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MEDICAL SYMBOLS: HISTORY AND MODERNITY

The medicine has a very long history, during which this science had wide variety of symbols that denoted people's happiness, prosperity or misfortune. Some of these symbols were forgotten, but some of them are popular now.

Physicians, historians, archeologists, linguists, art critics and so on deal with the medical symbols. That is why studying the history and development of the medical symbols we should consider the other branches of science and art of different countries and nations.

Among published works about the medical symbols, the most significant are works by H. D. Hrybanov. In his works "The Medicine in Symbols and Emblems" (1990) [1], "International Medical Emblems History" (1976) [3], the author mentioned the topical phaleristics, but these articles have not much information about medical phaleristics in history of Ukraine.

Soviet epoch historiography mainly considered the medical symbol origin such as "the cup with snake". These issues partly connected with works by V. M. Tarasonov "Cup as Medical Symbol" (1973) [5], "Medical Symbols as Treatment Reflection of Ancient Nations" (1985) [6] and by B. D. Petrov "Medical Emblem" (1964) [4]. In Ukrainian historiography Y. A. Barnshtein has investigated images of the medical symbols. There are minor studies of medical symbols origin in such periodicals as "Staff Nurse", "Soviet Health and Care Service", "Therapeutic Archives" and others. But in modern scientific literature there are no thorough investigations about the medical investigations.

Among different scientific methods of studying medical symbols the most wide-spread is the historical method, which depends on the history of the culture, science and art.

The literature survey shows us that the symbol, in different periods of time, has unlike meaning. In direct meaning the symbol (from the Greek *simbolon*) is the sign, which is very popular and is used for practical purposes. The sign has another interpretation given by famous Ukrainian physician of XVIII century, N. M. Maksymovych-Ambodyk (the author of the first Ukrainian manual of midwifery "Art of Swaddling" (1784) and two editions of "Emblems and Symbols" (1788; 1811) is "...The symbol is a short inscription, which consists of several words, which are joined with an emblem and can have historical, political, ethical or secret content". The emblem is "a witty image or picture, an object with inscription, which consists of short words" [1, c.5].

Brokhauz and Ephron give the most extended determination of the emblem and symbol. The emblem is conditional image of some notion in a picture. The main difference of the emblem and symbol is that we cannot explain emblem's content. Emblems should be clear and simple; spectators should see the meaning or message. But we can explain the symbol in different ways, because it embodies the idea and the emblem is only the conditional sign. In ancient Greeks and Romans the word "emblem" means relief ornaments on the jewelries [4, p.64].

The medicine has own peculiar symbols and emblems. There are evidences in world literature that prove the dependence of symbols origin and historical conditions of development human society, and their direct connection with empiric medicine. This fact

helps us to understand the original content of the medical symbols, which likely appeared to denote natural or family life. Ancient people identify these phenomena with living or inanimate beings.

E. D. Hrybanov offered the classification of treatment emblems [1, p. 35]. According to this classification all medical emblems are divided into general and private.

To general medical emblems belong: just a snake; the snake that entwinds the crosier (Asclepius's crosier); the snake that entwinds the cup; the snake that entwinds Apollo's tripod; the snake that entwinds Omphalos; two snakes that enwind the crozier (caduceus); the snake (or two snakes) entwinds the candle; the snake that enwind the mirror and so on.

To the private medical emblems belong: pictures of lily of the valley; Florentine infant; urinariya; a hand that feels the pulse is the emblem of the therapeutic department; pentagrams of some surgical instruments (scalpel, scissors and so on); drop of blood is the emblem of surgical department; the pestle is the emblem of pharmacy and others.

So the general medical emblems denote treatment in general, and private one are symbols of separate branches or departments of the medicine.

The most popular medical emblem in Ukraine is the cup with snake. This emblem symbolizes the health and treatment, and the snake defends healing substance in the cup from wicked beings that bring diseases. The first pictures of the cup with snake in Ukraine originated from VIII century. But then this emblem was considered as two separate emblems and became symbols of Asclepius's daughters and goddesses: Panakeia and Hugiaia. In XVII–XIX centuries some Ukrainian people thought the cup with snake represents animal bracing of food and water. Our ancestor (Sarmatians and Scythian) supposed the reason of all illnesses is worms (mythical snakes). In Kyiv Rus people deemed serpents stole men, but only a powerful man could overcome them. During thousands of years East-Slavic nations explained the cup as the symbol in different (sometimes even opposite) meanings, e.g. the cup as the cup of happiness, the cup of life, the cup of bitterness, the cup of pain. In medicine the cup symbolize a vessel, which is full of antidote and has healing power.

Famous Ukrainian doctor N. M. Maksymovych-Ambodyk (1744-1812) wrote: "We have a lot of symbols connected with the snake, e.g. if the snake is coiling, then it means the consideration, caution, health; if the snake is crawling, then it means the repentance, sadness, envy, enmity, rebellion, ingratitude; when the snake is on Hugiaia's hands – it means the health; when the snake is entwining Asclepius's crosier, it means the cure (pic.1).



Мал. 1. 1–7. Загальновизнана медична емблема України

The cup with snake, as the symbol, belongs also to military medicine, what was confirmed in 1922. We should mention that snake's head is on the left, and the tale is on the right [2].

Doctors obtained medical decorations for their courage, firmness, bravery and medical aid during the war. Physicians got some military medals free of charge.

The first Ukrainian breastplates originated from the late XIX – beginning of XX century in public organizations in the Western Ukraine. The wide-spread breastplates were among the Sich Riflemen Halych-Bukovyna Kurin during World War I in 1914-1918 and the military formations of Ukrainian People's Republic. In Ukraine the first Soviet breastplates appeared in 1917 and were honored decorations of Red Guards of Odessa. In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR) there were 55 decorations: 37 breastplates, 3 breastmedals and 15 rewards. In 1919 Ukrainian People's Republic Council of Ministers established the new decorations "Glory to Ukraine". Directory adopted the appropriate law, which was the first legal document, which initiated the new decorations in Independent Ukraine.

The issue about the honorary title for Health and Care Service Workers became urgent in 1934 (pic.2). In 1935 H. F. Pysemskyi (the famous gynaecologist, the graduate of St. Volodymyr University of Kyiv) and V. P. Filatov (the popular ophthalmologist, academician, Hero of Socialist Labour) obtained the first the honorary statuses. In 1942-1943 M. I. Ishchenko (the surgeon), B. M. Mankovkyi (the neurologist) and M. S. Spirov (the anatomist) were rewarded with the titles of Honored Scientist of Ukraine [2, p.11].

In the beginning of 1940 in Ukraine there were 5 honored titles, some of them were Honored Doctor (pic. 3). Firstly this status was initiated by Soviet authority according to the presidium decree of the Ukrainian SSR about "Honored Titles" (Sep.26, 1944) and the legal name of this status was "Honored Doctor of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic". That year only 5 persons obtained this title and during 1934-1952 224 doctors were rewarded [1, p.118].



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Мал. 2. Медичний знак Міністерства УРСР



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Мал.3. Заслужений лікар України (радянський період)

1981 witnessed the codification of the Ukrainian rewarding system. Due to this new statement there were 2 titles: “Honored Doctor of Ukrainian SSR” and “Honored Worker of Health and Care Service of USSR”. Only workers of polyclinics, hospitals, outpatient clinics, maternity homes, research institutes, prophylactic establishments and health and care services, who had the high specialized education and worked more than 10 years in medicine, could get the “Honored Doctor of Ukrainian SSR” title. Pharmacist, associate medical officers, service staff, who had worked in Health and Care Service more than 10 years, improved the quality of the medical service and were volunteers, could obtain the “Honored Worker of Health and Care Service of Ukrainian SSR” title [1, p.126].

Soviet legislation established the medical workers encouraging system. Steps of encouragement were the gratitude, entering Board of Honor and Book of Honor, promotion, rewarding with a premium, presents or orders and medals of USSR (pic.4).



Мал.4. 11–13. Відмінник охорони здоров'я Радянського Союзу

In independent Ukraine only President of Ukraine can award physicians with “Honored Doctor of Ukraine” according to the law about “State Rewards of Ukraine” (pic.5). According to the statute about honorable titles of Ukraine in 2001, doctors of Health and Care Service for their considerable contribution in the medicine and training qualified staff can get this decoration.

So the interest to the medicine and its history is growing. The medical symbols and emblems play the important role. There is the historical significance of the symbols and emblems, because it shows the close connection the medicine with the general history and culture of nations. So we know there is no future without the past.



Мал. 5. Заслужений лікар України

LIST OF LITERATURE:

1. E. D. Hrybanov, *Medicine in Symbols and Emblems*, Moscow: Medicine, 1990, 208 p.
2. E. D. Hrybanov, *Medicine in Numismatics*, Moscow: Medicine, 1962, 19 p.
3. E. D. Hrybanov, *History of International Medical Emblems*, Moscow: Central Institute of Doctor's Training, 1976, 33 p.
4. B. D. Petrov, *Medical Emblem*, Medical Nurse, 1964, № 3, 64 p.
5. V. M. Tarasonov, Y. M. Fokina, *The Cup as Medical Symbol*, Therapeutic archives 1973, № 8, 118 p.
6. V. M. Tarasonov, *Medical Symbols as Ancient Nations Treatment Reflection*, Moscow: Medicine, 1985, 120 p.

Medical symbols: history and modernity

Summary

The investigation is about the importance and usage of the medical symbols in the foreign literature. The history of the medical symbols shows the connection between the medical symbols and some historical events, development of human society.

The research of the medical symbols origin and content is popular because of its relation with general culture of all countries and cultures. That is why these symbols have been studied by many researchers of different branches of science, e.g. philosophers, mathematicians, psychologists, linguists, literary critics, historians and art critics.

There are general medical emblems that symbolize medical treatment in as general and separate branches of medicine. The most wide-spread medical symbol is the cup with snake that means the health and treatment.

In Soviet period the most popular medical decorations were “Honoured Worker of Health Care Service of USSR” and “Honoured Doctor of Ukraine”. These rewards had workers of health care services as thanks for their perfect and scrupulous work, professionalism. But only that people deserved the rewards, who had worked at least 15 years in the health care services. In independent Ukraine only a president can give “Honoured Doctor” decoration the persons, who have worked in Health Care Establishments, made great achievements in medical practice or trained other highly skilled stuff.