

Within the consumer society, a new information space is formed and the sphere of communication expands. But at the same time, people in the consumer society become very dependent on the opinions of others and are not independent, forget about more important human values. form an opinion about each other, based on how much they consume, what they have and what they buy. Whoever consumes more is more important and interesting in society than he who is less. Education, primarily higher education, becomes a paid market service, loses its value.

The consumer society is a complex and ambiguous phenomenon. Perhaps, in the form in which it exists today, it is itself able to cope with its problems, and perhaps the costs of a culture of unrestrained consumption will lead to the collapse of our civilization.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. «Consumption and the Consumer Society» by Neva Goodwin, Julie A. Nelson, Frank Ackerman and Thomas Weisskopf.
2. «Consumer society» Jean Baudrillard.
3. «Ecological sociology» O. Yanitsky.

---

## **ECOLOGICAL DANGER OF MEDICAL WASTAGE**

---

**S. Ignatovich, V. Letvinova, L. Kuzina**

*Belarusian State University, ISEI BSU,  
Minsk, Republic of Belarus  
miranikki@yandex.by*

The problem of medical wastes disposal in Belarus is the real danger, because it threatens the national health a pollutes the environment.

*Keywords:* medical waste, human health, disposal and storage of medical waste, cytostatic drugs, radioactive substances, the presence of medicines in the environment.

Nowadays the processing of medical wastage is becoming particularly significant around the world. The increase in the number of medical services and production of medicines results in the growth of medical wastage. According to the opinion of the specialists, the situation with medical wastage is critical. Annually 29,8 thousand tons of medical wastage is formed in Belarus, a part of which goes to household wastage and settles on dumps. Medical wastage is not just rubbish; it contains the activators of various infections, toxic and quite often radioactive substances. In that connection Basel convention of 1998 admitted medical wastage to be the most hazardous waste in the world. As medical wastage constitutes a threat for human health and the environment, the increased demands are placed to its storage, transport and utilization.

At present six installations on utilization of medical wastage are used in Belarus: in Brest, Grodno and in some clinics, but not all the installations meet up-to-date requirements. For example, cytostatic drugs need either to be burned at a temperature over 1200 degrees or be buried in the tight metal capsule in the hazardous waste landfill. There is one specialized landfill in Checherske (Gomel region). However there is no reliable information what substances are formed after its burning. The capacity of the hazardous waste landfill is not enough, therefore cytostatic drugs are stored frequently in hospitals, and indeed medical institutions are located, as a rule, in densely populated areas.

The process of collecting pharmaceutical wastage from the population remains to be defined. Many people do not know or do not think that the presence of medicines in the environment harms it a lot. Besides the population in general has no opportunity to utilize expired medicines. In this regard expired medicines appear in household wastage, fall to the soil and groundwater. According to data of the Centre of ecological decisions, 65 % of the consumers buy more medicine than it is necessary at present. Then 75 % of Belarusians throw expired medicines into a garbage bin without opening the packing; 19 % previously open the packing, 8 % open the packing and wash medicines away into a sewer; 7 % try to give drugs to acquaintances before their expiry date. 50 % of respondents would agree to hand over unusable drugs in chemist's stores and hospitals, if special containers were installed there. Some European countries have such practice. For example, in Belgium the process is organized within the partnership of pharmaceutical companies, pharmaceutical industry and drugstores in the community with the regional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In our opinion, a common concept according to the collecting and utilization of pharmaceutical drugs from the population has to be developed in the republic. Besides it is necessary to increase people's awareness about the danger of pharmaceutical wastage to human health and the environment.