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Questions from the Committee members

Mr Sadi (15:55-16:16)

You seem to have a huge drug problem. Every country has a drug problem, what is it in your case that the drug problem is more pronounced more acute? It must be something going wrong. Can you help us find out what it is and why you have not been able to deal with it?

Mr Uprimny (18:00 - 19:52)

In our previous recommendation we asked Kazakhstan to strengthen opioid substitution therapy for people dependent on these substances. However now very small number of persons in need of this treatment have access to that for many reasons but especially for first the end of Global Fund support that withdraw its assistance, second the decision of the government to reevaluate this treatment in spite of the fact that it is well established and effective therapy according to WHO, and third the criminalization of drug use that deter many users to access the program. We have received even information that in recent weeks police and prosecutors went to these centers of treatment to ask for the medical records of patients which is the violation of privacy. But I might expect this contradiction by going in the right direction the health and human rights approach with drug issues while keeping all criminal approach. So in that sense I have four questions.

- Do you intend really to adopt the public health instead of criminal approach to problems associated with drug use? And if that is so do you intend to decriminalize drug use?
- Do you intend to keep and strengthen the opioid substitution therapy and in general harm reduction strategies?
- What are the steps that you plan to undertake in relation with this intervention situation with police and prosecutors in opioid substitution centers?

The response of the State delegation

Ministry of Health (1:30:30 - 1:33:19)

The regulatory and legal framework of the Republic of Kazakhstan is regulated by the Health and the health care system Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Persons recognized as patients with alcoholism, drug addiction and substance abuse are subject to registration and supervision in the local health care organizations and receive supportive treatment in them in the manner established by the authorized body. If we talk about the drug methadone hydrochloride, it is registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan as a medicinal drug. As of today, the clinical protocol "Mental and behavioral disorders caused by the use of opioids. Supportive replacement therapy with opiate agonists" of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been approved. In addition, in accordance with the standard of organizing the provision of medical and social assistance in the field of mental

health of the population in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the state provides medical and social assistance. To date, opioid substitution program is implemented in 13 sites in 9 regions of our country. Since the beginning of the program, from 2008 till 2018, the total number of patients was 1,114 people. Now there are 258 clients in this program, 203 men and 55 women, which is 2.6% of all registered patients with opioid dependence. During the implementation of the project, 71.5% of patients were in the most active working age from 30 to 44 years, the overwhelming majority of patients (73.4%) fall on people who have injected drugs for more than 10 years. So the program includes persons with severe forms of drug dependence. 61.5% suffer from hepatitis B and C, and the presence of HIV infection is confirmed in 28.3%, with 17.4% TB patients. 76.1% of patients who are in the program were convicted of certain crimes and 33.8% had 3 or more convictions. Average number of unsuccessful treatment attempts in the past among program participants - 4.1 times.

Ministry of Interior (1:33:20 - 1:34:48)

I would like to add that we set up the interdepartmental headquarters on the implementation of opioid substitution therapy to coordinate the activities of state bodies aimed at countering drug addiction and drug business. In addition, an interdepartmental working group has been created from among the interested state bodies, which considers all aspects of this issue. A pilot project is ongoing. This working group is currently studying all the results of this project and the final decision on this issue, regarding the opioid therapy, will be made soon. Right now I would like to answer the question regarding the withdrawal of medical records. I would like to explain that the participants of this pilot project committed various types of offenses, including those related to drug trafficking, so these records were examined in the context of how the patient received this therapy. Thank you!