

## Building of the lymphedema awareness and treatment system in Russia

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**Introduction:** Russia – as many countries in the world – has many problems with lymphedema treatment: no insurance coverage; high cost of treatment and compression garments; no local production of flat knit compression garments; no LE treatment/diagnostics standards; no past education about lymphedema so lack of lymphology specialists; lack of information about lymphedema for doctors and patients, so most of patients are usually not diagnosed/misdiagnosed and get wrong treatment/no treatment; no cooperation between CDT specialists and lymphatic surgeons, etc. But the approximate number of LE patients in Russia is over 5000000. 10 years ago only one clinic for lymphedema treatment existed.

**Aim:** to build a system of lymphology treatment and education in Russia, to increase number of lymphology specialists, to increase number of patients who get right treatment on time, to improve providing information to patients and doctors about lymphedema, to manufacture local compression products.

**Method:** Development of The Russian Lymphology Association to establish official medical standards for LE diagnostics and treatment, to establish lymphological educational programs in universities, to build connections with international lymphology societies and specialists, to provide information and support about lymphedema to patients and doctors (schools for patients, lectures and conferences for doctors, YouTube channel, journal “LIMPHA”, social nets), to establish local manufacturing of the flat knit garments.

**Results:** The Russian Lymphology Association was founded, as a part of public healthcare system it can establish official medical standards for lymphedema treatment and diagnostics, which are currently being written by experts, according to ILS, ILF and ELS recommendations. Accredited educational program in lymphology was established in two medical universities, 102 specialists were educated during last 6 years. Russian lymphology specialists are members of ELS, ILS, LE and RN; and regularly participate in international lymphological conferences and courses. 28 private clinics treat lymphedema in 23 Russian cities and in Belorussia. 392 schools for patients, 46 lymphology conferences were organized (with international speakers), 3 years participating in The WLD project with total audience over 5000 people, the internet resources audience (YouTube channel, social nets, journal) is over 70000 people. That helps to get good results in prevention and early effective treatment of lymphedema. In 2023 first flat knit CM compression garments of local origin were produced in Moscow. Still financial and social problems exist, the main aim for future is to establish a productive dialogue with Healthcare Ministry about including lymphedema treatment into medical insurance programs and reimbursement of compression garment cost.