

M.Y. Mudrov on issues “of Piety and moral Qualities of the physician”

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For the first time in the history of Russian medicine, a detailed analysis of the ethical and medical views of M.Y. Mudrov is presented. The author proposes a classification of the ethical principles of M.Y. Mudrov's medical practice, which leads to the conclusion that his judgments on medical ethics were the first holistic concept of medical ethics in the history of Russian medicine. The essence of this concept is the basis of the traditional ethical values of Russian medicine and the basis for the formation of a moral culture for the modern doctor.

Keywords: *professional ethics of a physician, history of medicine, physician's ministry, moral responsibility, ethical principles and regulations*

Matvei Yakovlevich Mudrov (1772-1831) is known in Russia as a physician-researcher and physician-teacher. [1] He was an innovator in the development of many areas of medicine. These include the field of medical ethics, the development of which he had a great influence upon in Russia. His theoretical interest in the problems of professional ethics was no coincidence. His personal morality and integrity were legendary among his contemporaries. [2]

Mudrov was the first translator of the Hippocratic Oath into Russian as he was a supporter of ethical principles. Despite the "incredible difficulties" faced in the translating from the Greek language, thanks to the efforts of Mudrov the ethical heritage of Hippocrates became available in Russia. [3] The purpose of these efforts, he said, was to instill in a young doctor the idea of "a physician's moral qualities, and especially of his piety," to make physicians worthy of this important ministry." [4, p. 167-168] "The faculty promise of Russian doctors" (1845) was based on Mudrov's ideas and used by local physicians until 1917: "Taking with a deep appreciation the right of doctor bestowed upon me by science, and realizing the importance of the responsibilities assigned to me by such knowledge, I give a promise throughout my life to do nothing that dulls the honor of the class, into which I am now entering. I promise to help at any time, to the best of my understanding, resorting to my means to help the suffering, to saintly keep the family secrets entrusted to me and not to use for evil the

confidence given to me. I promise to continue to study medical science and contribute in every way to its prosperity, giving the scientific world all that I discover. I promise not to engage in the preparation and sale of secret substances. I promise to be true to my companion-doctors and not to offend their personality; however, if that would be required for the patient's benefit, to tell the truth directly and without hypocrisy. In important cases, I promise to turn to the advice of doctors who are more knowledgeable and experienced than I; and when called to a meeting, I'll in good conscience give credit to their service and diligence."

Mudrov's understanding of the basic principles of medical ethics is reflected in his ethical writings, which are of great value today. It works such as "On piety and moral qualities of the Hippocratic physician," "On the way to teach and learn medical practice or the activity of the medical art at the bedside," "On the benefits and objects of military hygiene, or the science of protecting the health of military servicemen," "The Law of Hippocrates," "The Hippocrates physician and the regimental doctor," "On the art of healing" and others. [4, 5]

All of these texts are directly addressed by Mudrov to students studying at the medical faculty of the Imperial Moscow University (IMU). The IMU was founded in 1755 and consisted of three faculties – philosophical, medical and legal. From 1813, Mudrov (for more than 10 years, with a few interruptions) was dean of the medical faculty. He headed the department during its most difficult period – the years after the invasion of Russia by

Napoleon's army in 1812. When the Napoleonic troops were in Moscow, the university building was almost completely burned down. The library, scientific equipment and more were destroyed.

According to eyewitnesses, when Mudrov's large and unique library burned at his house, he abandoned all his luxuries, and saved only 40 volumes of the "sorrowful pages" that he wrote, "by the beds of sick themselves." These 40 manuscripts contained the enormous and unique experience of the great clinician, the founder of the national therapeutic school – a doctor in the highest sense of the word. A crowd of sick and the poor who came for help lived permanently around Mudrov's house. Mudrov treated the poor without demanding money, but from the rich he took high fees.

Mudrov was able to clearly and vividly express his thoughts. The concordance of the meaning of his last name – "wise" – with his understanding of medicine is so deeply connected that his judgments quickly turned into aphorisms and they still have not lost their significance for medical practice: "A mediocre doctor is more likely harmful than helpful," "it is easier to prevent diseases than to treat them," "medicines of the soul heal the body," "all of nature is the doctor's pharmacy," "treat the patient, not the disease," "no two patients are alike," "for the poor – rest, good food and invigorating substances, for the rich – work, abstinence and cleansing substances." Mudrov died after being infected by a patient during a cholera epidemic in Russia. He was buried in one of the cholera cemeteries in the Vyborg district of St. Petersburg. On Mudrov's grave it is written that he died in 1831, "during the gallant deed of giving assistance to those suffering cholera in St. Petersburg, and fell victim to his own commitment. His productive life was 55 years."

Mudrov's ethical body of work contains a certain set of rules, "which should be kept through your whole life by the bed of the sick." Each of them was confirmed by his personal medical experience and is correlated with the "teachings of the great Hippocrates," of which he was a staunch supporter and advocate, and whose writings were made known in Russia thanks to his zeal.

A calling

Mudrov drew attention to the importance of choosing the medical profession. Not every person can become a doctor, and entering the

medical profession should not be a matter of chance but of calling. [6] Everyone who chooses the path of serving as a physician should identify their abilities, their humane moral qualities which conform to the requirements that society imposes on members of this noble profession. [7] You need to have an innate ability, without which all efforts are futile. Mudrov said that "Medicine is similar to agriculture, natural ability is a field, the rules of teachers – the seeds, the teachings of youth – the sowing, in which the seeds in good time are buried in the soil, the place of study – the surrounding air, providing nourishment for successful and careful farming, and finally, time crowns it with ripeness and works." [4, c. 176]

"A man must be worthy to serve as a doctor." [4, p. 77] This rule stems from his recognition of the special moral responsibility of the medical profession. He wrote that a mediocre doctor does more harm than good: patients left without medical assistance can recover, but with treatment by such doctors they can die.

Like the principle of Plato's academy, "let no one ignorant of geometry enter," it can be argued of the medical profession: "let no one ignorant of compassion for people enter." Mudrov warned that everyone who takes the path of healing should be prepared not for an easy life, but to "incurring toil for your future endeavors and do not look for anything but strict enforcement of this sacred position of yours", "achievement of civil welfare and the receiving of a noble name," regardless of the obstacles along the way.

The rule of constant education

"The disposition for good" lies at the basis of the desire to receive a medical education. But the process of receiving a medical education requires constant study until the death of the doctor, or "long-term meticulousness." Mudrov often used the Russian proverb "live and learn" and constantly referred to Hippocrates, who taught: "The life so short, the craft so long to learn."

The moral qualities of the doctor and their improvement

It was Mudrov's conviction that professional knowledge must be combined with wisdom. At the same time, he, like Hippocrates, spoke of moral

wisdom, not sophistry of abstract philosophy, which, he said, did not bring any benefit. To be a doctor requires certain moral qualities which, as well as medical knowledge, should be constantly improved. The tending of your soulful qualities should not be forgotten, he urged his students wisely.

Mudrov's student N. I. Pirogov also drew the attention of his colleagues and students over the years to the importance of continuing efforts to improve themselves. Following from his teacher, he argued: "Let each of us resolve this fundamental question of life – to live to improve oneself." [8, p. 224]

Among the spiritual qualities and moral character of the physician, occupying first place is to love one's neighbor. It is namely the love of one's neighbor that is the main basis of medical virtues.

In the essay "On the way to teach and learn medicine," he names:

- helpfulness;
- willingness to help at any time – day and night;
- unselfishness;
- indulge patients' errors with gentle restraint towards their disobedience;
- chastity, humility and modesty in all cases.

These internal moral qualities should find themselves expressed in external and exterior ways. These include friendliness, the ability to remain calm in both appearance and spirit when the patient is in danger and a happy demeanor without laughter and joking in the case of the disease taking a successful course; cleanliness in everything and especially in clothing; moderation in food. He agreed with Hippocrates that to gain trust, the physician should have a fresh complexion and a healthy, strong body, because if one looks pained and sluggish people will think one cannot help oneself or others. To some degree, a doctor can employ the use of incense, "in that, in a way, it will be pleasant for patients."

The doctor should be able to limit the discussion to what is only necessary and useful; answer questions intelligently and patiently tolerate opinions, not join in debate, restrain emotions, improve the ability to persuade others with "pleasantness."

Rules concerning relations with colleagues

Mudrov understood the importance of relationships between colleagues. Most of all, in agreement with Hippocrates, he considered gratitude to one's teachers as an undoubted virtue of young doctors. Gratitude for kind advice and the ability to decisively reject harmful suggestions and advice from colleagues is important for a doctor. Subserving, servility and hypocrisy were unacceptable to Mudrov: *"Is there any doctor who would agree to the blind man, he ought to run like a freak, and should avoid any benevolence and courtesy that are indecent to the doctor, and which often spoil the unity of treatment by empty satisfaction with poor advice."* [4, p. 190]

Mudrov appreciated and upheld the principle of collegiality, mutual respect between physicians: "... A smart and well-meaning doctor will not reproach another out of envy; as conversely it proves his own weak-mindedness. Only vulgar traders do such things, those who are looking for a yield." [4, p. 188]

Mudrov recognized the danger of competition among physicians. He urged doctors to develop between themselves a partnership relationship, not to neglect the advice of others, to suppress their base feelings of envy.

The rule of "maintaining confidentiality"

Understanding patient confidentiality, Mudrov, keeping with his time, was very brief. It came down to two positions. Firstly, a reserved character was necessary for a doctor when dealing with "reprehensible diseases" and keeping them secret. And, secondly, the physician's ability to maintain "silence concerning what had been seen or heard of family disorder ..."

The rule of "avoiding superstition"

Because Mudrov was a deeply religious man, and the Christian faith was accessible to all, and Orthodoxy was the culture-forming basis for life in Russia, in his work he did not provide details on the value of this rule to the physician. The guarantee for "avoiding superstition" was "worship both internal and external," i.e., personal faith and church life. However, on more than one occasion, the concept of "wisdom" in which a doctor should be united with medicine, he dealt

with "as a conquest of oneself, mandated with the healing power of God."

The rule of "receiving awards and unselfishness"

Mudrov taught his disciples selflessness. He understood selflessness as a physician's ability to provide assistance to the needy without the precondition of being rewarded.

He gave students advice on such remuneration. "The requirement of a reward is indecent, when the patient is suffering, especially those who suffer acute diseases; as quickly developing diseases, which do not allow for the patient to be left without assistance, prohibit the good doctor from denying treatment, but more than that, makes one look not for one's own benefit, but for honor and respect, thus it is better that upon recovery reprimand the ungrateful patient rather than when he is lying on his deathbed, being forced to pay; for who is truly a doctor, may God be with them! use faith more than cruelty in treatment. And having recognized the disease at its beginning, prescribe the needed treatment, for the patient to use before the end of the disease, leaving him to want for nothing." [4, p. 186] In his understanding it was a dishonest doctor who did not render aid to those who were unable to pay for it. Nevertheless, Mudrov did not deny the right of

a doctor for a reward, and he received large fees from wealthy patients. Despite this, he believed that most important for the physician was first and foremost honor and respect.

"In the treatment of patients do not have a goal of greed and awards, but the improvement of science and its dissemination. So, I advise you to have humanity and not lose sight of victuals and wealth. Sometimes heal without reward on the account of future gratuities, or, as they say: if not lucre, it would have been the glory of good. If you happen to aid a patient, in particular a stranger, and especially those who are poor, you have to help, because those who are humane and merciful are a true lovers of science and favored by it. Many a patient feels the danger of his illness; but is sure that being with a doctor of benevolence, he may remain confident in his recovery." [4, p. 186]

Observance of the moral rules of healing for Mudrov was certainly a prerequisite for professionalism and successful treatment. And, no less importantly, Mudrov confirmed that the doctor, "being true as such, would be important and loved by all."

This work was completed with the support of the Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation, project № 14-03-00581 "Bioethics in Russia: experience in conceptualizing and comparative analysis."

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Received: 30.01.14.

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The name of the article for quotation: M.Y. Mudrov on issues "of Piety and moral Qualities of the physician". *Istoriâ mediciny*. 2014. N2 (2). P. 88–92.