

ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASE COVID-19 AS OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

**A. V. Basanets, O. V. Yermakova, L. B. Kriukova, V. A. Gvozdetsky,
N. V. Zhurahovskaya**

Abstract

Introduction. Acute respiratory disease COVID-19 is a new condition, which has been included into the list of occupational diseases by the decree of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "About correction of the list of occupational diseases" # 394 on 13 May 2020. Medical staff is a professional group of high risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection. At the same time, the cases of COVID-19 in medical personnel are quite rarely acknowledged as an occupational disease.

Aim – to evaluate the reasons of low COVID-19 occupational morbidity in Ukraine.

Materials and methods. Statistics data regarding COVID-19 cases in medical personnel, approved as occupational disease as of 23 Mar 2021 in Ukraine were analyzed.

Results and discussion. As of 23 Mar 2021 COVID-19 has been diagnosed in 71174 healthcare workers. The investigation confirmed an occupational disease in 4758 workers (6,7 % of all cases or 26 % of investigation completed cases), including 256 (0,3 %) lethal cases. Thus, in majority of cases an occupational character of the disease was not confirmed. The following reasons of such a situation have been identified: 1. The administration of healthcare institutions deliberately hides such the cases; emergency notification about the occurrence of acute occupational disease is often not forwarded to responsible authority. 2. Healthcare providers insufficiently employ occupational diseases specialists, due to lack of funding for occupational diseases service on the second level of healthcare system. 3. Epidemiological investigation of acute disease case is not thorough. It is difficult later to identify the site and source of infection, making it impossible to establish a connection of a disease with work conditions. 4. Ukraine State Epidemiological Service has been liquidated, whereas epidemiological investigations belonged to the competency of this organization. 5. Training of epidemiologists and occupational health specialists has been stopped in Ukraine, complicating timely investigation of COVID-19 occupational infection at the time of pandemic.

As an example, there has been presented the case of occupational COVID-19 in current article.

Key words: coronavirus disease 2019: healthcare workers, occupational diseases.