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THE SANITARY-EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COUNCIL
(Novosibirsk Province Sanitary-Epidemiological Station)

- USSR -

by S. V. Pevsner

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Following is a translation of an article by S. V. Pevsner in the Russian-Language Periodical Gigiyena i Sanitariya (Hygiene and Sanitation) Moscow, Vol. XXIV, No. 10, 1959 Pages 71-72.

More than 2 years have passed since the publication in 'Gigiyena i sanitariya' of our article on "The sanitary-Epidemiological Council in the Operation of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Station." During this time it has been commented on by G. M. Pastushchak, S. I. Murovannaya, K. K. Vrachinskiy, V. K. Vyazhevich, A. I. Tkach and G. I. Okhrimovich. None of them has denied the positive importance of the sanitary-epidemiological council.

There developed a discussion on how to organize its operation. The most active objections came from G. M. Pastushchak in his article "Sanitary-epidemiological council or medical society." His criticism is rendered much less valuable by the fact that he does not cite the experience of his own work and we do not know whether there is a sanitary-epidemiological council organized and operating in the area where he works, whether his objections are valid, whether they only amount to formal concepts of the composition of the council, the periodic features of its convocation, etc. We would like first of all to reflect the objectives of the sanitary-epidemiological council in the light of the work done by the sanitary organization of Novosibirsk Province. In enumerating the problems discussed by the sanitary-epidemiological council during the course of 15 years, I would like to stress (it's not up to us to judge to what extent it has succeeded) that all reports have summarized results and given a general picture of work on epidemiology and sanitary improvements of towns and villages which in the final analysis have led to: a) the eradication of typhus fever, malaria and tularemia; b) assured satisfactory conditions around the reservoir of the Novosibirsk Hydroelectric Power Station (it has been determined that it is one of the few not yet contaminated by industrial sewage); c) the development of well-designed virgin land state farms, machine-tractor repair shops, etc.

Under such circumstances, it is proper to argue that the sanitary-epidemiological councils should be convoked not once or twice a year but every month, that therapists, veterinarians, etc. should participate more frequently. It is a question of the planned and prospective work of the sanitary agencies. First the problem is set forth and after it is resolved and carried out, the results are summarized.

Our comrades from Leningrad feel that the work of our sanitary-epidemiological council is not typical of the central areas of the USSR. This may indeed be so if we speak of the content of the work but the problems of its organization are applicable to any province. A sanitary organization, wherever located, must draw up a plan of operation based on

objectives advanced by the Party and the government for the further expansion and development of the national economy and culture with application to the specific conditions of its own area.

I would also like to reply to District Sanitary Physician K. K. Vrachinskiy. His objections are not well-founded; from the article it is quite clear that The District physicians are the central figures at meetings of the sanitary-epidemiological council, their reports and talks always prevail and are the lifestream of the work of the sanitary organization.

We must not require of the sanitary-epidemiological council that it replace the executive committees of the local Soviets. The latter not only criticize but materially assist the communal enterprises, the district consumers' unions and others, which the sanitary-epidemiological councils cannot do. It does not follow from this that the sanitary-epidemiological councils should be cut off from these organizations. This would be wrong because problems of housing, nutrition and trade must be solved from the standpoint of public health and sometimes from the standpoint of epidemic control as well.

At the July 1959 session of our sanitary-epidemiological council we considered problems which have arisen in the seven-year plan; reconstruction of the village on the basis of the consolidation of villages and district planning and sanitary and public health measures deriving from this. New rural housing construction (7,000,000 rural homes), the growth in cultural and service institutions, the creation of enterprises serving several collective farms in the production of building materials, or state farms, etc., all this must lead to a radical improvement in rural planning. It has been established that problems in central water supply, electrification and the installation of a community radio system, and landscaping of streets can in many cases be better and more easily solved if we increase the number of houses and reduce the size of the collective farm plots by eliminating the individual garden plots outside the village.

Planning bureaus in our province are drawing up 100 plans this year for the reconstruction of collective farm villages; they are all being considered with preliminary sanitary supervision and several of them will be used for demonstration purposes at a meeting of the sanitary-epidemiological council. We do not limit ourselves to architects and designers reports but consider problems in the construction and planning of a collective farm home, grounds, water supply, waste disposal and in the livestock section, etc. In considering these problems not only will the sanitary and sector physicians participate but representatives of the agricultural agencies and agricultural specialists as well.

This year the work of the sanitary-epidemiological council will enjoy the active participation of sanitary physicians of Novosibirsk. We will consider problems related to the reconstruction of industrial enterprises aimed at combating air pollution.

Of current importance is the problem of middle school improvement to be discussed jointly with public education agencies, in particular,

problems of public health in the area of student health protection workshops, on state and collective farms, at industrial enterprises under the specific conditions prevailing in our province.

All these and other questions can be successfully solved with the participation of scientists from the public health and technical institutes. Of great importance is the participation of field workers, hygienists, representatives of industrial enterprises and agricultural workers. This is all the more necessary since we have to solve problems in the over-all mechanization of production processes and the adoption of automated units.

Sanitary-epidemiological councils have played a positive role in the growth of public health organization, in the growth and correct disposition of public health personnel, in the creation of a network of scientific institutes and most important in establishing a tradition of participation and cooperation among public health agencies in studying and improving hygienic conditions of populated areas and in carrying out scientifically-based epidemic control measures.

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