



BESCHWERDEN – ANAMNESE – BEFUND

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Introducing English into Everyday Life of Russian Hospitals

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ABSTRACT

The authors discuss the international experience of teaching professional communication in English in the Russian hospital setting by an interdisciplinary and international team.

Until recently, teaching Medical English in Russia had some specific features if compared with the common practice in many European countries. We did not teach clinical communication in English, as the Russian doctors were not supposed to communicate much in English in the clinical setting. Russian medical doctors mainly used and many of them currently use it to obtain professional information and then use the information obtained in their Russian articles, teaching courses for students, and presentations inside the country. Thus, the major skill needed is that of obtaining the information from a variety of international sources through all kinds of reading, and the skill of using the information obtained in English in the Russian professional setting. However, to be continuously updated on the latest advances in modern medicine, and what is very important, to be able to share their achievements with international colleagues, Russian doctors need to attend and participate actively in training courses and conferences, and other international projects.

Thus, given the growing involvement of the Russian physicians in the international professional collaboration, some additional needs emerged. The Russian doctors need skills to make a paper or poster presentation in English, and participate in the academic discussions, the major skill being that of medical academic writing. A new need is the skill of presenting a patient at a clinical session (e.g., at an international consultation).

To meet these needs the international team of linguists and medical doctors launched a project called Making English a part of everyday life in the Sechenov university hospitals. What makes the training very effective is the participation of two experts, a medical doctor and a medical English teacher, each having their responsibilities during the session. The “authentic” atmosphere is created by giving the training in the clinical setting (not in the classroom) and by discussing the real patients the trainees currently work with, the real guidelines they are supposed to know and use in their everyday activities, the latest research they did or read about. A very useful component of the training is the online international clinical sessions held regularly to discuss the patients with international colleagues.