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**iCREATE**

Increasing Capacity in  
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State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova

# Abstract Book

## HEALTH RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTION OF INJURIES AND DISEASES

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# IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTH CAPITAL THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE PRIMARY CARE SYSTEM: EVIDENCE FROM GEORGIA

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**Introduction.** Health care system orientation to the primary care has a positive effect on the continuity and coordination of medical services, which simultaneously reduces the cost of unnecessary specialized services and improves the health of the population. In the health care system focused on primary health care, the role of family physician as a gatekeeper increases. In Georgia (Republic), many patients seek care without a referral by a primary-care provider, as a result, patient's referral rate to family physician is low. The tendency of patient self-referral behavior may reduce the effectiveness of the healthcare system. The purpose of the research is to study the problem of a low rate of the patient's referral to family physician in Georgia.

**Material and methods.** Within the quantitative survey, family physicians and patients were interviewed under a semi-structured questionnaire in different regions of Georgia.

**Results.** Patient's referral rate to family physician is low. 15% (n=3) of family physicians recognize that patients often address them only for the referral to the specialists. only 5% (n=3) of family physicians provide preventive consultations sometimes and 50% (n=10) - in case of need only. 70% (n=14) of family physicians think that their remuneration is not adequate to their work and that they work more than they are paid. 35% (n=105) of respondents in case of a health problem address both a family physician and a specialist-physician. 42% (n=126) of patients visit the family physician once a year or do not visit at all and 47% (n=141) of patients believe that the family physician institute needs some changes.

**Conclusion.** The result suggests that low rate of the patient's referral to family physician is due to distrust towards family physicians which is related to the lack of qualification of physicians, low public awareness of the competence of the family physicians. Due to inadequate reimbursement, family physicians do not have enough motivation to provide adequate service and lack of continuous professional education negatively affects their professional development. It is recommended to raise public awareness about the primary care, to introduce effective methods for payment of family physicians, to increase the role and affordability of continuous professional education.

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