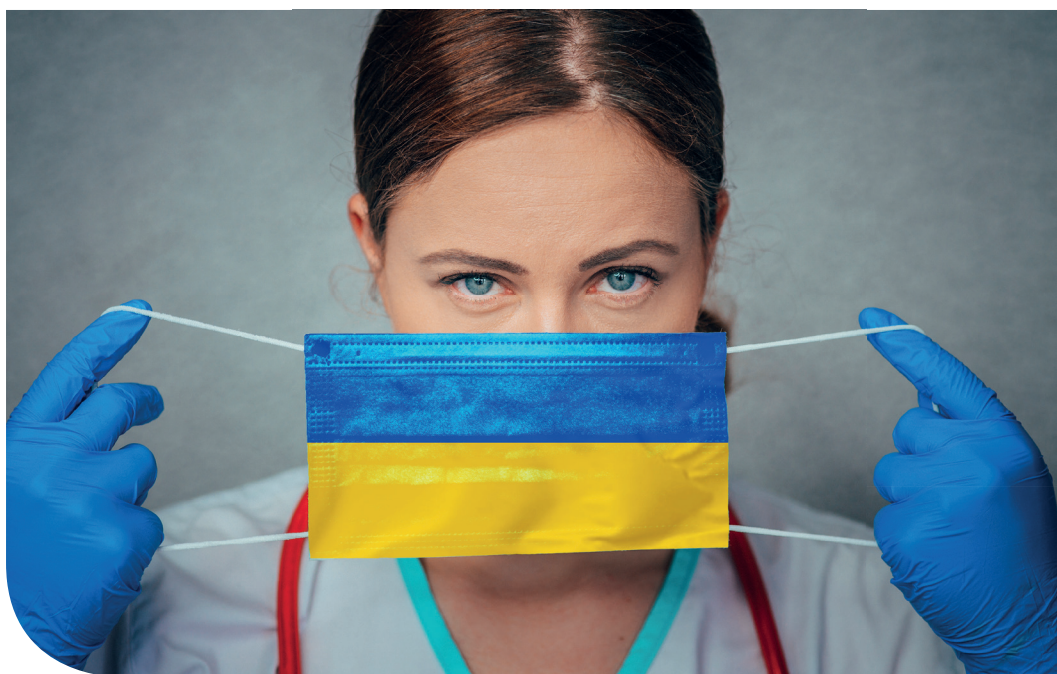


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Editorial

The present volume 5 of the Akkon series of publications is dedicated to the topic of public health in a very important but neglected partner country to the European Union: Ukraine. It is aimed at our national and international project partners, as well as anyone interested in scientific and practical concepts and experiences for preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health across regional or national boundaries.

Despite its rich culture, great economic potential, high level of education and last but not least its sheer size – it is the largest state whose borders lie entirely within Europe and is 1.7 times the size of the Federal Republic of Germany – Ukraine seems far away in perception and awareness. Publications on recent dramatic events, such as the Ukraine conflict or the Crimea crisis, have done little to change this. In fact, the armed conflict in the eastern Ukrainian oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, which has been ongoing since February 2014, is still a burdening feature of many political and economic difficulties destabilizing the country. News coverage of health issues in Ukraine has recently been dominated by highly critical reports on the handling of the Covid 19 pandemic. This pandemic exacerbated existing weaknesses in the Ukrainian health care system, but at least it did not create any new ones.

Ukraine went independent in 1991 with the characteristics of the Soviet health care system. Since then, reform of the obviously inefficient system has been on the agenda. Statistics still show an alarming picture: The average life expectancy of Ukrainians, at 71.3 years, is ten years lower than that of countries in Central and Western Europe. In terms of tuberculosis-related deaths, the country occupies the sad top spot in Europe. The conflict in the east is fuelling the TB epidemic. The biggest challenge for the Ukrainian health system is the country's hybrid epidemiological profile: Most people die from noncommunicable diseases, but infectious diseases are still not well treated.

The Akkon University of Human Sciences, with its Institute for Research in International Assistance (IRIA), started here, launching its collaboration with Ukraine in 2018 with the project “Tuberculosis and Migration during the Ukraine crisis” – funded by the Federal Foreign Office.

This was complemented from 2017 to 2020 by the project “Strengthening the health system in Ukraine by promoting health sciences and effective bilateral cooperation”. The objective of this work, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Health, was to improve health care in Ukraine by promoting health sciences.

Our approach: building sustainable personal and scientific relationships and exchange of know-how, basic analyses of the health care system and the conflict situation, and establishing partnerships with Ukrainian universities to improve medical education. We started from established university partnerships e.g. with Ternopil National Medical University, expanded the circle of partners, complemented the work in the subprojects with scientific exchange in various events coordinated by IRIA, such as: “International Ukrainian-German Public Health Symposium” or the “International Young Researchers' Symposium on Global Health – Satellite Symposium World Health Summit”.

Measured against the goals set, this project was very effective: the introduction of the Master's program in Public Health was a success. In addition to the partner universities, other universities would like to continue the cooperation. The International Ukrainian-German Public Health Symposia have found their place in the scientific calendar of events and bring together numerous health experts, lecturers and young talents. By intensifying exchanges in the health sector, other areas such as military medicine and cooperation with humanitarian organizations can also be expanded in the eastern Ukrainian regions.

With these activities, we are not only contributing to the deepening of bilateral relations in the field of health and medicine between Germany and Ukraine. At the same time, we are part of a far-reaching reform process that has achieved remarkable breakthroughs in recent years:

- 1.** For Ukraine as a low or middle-income country, improving inefficiencies in health care financing is a priority task. Since 2018, new financing principles for the primary health care system have been introduced: From line-item budgets of state-controlled institutions, there has been a shift to performance-based financing of autonomous healthcare institutions. Ukrainians now have the right to choose primary care physicians of their choice. As a result, providers receive funding from the National Health Service of Ukraine based on the principle that “the money follows the patient”. Facilities can thus offer better services and develop strategically. In 2020, similar arrangements came into effect for specialists and hospital care. Given the high out-of-pocket payments Ukrainians have had to make to date (50% of all expenditures; Poland 21%; Germany: 13%), these changes and the strengthened role of primary care are considered one of the most profound shifts in Ukraine's healthcare system since independence.

#09

CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND WORK HYGIENE AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

*Valentyna Fedorchuk-Moroz, Olena Visyn
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For more than a year now, the humankind has been dealing with a huge challenge that is global pandemic of COVID-19. Many of not only small enterprises but also large companies were forced to downsize or even close whole projects as they found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy. Many people started working from home, especially with the lockdowns, which has caused and is still causing plethora of issues. How can one consider the experience gained and ensure safety of workers amidst the pandemic? The answer to this question was given to those interested during World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2021 entitled "Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises" and focused on involving governments, employers, and employees into establishing healthy and safe working conditions with the main priority on anticipating and preventing crises.

The issue of organizing and managing labour relations amidst the pandemic has been of great scientific interest. Researchers have been particularly interested in working conditions of medical workers since they are at the forefront of the fight with coronavirus infection^[1-3]. For instance, Yavorovskiy^[2] notes, "The risk of contracting SARS CoV 2 in health-care was 3.8 times higher than among the general population at the beginning of October. Healthcare workers are 1.5

times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the rest of the population". Sliusarevskiy et al.^[4], as well as Maksymenko et al.^[5] researched the psychological aspects of staff health in quarantine, basics of psychological care, as well as the results of psychological research during the pandemic. According to the authors^[4], "It is scientific psychology that should be used in the future to overcome certain real threats to people and groups, individuals and society". The legal basis for the organization and conduct of economic activity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the subject of research by scientists Duravkina, for example. According to the authors^[7], "The primary task of the state should be the modernization of the economy and respective legislation to minimize risks and losses of domestic producers and protect both the population of the state and national producers of goods and services". However, despite the significant interest of researchers in this problem, it is not sufficiently covered by research, especially in matters related to occupational safety and health in the pandemic caused by COVID-19.

To provide quality advice to employers willing to protect their employees and continue to effectively manage businesses and organizations, ISO occupatio-

nal safety professionals have developed a new international standard ISO/PAS 45005: 2020 "Occupational health and safety management – General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic". This document can be useful for both small businesses, which employ only a few people, and large corporations. This standard is mandatory in addition to such international labor protection documents as ISO 45001, OHSAS 18001, and ILO-OSH Guidelines of the International Labor Organization, various National Standards, International Labor Standards and ILO conventions. For example, according to the order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine of 25.02.2020 No 521 "On amendments to the List of extremely dangerous, dangerous infectious and parasitic human diseases and carriers of pathogens of these diseases"^[8], coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is recognized as an extremely dangerous disease.

The standard concerned summarizes best international practices on occupational safety and health during the COVID-19 pandemic and is intended to complement any relevant national guidelines and regulations. The new international standard ISO/PAS 45005: 2020 is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased risk that the disease poses to human health, safety, and well-being of different groups, including those working from home, as well as workers who managed to stay in traditional offline working environment.

According to [9], "Governments, regulators and other professional organizations around the world have published guidelines for safe work during the COVID-19 pandemic".

The new standard contains a single general set of guidelines that complements the information being disseminated by national governments and supports the principles, namely:

- "reasonable risks management measures arising from COVID-19 are applied or will be applied to protect the health and safety of workers;
- workers should not be required to work if these measures have not been implemented".

Obviously, to understand individual needs, the organization should encourage discussion and interaction with employees or persons representing their interests.

Excessive influence of the informational environment, working from home, the risk of disease, physical isolation, constant use of protective equipment all lead to stress, which negatively affects safety and health of workers amidst the pandemic.

#09

CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND WORK HYGIENE AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. To ensure proper functioning of economic entities amidst the pandemic, namely the creation of safe and healthy working conditions and reducing the risks arising from COVID-19, employers should in the organization of work be guided by the new international standard

ISO/PAS 45005: 2020 "Occupational health and safety management – General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic".

Particular attention should be paid to mental health of employees and their emotional recovery, as well as to rational regime of work and rest. —

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