 1 – Imperfection of the financing mechanism of the hospice care system;
- 2 – IDeficiencies in the legal framework for palliative and hospice care in Ukraine;
- 3 – IProblems in organizing the collection, storage and management of information in hospices;



- 4 – Inadequate development of the system of education, training and retraining of personnel of the palliative and hospice care system.

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