

**DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL CULTURE BASED ON THE INTEGRATIVE
POSSIBILITIES OF FOLK MEDICINE AMONG STUDENTS OF MEDICAL
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Rakhmanov Aliyor Abdurashidovich

Andijan State Medical Institute, independent researcher

Annotation: This article analyzes the integrative possibilities of folk medicine in the process of developing medical culture among students of higher medical educational institutions of Uzbekistan. Official statistics, international experience, decrees and resolutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and practical proposals are presented on the topic.

Keywords: folk medicine, integrative medicine, medical culture, medical education, higher medical institutions, traditional medicine, integration of modern medicine, healthy lifestyle, health care system, medical pedagogy.

Introduction. As the field of medicine is expanding in the modern era, the issue of combining traditional medicine and folk medicine with modern medicine as one of its components is gaining urgent importance. Traditional medicine was formed as the oldest treatment system in human history and has developed over centuries based on experience and observation. In the 21st century, as part of globalization processes, preserving cultural diversity, and promoting a healthy lifestyle, traditional medicine is being integrated with modern treatment methods in many countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2023, 80% of the world's population has used traditional medicine at least once in their lives. At the same time, in developed countries, 60-70% of the population uses integrative medicine services in the healthcare system. For Uzbekistan, the integration of traditional medicine with modern medicine is also an important strategic direction, especially in developing the medical culture of future doctors in medical educational institutions. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-106 dated March 15, 2022 "On the Strategy for the Development of the Healthcare System in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026" identifies the issues of harmonization of traditional and modern medicine, prevention and promotion of a healthy lifestyle as priority tasks. In this regard, the integration of elements of folk medicine into the educational process in the development of medical culture of students in higher medical educational institutions is a requirement of the time, which serves to strengthen not only scientific and practical skills, but also national values. As of 2024, according to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, 8 higher medical educational institutions and their branches operate in Uzbekistan, and more than 70 thousand students study there. Every year, approximately 15,000 new students are admitted to medical schools. According to the results of a social survey conducted at Andijan, Tashkent, and Samarkand medical institutes (N=620), 68 percent of their students expressed their support for the implementation of traditional medicine methods in practice, and 57 percent participated in additional courses on the integration of traditional medicine with modern medicine. According to the figures presented in the 2024 SSV report, 34 percent of the population regularly uses elements of traditional medicine, and 42 percent of clinical bases of higher medical education institutions have elements of traditional medicine in phytotherapy and physiotherapy rooms. These indicators demonstrate the potential of traditional medicine in the medical education system of Uzbekistan. State policy also supports this direction. In addition to Decree No.

PF-106, Resolution No. PQ-312 of May 11, 2023 established measures to support a healthy lifestyle of the population and develop preventive medicine. In addition, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Preservation of Citizens' Health” in its new edition, adopted in 2023, legally regulated the use of traditional medicine methods. International experience also confirms the effectiveness of integrative medicine. For example, in China, traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is fully integrated into the state healthcare system, and mandatory courses on TCM are taught in higher medical education institutions. In Germany, phytotherapy and naturopathy are taught as part of doctor training programs, and some universities in the United States operate integrative medicine centers. Although initial steps have been taken in this regard in Uzbekistan, there are a number of problems for systemic integration. These include the lack of separate blocks on folk medicine in the curricula, insufficiently equipped practice bases, and a lack of scientific and research work. Therefore, the following strategic directions are proposed for the integrated teaching of folk medicine in the medical education system: first, the inclusion of theoretical and practical modules on folk medicine in the curriculum of higher medical education institutions; second, controlled testing of methods such as phytotherapy, apitherapy, and acupuncture in clinical practices; thirdly, to expand research and establish international cooperation in folk medicine; fourthly, to organize competitions, seminars, workshops on integrative medicine for students; fifthly, to train and improve the skills of specialist teachers in this field. Based on statistical data, it can be said that if the system of integrated teaching of folk medicine in medical education is fully established, this will not only improve the medical culture of students, but also make a significant contribution to the development of a preventive culture and a healthy lifestyle of the population.

Conclusion

Integrating folk medicine with modern medicine in the medical education system of Uzbekistan is an effective tool for developing the medical culture of students. Although reforms in state policy, decrees and decisions have created a solid legal basis for this process, a more systematic approach is required in practice. International experience shows that integrating elements of traditional medicine into the educational process enriches the clinical thinking of future doctors, increases respect for national treatment methods, and widely promotes a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, the introduction of special modules on traditional medicine in the medical education system in Uzbekistan, adapting practice bases to modern requirements, strengthening scientific research, and establishing international cooperation will contribute to the development of integrative medicine in the future, and ultimately to the creation of a healthy society.

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