

Lack of PTSD Treatment for Russian Soldiers



Work[ing] to preserve the psychological health of military personnel in the SMO zone should now be a priority.

President Putin meets with injured Russian soldiers, 25 May 2022

Source: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68479> Attribution: CCA 4.0

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OE Watch Commentary

The accompanying excerpt from the semi-independent Russian news site *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* looks at the question of repairing military morale, arguing that Russia “lacks comprehensive measures to preserve the mental state of people who are in the zone of the SMO [special military operation].” The article begins by pointing out that Russian medical personnel have experience with dealing with “stress, trauma, [and] post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).” It describes how during operations in Chechnya (1994-1996), Ministry of Defense doctors developed a multi-step process to identify “servicemen with adaptation disorders caused by severe psycho-emotional stress” and then provided treatment based on the degree

of trauma. The article also discusses research and methods recently demonstrated at the Army-2022 exercise designed “to increase the efficiency of the professional activities of servicemen and extend their professional longevity.” However, Russia has not yet fielded the new diagnostic equipment required even though, as the article points out, “such complexes are now in great demand among the troops.” The article further asserts that “work to preserve the psychological health of military personnel in the SMO zone should now be a priority.” The article concludes by warning that “due to psycho-traumatism, we expect an increase in cardiovascular and nervous diseases, alcoholism, disability, and mortality among various categories of citizens.”

Source: Yuri Avdeev, “Психологические травмы войны излечимы (The psychological trauma of war is curable),” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (semi-independent site), 22 September 2022. https://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2022-09-22/7_1207_medicine.html

...For more than six months, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation have been conducting a special military operation (SMO) to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine. At the same time, in many ways, there is a lack of comprehensive measures to preserve the mental state of people who are in the zone of the SMO, in the territory controlled by the RF Armed Forces....

Combat operations are accompanied by social stress, which arises in the event of an extreme threat to the survival of the individual personality. Or the survival of entire social groups to which it belongs.... However, practicing physicians and psychologists have their own view of psychological trauma. They consider them treatable and distinguish between concepts such as stress, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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...During the operation to restore constitutional order in Chechnya in 1994–1996, doctors from the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and other interested departments searched for the most informative psycho-diagnostic and effective psycho-corrective methods used at various stages of medical care. The result of the work done was the formation of a three-stage (three-stage) system for the provision of psychological and psychiatric assistance, which has been actively used since the beginning of the counter-terrorist operation in the North Caucasus region in 1999.

The first stage was carried out by specialists (psychologists and psycho-neurologists) directly in units and subunits using express diagnostic and express correction techniques. Active identification of servicemen with adaptation disorders caused by severe psycho-emotional stress, when the human psyche is not able to adapt to the changes in life, was carried out. The second stage is the provision of medical and psychological assistance to military personnel with a treatment period of up to seven days.... The third stage is specialized medical care for military personnel with treatment periods of up to 30 days.

In January 2021, the Military Medical Academy. Kirov, under the leadership of the Main Military Medical Directorate on the basis of the ERA Military Innovation Technopolis, created a laboratory where a project is being implemented to study and implement technologies of the platform for medical and psychological monitoring of the professional reliability of military personnel based on the principles of personalized medicine. The main goal of scientific research was to increase the efficiency of the professional activities of servicemen and extend their professional longevity....

Active work is underway to develop specialized psychophysiological equipment. One of its samples was demonstrated at the international forum "Army-2022".... Made in the interests of the main military medical department of the Ministry of Defense, it is compact and allows in the field using various sensory sensors placed on a soldier to determine his psychophysiological state in a few minutes.

...Representatives of the department could not give any intelligible explanations about the possibilities of finalizing the system in the interests of the Ministry of Defense. It is also unclear why there are no developed mobile models of complexes for psychological relief rooms. Meanwhile, such complexes are now in great demand among the troops.

While in the profile of psychologists, work to preserve the psychological health of military personnel in the SMO zone should now be a priority. And also, if necessary, the fastest restoration of their combat capability and ability to work. ...Those who do not think about distant difficulties are sure to face close troubles. Therefore, today the primary task of Russian health care is the creation and effective operation of a system of medical and social support aimed at restoring the mental and somatic health of citizens who were on the territory of the SMO. Otherwise, due to psycho-traumatism, we expect an increase in cardiovascular and nervous diseases, alcoholism, disability, and mortality among various categories of citizens.