

## **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES IN UKRAINE**

### **country report**

Ukraine is one of largest countries in Europe in term of land area and ranks fifth in population. According to the State Committee of Statistics, the population of Ukraine in 2001 was 49036,5 thousand, including 22775,7 thousand men and 26260,8 thousand women. The woman population from 15 to 45 years (reproductive age) was 12711,8. Women make 53,6 % from an aggregate number of the population of Ukraine. During last 10 years Ukrainian's population decreased by more than 3,5 million people, including 1 million children.

The main reasons of depopulation during mentioned period include decreasing birth rate (by 40%) and rising mortality (almost by 30%). Average life expectancy in Ukraine in 2002 was 67,5 years (men - 61,7 years, women - 73,3 years).

The legislative basis for the health protection of women and children in Ukraine incorporates most of internationally recognised human rights. One of the major components of the general state of health of the population and basis of formation of prospects of the further demographic development of the country is reproductive health of the population.

The basic parameters of reproductive health are maternal and mortality children's rates are considered as sensitive barometers of general medical and socially economic condition of the country. The maternal mortality is one of the most important criteria characterising of women health and the quality of obstetrics. In 2002 in Ukraine maternal mortality was 21,8 (per 100,000 live births) in comparison with 39,7 in 1992 year. The indicator of infant morbidity has declined since 14,7 (per 1000 live births) in 1995 year to 10,3 in 2002 year. Nearly half of new-borns, which die in the neonatal period, are premature.

#### **Abortion**

According to Ukrainian law abortion is legal since 50-ths up to the 12th week of gestation and under medical conditions till 26th week of gestation. For the women of Ukraine, over several decades, abortion has been the basic method of regulatory natality. Unsafe abortion remains the main cause of maternal mortality, infertility, high level of gynaecological disorders and complication during pregnancy and delivery. The numbers of abortions in Ukraine has considerably decreased in Ukraine since 82 (per 1000 women of childbearing age) in 1990 year to 25,8 in 2002 year. Officially registered the ratio of the number of births to those of abortions in Ukraine is 84,4:100 in 2000 year in comparison with 157:100 in 1990 year. According to independent researches each year in Ukraine over 10–15 % of abortions are performed illegally outside medical institutions.

#### **Reproductive health services**

As result of performance of national programs "Family Planning", "Reproductive Health 2001-2005", work of many Ukrainian and international NGOs last years positive changes in prevalence of contraception are observed. In 2000 year, according to the data of Ministry of Health the coefficient of intrauterine device (IUD) is 149,2 and the oral contraceptives are 108,3 (per 1000 women of childbearing age). Testify of married couples that use condoms 13,4 %, oral contraceptives - 6,7 %, vaginal tablets - 0,8 %.

#### **Sex education**

Medical assistance to children and adolescents in the area of Reproductive Health is provided in Ukraine through Family Planning centers, centers for adolescents, which are mostly organized within maternity advice bureaus and children's consultations, and children and adolescent gynecological rooms. In Ukraine, there are 30 oblast and city Family Planning centers, 585 Family Planning consultation rooms, 20 rooms and departments of children and adolescent gynaecology. Centres for sexual education of adolescents are established in 14 oblasts of Ukraine, and 3 adolescent Family Planning centres (2 in Kiev and 1 in Lviv) work as youth friendly clinics, but it is still not satisfied for Ukraine, because of dramatically increasing of STIs rates and HIV/AIDS epidemic.

## **HIV/AIDS**

In 1987 the first HIV positive individual was diagnosed in Ukraine. By the September of 2003, 52,993 people have been officially registered as HIV positive. Since 1998 increasing cases of heterosexual transmission (from 300 cases/year in 1995 to 1885/year in 2001); on-going transmission among IDUs (experts estimate that there are between 700 - 800,000 drug users throughout Ukraine, 80% of whom are believed to inject); vertical transmission from mother to their new-born children increasing (from 9 per year in 1995 to 1262 in 2002). These figures are generally believed to represent only a small fraction of the actual number of infections in Ukraine. Ministry of Health officials and international experts estimate that by the end of 2002, more than 500,000 people from every part of Ukraine were infected, representing more than 1% of the total Ukrainian population or nearly 2% of the adult (15-49) population.

In Ukraine since 1988 syphilis rates have almost doubled every year, increasing from 6.2 (per 100,000 population) in 1990 to 144.0 in 1997. In 2001 syphilis rates has decreased up to 74,7 (per 100,000 population). In 1995-2001 years syphilis it is registered 17200 pregnant women and 440 cases of a congenital syphilis.

Malignant tumours (first of all organs of reproductive system) are the second leading cause of death among women of working age in Ukraine. In 2001 the indicators of disease per 100,00 women is 18,2 Cervical cancer, 22,7 for Uterine cancer, 15,1 for Ovarian cancer, and 56,4 for Breast cancer.

The incidence rates of Breast cancer increased more than twice (2,27) within the last 10 years from 22.6 women per 100,000 in 1986 to 56,4 in 2002. In Ukraine in 2002 year fall ill with Breast cancer 14 579 women. One of the most objective indicators is the rate of deaths within one year of diagnosis. In 2001 14% of women with diagnosed Breast cancer have died within one year. According to National Cancer Register in year 2002 only 12% of new cases were identified at stage I and 30,3% of new Breast Cancer cases are still being identified in the late stages III and IV.

## **About the organisation**

NGO "Women Health & Family Planning", Kiev, Ukraine was registered in 1996. The main goal of the organisation is to promote Health Care and Social Protection of the population in the sphere of Reproductive Health and Rights. Major directions of our activities span: Reproductive Health and Rights; Independent Expertise and Strategy Development in Reproductive Health (in co-operation with Ministry of Health, Ukrainian Network of Reproductive Health, Ukrainian Family Planning Association, USAID and other); Education and Advocacy (adolescents sex education programs); Safe Motherhood; Training of Medical Personnel (Emergency contraception, Cervical Screening standards); Cancer prevention and Cancer early diagnosis of the reproductive organs.

## **Recommendations and conclusions:**

- To developed and approve Advocacy program on Reproductive Rights;
- To raise public awareness and to draw up attention of Ukrainian society to the important problem of Reproductive Health;
- Providing all-Ukrainian program for sexual education of adolescents;
- To develop and conduct information - educational campaign for involvement of men in participation and decision of Reproductive Health problem;
- Providing all-Ukrainian information and education campaigns for Breast and Cervical cancer Screening Programs;
- Conducting Independent Expertise for Strategy Development in Reproductive Health and Rights.

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