

Information Support for Healthcare Leaders in the Russian Federation

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Keywords: Public Health/Health Administration and planning (SP1), Health Sector Reform(SP7); Information Science/Library Science(L01.583);

Healthcare decision makers constitute a crucial group of information users of WHO materials and data on international projects. The new information policy perused by the WHO Regional Office for Europe prioritizes information support for this particular group of users.

The current information situation in Russia is characterized as follows:

1. The majority of the Russian regions are geographically remote from Moscow where the principal information centers providing WHO materials and data on international projects are situated; therefore, their availability to the regions is limited.
2. The Internet moves the user closer to info resources enabling an easy access at the working station. However, the Internet is overflowed with information and a layperson or a very busy one is most likely to get lost.
3. The majority of international data is available in English, which limits its wide use in the Russian regions.

Development of the relevant websites similar to “ZdravInform” Library, which was developed primarily for consolidation, systematisation and dissemination of completed and ongoing health reform projects in the Russian Federation, and WHO Documentation Center website, has greatly contributed to better information support of the regions. However, in this case the information is received passively and it remains unclear to what extent and how regularly the data finds its consumer.

On the other hand, the information support for decision makers requires preparation of brief informative digests of massive documents.

All this necessitates release of an Information bulletin specifically tailored for this group of users in the form of brief yet informative executive summaries of WHO documents related to main questions of healthcare policy and

international projects implemented world-wide, especially in countries in transition.

Since January 2005, the WHO/CIDA Health Care Policy and Stewardship Programme in Russia has been supporting the publication of a monthly Information Bulletin for Health Leaders.

The WHO Documentation Center jointly with “ZdravInform” Library of International Health Projects under the Central Scientific Research Institute for Organization and Information of the Health Care prepare and distribute the Bulletin.

One of the partner, “ZdravInform” Library, contains an information about health reform projects implemented in the Russian Federation at federal, regional or municipal levels. Many of these projects generate valuable results. “ZdravInform” Library was developed in order to make better use of these valuable results. It is the aim of “ZdravInform” to collect and process information on ongoing and completed health reform projects implemented on the territory of the Russian Federation. This enables health care managers, researchers and consultants to get a detailed picture of the latest developments in health reform and better exploit these experiences. The existing experience can be built on in the process of replication and implementation of health reform initiatives or utilised to start new activities at a more progressive stage and avoid duplication.

Main goal of another partner, the WHO Documentation Center, is disseminating the information provided by the WHO Regional Office for Europe as widely as possible within the territory of Russia.

The WHO Documentation Centre should fulfill the following core functions:

- **Organization and management**

Collection, indexation, cataloguing and storage of WHO information products, provision of information upon request on different health problems, and collaboration with other health libraries.

- **Dissemination**

Electronic and/or hard copy dissemination of WHO information products to the relevant target audiences within the country, as well as to national medical, public health and professional journals that should receive updated copies of the WHO information products.

- **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the info utilization and feedback from information consumers on different forms of the WHO information products (i.e. number of loans).

Translation of basic papers from English into Russian is provided if WHO documents and international projects materials are available in English only.

The summary is thought to outline the projects' goal, objectives, and results with images, i.e. graphs, tables and diagrams if required. The same approach is used in preparing summaries of WHO documents. The summary will contain web links and references so that the user can retrieve the full version of any document. All summaries will be combined into a monthly information bulletin of no more than 5 electronic pages.

The Information bulletin is circulated by e-mail to the heads of the regional healthcare departments once a month. The Bulletin is also disseminated at workshops and conferences for the regional health authorities. The Bulletin is also included on "ZdravInform" and WHO DC web sites.

The Bulletin is a special issue focused on one of the priority areas of international policy in healthcare and consists of 2 parts:

- short summaries of WHO main documents and publications on the selected topic with e-links if available; and
- a brief on the relevant ongoing international projects in the Russian Federation with a list of project deliverables and results and lessons learnt if completed.

The size of the Bulletin is 7-8 pages with a monthly release.

Term of the initial contract is from December 1, 2004 to May 2005. This project included 3 stages:

1. **Preparation (December 2004).** Bulletin design and dummy layout were prepared and a list of e-mail addresses of the regional health departments and legislative bodies was developed. The mail list also included main federal health authorities: Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, State Duma, several federal research institutes, etc.

Initial mail list included 315 e-mail addresses as of late December 2004.

2. **Monthly release of the Bulletin (January – August 2005)**

The following activities were implemented to release each issue of the Bulletin:

- search for and selection of the relevant information;
- translation of the selected documents if available in English only;
- development of a short analytical summary of each document; and
- Bulletin layout and page proofs.

3. **Dissemination of the Bulletin hard copies at conferences and seminars (March-August 2005)**

8 issues of the Bulletin were developed and distributed according to the e-mail list:

- December 2004. *Bulletin General Information*
- January 2005. *Healthcare Financing*
- February 2005. *Healthcare Policy*

- March 2005. *Mother and Child Health*
- April 2005. *Drug Policy*
- May 2005. *Quality of Medical Care*
- June 2005. *Primary Health Care*
- July 2005. *Disease prevention*
- August 2005. *HIV/AIDS*

The Bulletin developers select topics of the Bulletin issues according to the Russian healthcare priorities as well as topics of the most representative All-Russia health conferences that attract a broad participation of the Russian health leaders who constitute the Bulletin target group.

The Information Bulletin has been disseminated at:

- “Informational Technologies in Medicine” All-Russia Conference (March 15-18, 2005; Moscow). 100 copies of each 3 issues of the Bulletin (#1-#3) were distributed;
- “Man and Drug” All-Russia Congress (April 18-22, 2005; Moscow). 100 copies of the Bulletin fifth issue *Drug Policy* were distributed.
- Round table of “Pharmaceuticals and Business” 2nd All-Russia Congress (April 22, 2005; Moscow). 30 copies of the Bulletin fifth issue *Drug Policy* were distributed.
- “Quality Assurance in Primary Care” seminar (May 5, 2005; Moscow). 30 copies of each 2 issues of the Bulletin (#4-#5) were distributed.
- “Quality Assurance and Quality Management of Medical and Social Care” All-Russia conference (May 25-26, 2005; Moscow). 300 copies of the Bulletin sixth issue and 100 copies of the Bulletin issues #2-5 were distributed.
- The Bulletin is monthly distributed at Interagency Meetings.
- The Bulletin is monthly published at “Healthcare manager” magazine with a circulation of 2’000 copies.

The Bulletin has kindled interest of both health leaders and specialists of the Russian healthcare. Under the Project the number of regular subscribers has increased by 205 people (from 315 at launch as of December 2004 to 570 clients as of August 2005).

Unfortunately, data tracking was not among the Project initial objectives, therefore only statistics on electronic requests with the client’s region and position is currently available:

- Following the second issue of the Bulletin 32 new clients subscribed (including those subscribed through the WHO Documentation Center, i.e. one member of the Healthcare Committee under the State Duma and one senior researcher from Kurgan Medical Research Institute);
- Following the third issue 54 new clients joined the Bulletin readership (including those subscribed through the WHO Documentation Center, i.e. one senior researcher from Rostov Oncology Dispensary);
- Following the fourth issue the Bulletin got another 57 new subscribers (including those subscribed through the WHO Documentation Center, i.e. 7 representatives of Mother and Child Care services from Ivanovo, Yaroslavl, Rostov, Tula, Tver,

and Kostroma Oblasts, as well as 2 pediatricians from Ivanovo and Rostov Oblast Centers for Prophylaxis);

- Following presentation of the Bulletin at “Informational Technologies in Medicine” All-Russia Conference (March 15-18, 2005; Moscow) 5 representatives of Medical Research Institutes from Saint-Petersburg (2 people), Krasnodar (one person), Tomsk (one person), and Ekaterinburg (one person) joined our readership;
- Following the fifth issue of the Bulletin 55 new clients subscribed, including 3 faculty members of the Nursing Chair at Sechenov Moscow Medical Academy;

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