
Professional and public accreditation of medical educational programs. The pilot project of the Russian Society of Cardiology

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Abstract

One of the main approaches to develop health care system is to increase the quality of medical education in the country. Currently, there exists the legislative framework for the successful modernization of medical education and improving the quality of medical specialists. The pilot project «Professional and public accreditation of educational programs — a way to improve medical education» led by the Russian Society of Cardiology is considered a first step to introduce an independent professional and public accreditation of educational programs in the health care system.

Key words: professional and public accreditation of educational programs, Russian Society of Cardiology, quality of medical education

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Профессионально-общественная аккредитация образовательных программ медицинского профиля. Пилотный проект Общероссийской общественной организации «Российское кардиологическое общество»

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Резюме

Одним из главных механизмов, который с меньшими вложениями может способствовать развитию здравоохранения, является повышение качества медицинского образования в стране. В настоящее время имеется вся нормативно-правовая база для успешной модернизации медицинского образования и повышения качества подготовки врачей-специалистов. Пилотный проект «Профессионально-общественная аккредитация образовательных программ — элемент системы повышения качества медицинского образования» на базе Российского кардиологического общества послужит началом введения независимой профессионально-общественной аккредитации образовательных программ в сфере здравоохранения в широкую практику.

Ключевые слова: профессионально-общественная аккредитация образовательных программ, Российское кардиологическое общество, качество медицинского образования

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Introduction

Currently, the improvement of medical care quality without multi-billion investments is a challenge in the health care system. Medical education is one of the main approaches that can facilitate the development with lower investments. According to mass media and sociological surveys, about 80% of all complaints are related to low medical qualification.

In the Russian Federation currently two procedures disclosing the qualification of a medical specialist and nursing staff exist. These are evaluation of medical specialists and certification of medical specialists and nursing staff.

Evaluation of a medical specialist

Qualification category of a physician serves as an indicator of the qualification level: physicians of the highest category, first category, second category, or uncategorized physicians. A similar system is provided for nursing staff. The evaluation procedure is regulated by Order of the Ministry of Health of Russia No. 240n dated April 23, 2013 "On the Procedure and Terms of Evaluation of Medical Specialists and Pharmacists for Receiving of a Qualification Category" [1]. Actually a category is assigned for former achievements and the current abilities within the whole range of specialist's activities are not completely considered. For instance, a physician's category provides no information about his or her competences and admissions to various manipulations. Without this information, in disputable cases, insurance organizations or governmental authorities cannot understand whether a physician had a legal right to treat a patient in a specific state.

Specialist's certificate

A certificate grants to a physician (or a member of nursing staff) the right for independent work. Certification of medical specialists was established by Order of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Russia No. 286 dated December 19, 1994, which was acknowledged invalid by Order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation No. 316 dated October 18, 2002 [2, 3]. Currently, the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation uses Article 54 of the Basic Law on Health Protection of Citizens of the

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Therefore, formal, simplistic approach to assessment of the quality of professionals' training in the sphere of health care levels all the efforts to manage quality of health care. No matter how scientific and technical progress goes, a medical specialist shall determine the quality of medical care. Otherwise, medical equipment, even most advanced, remains just "hardware", and drugs remain just chemical substances, hazardous for life in certain cases. Thus, the quality of health care delivery to the population, optimum use of health care system resources, increase of health care efficiency for subjects of the Russian Federation, determined by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 598 dated May 7, 2012 [8], directly depend on the level of training of medical specialists possessing modern methods of diagnostics and treatment of diseases, capable to apply the newest achievements of medical science, ensure preventive management. Modernization

of the medical education system is essential for innovative economics.

Accreditation of medical personnel

New Federal Law No. 323-FZ “On Principles of Citizens’ Health Care in the Russian Federation” [9] came into effect in our country on November 21, 2011. Article 69 of this law reads as follows: “Persons that received medical or other education in the Russian Federation in accordance with the federal state educational standards and have a certificate of specialist’s accreditation shall be entitled to perform medical activities in the Russian Federation”. Thus, to receive a work permit, a physician shall have a certificate of accreditation instead of a physician’s certificate. This provision came into effect on January 1, 2016, and gradually certificates will be abolished. The term of validity of a certificate of accreditation is limited to five years. After five years, the procedure of accreditation shall be undergone again. Accreditation of a medical specialist implies the procedure for determination of compliance and readiness of a specific individual for performance of medical activity in a particular field in accordance with the established procedures of health care delivery and with the medical care standards.

Medical activities in the Russian Federation shall be subject to licensing in accordance with Federal Law No. 99-FZ dd. May 4, 2011 “On Licensing of Certain Types of Activity” [10]. In accordance with the aforementioned law, a license in our country can only be registered by a medical entity. A medical entity is either a legal entity or an individual entrepreneur. Accordingly, physicians (unless they are individual entrepreneurs) may not and must not have a license. But as a matter of fact, accreditation of a medical specialist is exactly a license for medical activities. A certificate of accreditation confirms that its holder meets certain educational standards, and medical services will be rendered with proper level of quality.

Peculiarities of licensing/certification of medical activity in other countries

Principles of licensing and certification of medical activities in other countries differ significantly from our system, as they are based upon the scheme of personal permits. In Western

countries, like in our country, a degree in medicine only confirms that a person has attended the general course in the selected field of medicine and is entitled to independently render first aid in emergency situations and can work as a health care employee under the supervision.

To receive a permit to certain independent types of health care activities, a person shall complete a course of residency (3–5 years). During that time, a young professional works under the guidance of assigned supervisors (who shall only be represented by experienced professionals selected on the basis of special criteria), and after that such professional will receive his or her first official permit of the basic level, confirmed by a personal certificate. As early as during this period, individual sets of resident’s permits may differ depending on the level of knowledge and revealed practical skills. During subsequent years, a specialist increase the number of permits, both regarding their types and complexity, on the basis of specific position and a personal desire to have additional opportunities to earn money.

There is no strict system of obligatory qualification upgrade courses like in our country. Some additional permits may be received by specialists in their own hospital in the course of ongoing work under the supervision (if the team has professionals with such authorities granted by a medical association), while other permits require longer education and practical training in university centers or major public or private clinics. Such courses are usually paid for by candidates themselves but may also be provided with special grants of professional associations, target state programs, or sponsored by employers. In most cases, commercial courses are not strictly limited in time. Specialists themselves determine many issues: study duration, study costs to prove their right to receive a permit. If necessary, it is allowed splitting the training course, re-running for permits, etc. The main objective is to receive an opinion (guarantee) of authorized professionals.

In most European countries, a license is issued to a medical specialist by the Ministry of Health. However, in some countries there are independent licensing bodies (medical bureaus, chambers, colleges, associations). As a rule, the law stipulates the conditions under which a medical license can be suspended or finally terminated.

Modernization of medical education in Russia

The introduction of the accreditation for medical specialists is directly associated with modernization of medical education. The Bologna process, i. e. the process for creation of a single educational system in Europe, which was launched in 1999 after signing of the Bologna Declaration in the city of Bologna (Italy), implies mutual recognition of qualifications between countries with comparable standards of education, which will provide mobility to highly qualified personnel and ensure development of the system of postgraduate additional education, the so-called "lifetime education" or, in our case, "continuous medical education". Thus, ideally, the Bologna process will sometimes lead to comparable educational systems of different countries and create the opportunity of easy recalculation from one system into another one. Therefore, a medical specialist who received education and a license to practice in one country will be able to work in another country, because the corresponding documents will be a clear enough evidence of the skill level. For now, examinations shall be passed anew in each foreign country to get a permit for medical practice.

Russia joined the Bologna process in 2003, and since September 1, 2009, all Russian state higher educational institutions were transferred to the two-stage higher education system (Bachelor's programme and Master's programme). However, the conventional one-stage education system, which is the Specialist's program, remained for higher medical educational in Russia (like in most European countries).

Internship (as the 7th year of education) will be eliminated since September 1, 2017. At the sixth year of education, students will work under the guidance of their professors and senior physicians, and after graduation they will be admitted to practical activities in institutions of primary care, as a rule, in outpatient clinics, as general practitioners, pediatricians, surgeons, odontologists, etc. On the opposite, clinical residency is further developed. It will vary in duration depending on the complexity of gaining skills in a particular medical field (1–2 years in general practice and up to 3–5 years in surgery).

The Ministry of Health of Russia is planning to create a unified database (register of professionals),

which will include all professionals with the higher and secondary medical education irrespectively of the status of a medical institution where they work. A part of information (e. g. education received, completed qualification upgrade courses, etc.) will be in public access, which is important for implementation of the patients' right to select their attending physician. After graduation, a physician will undergo primary accreditation, and then, in the process of mastering new skills and abilities, such physician will be re-accredited. This re-accreditation will reflect acquisition of new professional competences and admission to perform various manipulations and medical procedures.

In addition to that, assessment of professional competences and ability to perform medical activities shall be performed by fellow professionals united into professional associations. Representatives of educational institutions can only act as observers, if they participated in the education process and, therefore, are interested in its favorable completion. Thus, introduction of accreditation of medical specialists will become the final stage of medical education reformation.

Interconnection of educational standards, professional standards, professional and public accreditation of educational programs

However, modernization of the entire medical education system (secondary, higher, additional professional) shall (and has already started) be built upon the unified state educational standards, which are associated with professional standards of rendering medical care. In this regard, formation of the system of independent professional public accreditation (PPA) of education programmes, dissemination of practice of professional and public certification of educational programmes' graduates, joining international associations for accreditation of educational programmes and institutions will allow using the human potential as efficiently as possible and creating conditions for self-fulfillment of physicians in their profession. In particular, creation of independent PPA of educational programmes is set forth in the concept of long-term development of the Russian Federation for the period of 2010 as a reference point. And the PPA implementation process is regulated with Article 96 of Federal Law No. 273-FZ dated 26.12.2012 "On Education in the Russian Federation" [11].

At the same time, this system mechanism for management of education quality has not been properly developed in our country. Currently, we can state that the content of educational programmes (both primary programmes and programmes of additional vocational education — qualification upgrade and/or professional retraining) in educational institutions are seriously and frequently criticized by both students and professors. In the context of development of self-regulated organizations, the professional community of medical specialists shall participate in development of educational programmes and be in charge of their quality. For the community of medical specialists, employers, and authorities, participation of the professional medical community in development and assessment of educational programmes in the field of health care may be the basis for approving educational programmes and educational institutions.

Development of the independent PPA system of educational programmes can become an important component in the system of development of medical education. Accreditation of educational programmes by professional communities does not duplicate state accreditation. PPA of educational programmes is universal acknowledgment of the quality of training and demand for graduates from the professional medical community and practical health care institutions. At the present time, outcomes of PPA of educational programmes are taken into consideration in the course of distribution of control numbers of admission to budgetary education positions including those in residency (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia No. 340 dated 01.04.2015) [12] and in the course of state accreditation of educational programmes (Regulation of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1039 dated November 18, 2013) [13]. Details on availability of PPA are used for the entire term of accreditation for formation of ratings, notification of consumers of educational services, employers, executive bodies of the status of organizations that perform educational activities.

Currently, the key positions of the national system of qualifications and professional standards are being developed. Professional standards are the basis for the universal acknowledgment of qualification in the country irrespectively of the specialization. Federal Law No. 122-FZ dated

02.05.2015 “On Making Amendments to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation” and Articles 11 and 13 of Federal Law No. 273-FZ dated 26.12.2012 “On Education in the Russian Federation”, which will be enforced on July 1, 2016, is to regulate the assessment of professionals’ qualifications [14]. The Presidential National Council for Professional Qualifications was formed in the Russian Federation and the authorities of the Council for Professional Qualifications in the field of health care were transferred to the National Medical Chamber.

Pilot project of professional and public accreditation

To ensure high quality of education of health care, All-Russian Public Organization “Russian Society of Cardiology” (RSC) with participation of the National Medical Chamber implements the pilot project of PPA of educational programmes for training of higher qualification personnel in the residency for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology” in 2016.

Currently, RSC selects the organizations that implement residency programmes and are ready to perform PPA of educational programmes for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”. It also arranges receiving of corresponding request questionnaires from educational organizations. PPA of educational programmes in the pilot mode does not cause financial loss for the organization that implements the residency programme for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”. Accreditation procedures are planned for the period from June to August 2016 in three federal districts with participation of trained experts of the Central Expert Council (CEC) of the National Medical Chamber. The objectives are PPA of educational programmes and assessment of experts’ qualification.

PPA procedure in a pilot project will allow professors and teachers, and the entire organization that performs educational activities to receive practical experience of independent assessment of education quality.

In addition (apart from the PPA of the residency educational programme for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”), implementation of this project includes the following: development of regulatory documents and methodological materials, assessment tools package for PPA of educational programmes of the medical profile, training of PPA experts in regions, development of

the rationale of the PPA model and technology in real Russian social and economic conditions, conditions for experience exchange and the dialogue with the authorities.

According to the results, the PPA of educational programmes will be performed. The first accreditation stage is self-inspection of the educational institution. The second stage will be a visit of the expert committee to the educational organization. During the visit, the expert committee evaluates the situation in the educational organization, content of implemented educational programmes, students' opinion, professors and teachers, educational resources, innovative technologies. The expert committee and expert selection criteria are approved by the "Provision on the Central Expert Council for Accreditation Expertise of Educational Programmes and Educational Organizations in the Field of Health Care of the National Medical Chamber". Each expert shall sign an application form of the absence of conflict of interests with the educational organization where expertise is held. The expert committee is formed of qualified experts in the field of assessment of educational programmes and includes representatives of professional societies. Training of experts is performed within a special qualification programme "Professional and Public Accreditation of Professional Educational Programs". At the third stage of the PPA, based on the experts' reports, the CES will take the resolution of PPA of the educational programme and issue a certificate of accreditation.

Conclusions

Thus, currently, there is a legal base and all prerequisites for successful modernization of medical education and upgrading of quality of medical training. Pilot project "Professional and Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes as an Element of the System of Upgrading of the Quality of Medical Education" within RCS activities, which is a professional public association of health care professionals, will favour its implementation. The development of the self-regulated medical institute and improvement of health care quality are the final goals. This project will be the first step for the independent PPA of educational medical programmes.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Russian Federation, Order of the Ministry of Health of Russia No. 337 dated August 27, 1999 "On Nomenclature of Specializations in Health Care Institutions", Order of the Ministry of Health of Russia No. 249 dated August 19, 1997 "On Nomenclature of Specializations of Nursing and Pharmaceutical Staff", and Order of the Ministry of Health of the USSR No. 418 dated May 13, 1989 "On Approval of the New Revision of the "List of Higher Educational Institutions and Specialized Secondary Educational Institutions, Training and Titles Which Grant the Right to Perform Medical and Pharmaceutical Activities" [4–7] in the course of certification of medical and pharmaceutical staff as well as for their admission to medical and pharmaceutical activities. The certificate is issued after completion of a certification course in a specialized educational institution and is valid for 5 years. Thus, vicious system of medical certification is being formed in our country, in which educational institutions take up the leading role. By organizing so-called certification trainings, they issue professional certificates without their approval at the national level and without attestation by a professional medical association. The viciousness of the situation is in the fact that educational institutions provide education training and evaluate it themselves at the same time, and a number of certified professionals assess the education quality.

Therefore, formal, simplistic approach to assessment of the quality of professionals' training in the sphere of health care levels all the efforts to manage quality of health care. No matter how scientific and technical progress goes, a medical specialist shall determine the quality of medical care. Otherwise, medical equipment, even most advanced, remains just "hardware", and drugs remain just chemical substances, hazardous for life in certain cases. Thus, the quality of health care delivery to the population, optimum use of health care system resources, increase of health care efficiency for subjects of the Russian Federation, determined by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 598 dated May 7, 2012 [8], directly depend on the level of training of medical specialists possessing modern methods of diagnostics and treatment of diseases, capable to apply the newest achievements of medical science, ensure preventive management. Modernization

of the medical education system is essential for innovative economics.

Accreditation of medical personnel

New Federal Law No. 323-FZ “On Principles of Citizens’ Health Care in the Russian Federation” [9] came into effect in our country on November 21, 2011. Article 69 of this law reads as follows: “Persons that received medical or other education in the Russian Federation in accordance with the federal state educational standards and have a certificate of specialist’s accreditation shall be entitled to perform medical activities in the Russian Federation”. Thus, to receive a work permit, a physician shall have a certificate of accreditation instead of a physician’s certificate. This provision came into effect on January 1, 2016, and gradually certificates will be abolished. The term of validity of a certificate of accreditation is limited to five years. After five years, the procedure of accreditation shall be undergone again. Accreditation of a medical specialist implies the procedure for determination of compliance and readiness of a specific individual for performance of medical activity in a particular field in accordance with the established procedures of health care delivery and with the medical care standards.

Medical activities in the Russian Federation shall be subject to licensing in accordance with Federal Law No. 99-FZ dd. May 4, 2011 “On Licensing of Certain Types of Activity” [10]. In accordance with the aforementioned law, a license in our country can only be registered by a medical entity. A medical entity is either a legal entity or an individual entrepreneur. Accordingly, physicians (unless they are individual entrepreneurs) may not and must not have a license. But as a matter of fact, accreditation of a medical specialist is exactly a license for medical activities. A certificate of accreditation confirms that its holder meets certain educational standards, and medical services will be rendered with proper level of quality.

Peculiarities of licensing/certification of medical activity in other countries

Principles of licensing and certification of medical activities in other countries differ significantly from our system, as they are based upon the scheme of personal permits. In Western

countries, like in our country, a degree in medicine only confirms that a person has attended the general course in the selected field of medicine and is entitled to independently render first aid in emergency situations and can work as a health care employee under the supervision.

To receive a permit to certain independent types of health care activities, a person shall complete a course of residency (3–5 years). During that time, a young professional works under the guidance of assigned supervisors (who shall only be represented by experienced professionals selected on the basis of special criteria), and after that such professional will receive his or her first official permit of the basic level, confirmed by a personal certificate. As early as during this period, individual sets of resident’s permits may differ depending on the level of knowledge and revealed practical skills. During subsequent years, a specialist increase the number of permits, both regarding their types and complexity, on the basis of specific position and a personal desire to have additional opportunities to earn money.

There is no strict system of obligatory qualification upgrade courses like in our country. Some additional permits may be received by specialists in their own hospital in the course of ongoing work under the supervision (if the team has professionals with such authorities granted by a medical association), while other permits require longer education and practical training in university centers or major public or private clinics. Such courses are usually paid for by candidates themselves but may also be provided with special grants of professional associations, target state programs, or sponsored by employers. In most cases, commercial courses are not strictly limited in time. Specialists themselves determine many issues: study duration, study costs to prove their right to receive a permit. If necessary, it is allowed splitting the training course, re-running for permits, etc. The main objective is to receive an opinion (guarantee) of authorized professionals.

In most European countries, a license is issued to a medical specialist by the Ministry of Health. However, in some countries there are independent licensing bodies (medical bureaus, chambers, colleges, associations). As a rule, the law stipulates the conditions under which a medical license can be suspended or finally terminated.

Modernization of medical education in Russia

The introduction of the accreditation for medical specialists is directly associated with modernization of medical education. The Bologna process, i. e. the process for creation of a single educational system in Europe, which was launched in 1999 after signing of the Bologna Declaration in the city of Bologna (Italy), implies mutual recognition of qualifications between countries with comparable standards of education, which will provide mobility to highly qualified personnel and ensure development of the system of postgraduate additional education, the so-called “lifetime education” or, in our case, “continuous medical education”. Thus, ideally, the Bologna process will sometimes lead to comparable educational systems of different countries and create the opportunity of easy recalculation from one system into another one. Therefore, a medical specialist who received education and a license to practice in one country will be able to work in another country, because the corresponding documents will be a clear enough evidence of the skill level. For now, examinations shall be passed anew in each foreign country to get a permit for medical practice.

Russia joined the Bologna process in 2003, and since September 1, 2009, all Russian state higher educational institutions were transferred to the two-stage higher education system (Bachelor's programme and Master's programme). However, the conventional one-stage education system, which is the Specialist's program, remained for higher medical educational in Russia (like in most European countries).

Internship (as the 7th year of education) will be eliminated since September 1, 2017. At the sixth year of education, students will work under the guidance of their professors and senior physicians, and after graduation they will be admitted to practical activities in institutions of primary care, as a rule, in outpatient clinics, as general practitioners, pediatricians, surgeons, odontologists, etc. On the opposite, clinical residency is further developed. It will vary in duration depending on the complexity of gaining skills in a particular medical field (1–2 years in general practice and up to 3–5 years in surgery).

The Ministry of Health of Russia is planning to create a unified database (register of professionals),

which will include all professionals with the higher and secondary medical education irrespectively of the status of a medical institution where they work. A part of information (e. g. education received, completed qualification upgrade courses, etc.) will be in public access, which is important for implementation of the patients' right to select their attending physician. After graduation, a physician will undergo primary accreditation, and then, in the process of mastering new skills and abilities, such physician will be re-accredited. This re-accreditation will reflect acquisition of new professional competences and admission to perform various manipulations and medical procedures.

In addition to that, assessment of professional competences and ability to perform medical activities shall be performed by fellow professionals united into professional associations. Representatives of educational institutions can only act as observers, if they participated in the education process and, therefore, are interested in its favorable completion. Thus, introduction of accreditation of medical specialists will become the final stage of medical education reformation.

Interconnection of educational standards, professional standards, professional and public accreditation of educational programs

However, modernization of the entire medical education system (secondary, higher, additional professional) shall (and has already started) be built upon the unified state educational standards, which are associated with professional standards of rendering medical care. In this regard, formation of the system of independent professional public accreditation (PPA) of education programmes, dissemination of practice of professional and public certification of educational programmes' graduates, joining international associations for accreditation of educational programmes and institutions will allow using the human potential as efficiently as possible and creating conditions for self-fulfillment of physicians in their profession. In particular, creation of independent PPA of educational programmes is set forth in the concept of long-term development of the Russian Federation for the period of 2010 as a reference point. And the PPA implementation process is regulated with Article 96 of Federal Law No. 273-FZ dated 26.12.2012 “On Education in the Russian Federation” [11].

At the same time, this system mechanism for management of education quality has not been properly developed in our country. Currently, we can state that the content of educational programmes (both primary programmes and programmes of additional vocational education — qualification upgrade and/or professional retraining) in educational institutions are seriously and frequently criticized by both students and professors. In the context of development of self-regulated organizations, the professional community of medical specialists shall participate in development of educational programmes and be in charge of their quality. For the community of medical specialists, employers, and authorities, participation of the professional medical community in development and assessment of educational programmes in the field of health care may be the basis for approving educational programmes and educational institutions.

Development of the independent PPA system of educational programmes can become an important component in the system of development of medical education. Accreditation of educational programmes by professional communities does not duplicate state accreditation. PPA of educational programmes is universal acknowledgment of the quality of training and demand for graduates from the professional medical community and practical health care institutions. At the present time, outcomes of PPA of educational programmes are taken into consideration in the course of distribution of control numbers of admission to budgetary education positions including those in residency (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia No. 340 dated 01.04.2015) [12] and in the course of state accreditation of educational programmes (Regulation of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1039 dated November 18, 2013) [13]. Details on availability of PPA are used for the entire term of accreditation for formation of ratings, notification of consumers of educational services, employers, executive bodies of the status of organizations that perform educational activities.

Currently, the key positions of the national system of qualifications and professional standards are being developed. Professional standards are the basis for the universal acknowledgment of qualification in the country irrespectively of the specialization. Federal Law No. 122-FZ dated

02.05.2015 “On Making Amendments to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation” and Articles 11 and 13 of Federal Law No. 273-FZ dated 26.12.2012 “On Education in the Russian Federation”, which will be enforced on July 1, 2016, is to regulate the assessment of professionals’ qualifications [14]. The Presidential National Council for Professional Qualifications was formed in the Russian Federation and the authorities of the Council for Professional Qualifications in the field of health care were transferred to the National Medical Chamber.

Pilot project of professional and public accreditation

To ensure high quality of education of health care, All-Russian Public Organization “Russian Society of Cardiology” (RSC) with participation of the National Medical Chamber implements the pilot project of PPA of educational programmes for training of higher qualification personnel in the residency for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology” in 2016.

Currently, RSC selects the organizations that implement residency programmes and are ready to perform PPA of educational programmes for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”. It also arranges receiving of corresponding request questionnaires from educational organizations. PPA of educational programmes in the pilot mode does not cause financial loss for the organization that implements the residency programme for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”. Accreditation procedures are planned for the period from June to August 2016 in three federal districts with participation of trained experts of the Central Expert Council (CEC) of the National Medical Chamber. The objectives are PPA of educational programmes and assessment of experts’ qualification.

PPA procedure in a pilot project will allow professors and teachers, and the entire organization that performs educational activities to receive practical experience of independent assessment of education quality.

In addition (apart from the PPA of the residency educational programme for specialization 31.08.36 “Cardiology”), implementation of this project includes the following: development of regulatory documents and methodological materials, assessment tools package for PPA of educational programmes of the medical profile, training of PPA experts in regions, development of

the rationale of the PPA model and technology in real Russian social and economic conditions, conditions for experience exchange and the dialogue with the authorities.

According to the results, the PPA of educational programmes will be performed. The first accreditation stage is self-inspection of the educational institution. The second stage will be a visit of the expert committee to the educational organization. During the visit, the expert committee evaluates the situation in the educational organization, content of implemented educational programmes, students' opinion, professors and teachers, educational resources, innovative technologies. The expert committee and expert selection criteria are approved by the "Provision on the Central Expert Council for Accreditation Expertise of Educational Programmes and Educational Organizations in the Field of Health Care of the National Medical Chamber". Each expert shall sign an application form of the absence of conflict of interests with the educational organization where expertise is held. The expert committee is formed of qualified experts in the field of assessment of educational programmes and includes representatives of professional societies. Training of experts is performed within a special qualification programme "Professional and Public Accreditation of Professional Educational Programs". At the third stage of the PPA, based on the experts' reports, the CES will take the resolution of PPA of the educational programme and issue a certificate of accreditation.

Conclusions

Thus, currently, there is a legal base and all prerequisites for successful modernization of medical education and upgrading of quality of medical training. Pilot project "Professional and Public Accreditation of Educational Programmes as an Element of the System of Upgrading of the Quality of Medical Education" within RCS activities, which is a professional public association of health care professionals, will favour its implementation. The development of the self-regulated medical institute and improvement of health care quality are the final goals. This project will be the first step for the independent PPA of educational medical programmes.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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