

HEALTH CARE REFORM IN UKRAINE: CITIZENS' PERCEPTION

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Objectives: We aim to examine the health care reform in Ukraine through the angle of health care users, their perceptions and understanding of the reform. The country overall inherited numerous public institutions and organizational culture from the Soviet Union, which have not been transformed until recent time. In particular, Euromaidan of 2013-2014 was the turning point: it was public response to the lack of Euro-integration efforts of the government and to the wide-spread corruption as well as threat to the freedom in the country. As a result of the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine strengthened civil society and demonstrated the availability of bottom-up influence on the national politics

Methods: The analysis is based on two waves of "Health Index. Ukraine" survey that comprise questions on the perception, whether health care reform is needed and if is taking place in Ukraine (on the opinion of citizens). In 2017 we added new question on the content of the reform. The data has been collected in May- July 2016 and 2017 in Ukraine with the use of nationally and regionally representative sample of adults 18+ years old. The overall sample size is around 10 000 respondents. Face-to-face interviews based on structured questionnaire have been the mode of data collection. Based on these data, we carry out a multi-regional and SES regression analysis to investigate factors associated with the perception of health care reform by health care users in Ukraine and its regions.

Results: In 2016, 93% Ukrainians believed that health care reform was necessary, while in 2017 the share of the respondents decreased (84%). In most regions the difference between 2017 and 2016 is not statistically significant, but in Volyn (14%), Dnipropetrovsk (12%), Zaporozhia (23%) and Donetsk, Lugansk (30% and 32%) regions fluctuations are high. Only in Ternopil region, the share of those who see the need in health care reform has substantially increased (from 60% in 2016 to 92% in 2017). Still, in 2016 only 15% recognize that the reform takes place. Respondents who report worse health status as well as older people

have higher probability of noticing reform implementation are more reluctant to notice health care reforms.

Discussion: To ensure that policies are effective, they need to be driven by the underlying needs of the population. Data are a critical element for policy design, but lack of availability and poor quality of data often present challenges, which is clearly the case of Ukraine.

The previous passive phase and “no action, no changes, no mistakes” experience of Ukrainian health care seems to be finally over and the period of transformation begins.

In 2017, legislation on the state financial guarantees for the provision of health services and medicines was adopted. From July 2018, the National health care service of Ukraine will function for primary care. Full implementation of the healthcare reform for the primary care will occur in 2019. No one knows how much time Ukraine would need for these systemic reform as “health care system is not a bicycle, it is more similar to transatlantic ” especially in a big and inexperienced in reform implementation country. In post-Maidan society - where more mature civil society has started performing its watchdog function - such the health care reform looks more feasible than several years ago.