

# Forensic Pharmaceutical Studies of the Level of Illicit Trafficking of Psychoactive Substances: Drug Addiction Among Minors and Youth, Consequences for Mental Public Health and Need for Rehabilitation Activities

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**Abstract.** The article examines the impact of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, tobacco products and alcohol on the neuropsychological mental health of minors and youth in Ukraine, the European Union and the USA. The existence of causal relationships between the spread of drug addiction and the increased risk of severe mental disorders, including suicide, has been established. Particular attention is paid to the activities of organized drug groups that use Internet technologies and electronic payment systems to sell prohibited psychoactive substances, which operate in parallel with the official medical and pharmaceutical infrastructure. Based on forensic and pharmaceutical research, it is substantiated that the drug business is a significant threat to the gene pool of the state, national security, legal culture, mental and public health. The relationship between drug addiction and the development of concomitant diseases according to ICD-11 has been revealed, tuberculosis, cardiovascular pathologies, oncology, HIV/AIDS,

digestive disorders, endocrine system, and neuropsychiatric sphere. The necessity of carrying out rehabilitation, social and psychological measures to counteract suicidal thinking has been proven. The necessity of introducing an updated terminological apparatus based on the unification of two branches of law, medical law and pharmaceutical law, into one branch of law – medical and pharmaceutical law has been emphasized. The definition of medical and pharmaceutical law is given as a set of legal norms that regulate relations arising in the sphere of health care and the pharmaceutical industry during medical and pharmaceutical activities related to the circulation of medicines of all clinical and pharmacological, classification and legal, nomenclature and legal groups.

**Keywords:** forensic pharmacy, neurology, psychiatry, illicit trafficking, psychoactive substances, addictive dependence, youth, mental health, public health, rehabilitation, suicides.

**Introduction.** Addiction to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and tobacco products, alcoholic beverages among adolescents, young people, the most able-bodied part of the population, and elderly citizens in Ukraine, the EU countries, and the USA is in causal relationships with the psychoneurological system (mental health) of a person and a patient, which increases the risk of serious psychoneurological disorders, fatalities, the consequences of which are suicide [1-4].

Citizens of different age groups, minors, and young people who abuse psychoactive substances have addictive dependence, as noted by Bhandari S., are up to 14 times more likely to die from suicide. Addiction or use of heavy psychoactive substances (heroin) is a common phenomenon among citizens who died due to suicide [5].

Stressful life events, depression, divorce, job loss, problems at work, at school, or family problems can trigger suicidal thoughts in people with alcohol or drug addiction (Fig. 1):

- ✓ People with alcohol addiction are 5 times more likely to die from suicide;
- ✓ In every 5<sup>th</sup> case of suicide, excessive doses of alcohol are found in the human body during a forensic examination;
- ✓ The number of suicides associated with the abuse of narcotic painkillers has doubled in recent years;

- ✓ Approximately every fifth citizen who commits suicide uses prescription opioids or heroin;
- ✓ People who commit suicide use fentanyl, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines without a doctor's prescription.

People with alcohol addiction have a 5 times higher risk of suicide
Toxic doses of alcohol were found in 20% of suicides
The number of suicides associated with the use of narcotic painkillers has doubled
Approximately one in five suicides is associated with the use of opioids or heroin
Fentanyl, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines are often detected without medical indications

**Fig. 1.** Specific triggers for suicide in people with addictive disorders.

According to research by scientists (2021-2022) from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the 11th leading cause of death for US citizens aged 10 to 64 [6, 7]. Fig. 2 shows suicide statistics for the period 2020-2022.

US President-elect Donald Trump announced the plan, which will impose an additional 10% tariff on Chinese goods imported into the US and a 25% tariff on Canada and Mexico, as an attempt to stop the flow of narcotics (in particular, fentanyl, etc.). He expressed the opinion that: "...as everyone knows, thousands of people are sailing through Mexico and Canada, bringing crime and drugs to unprecedented levels..." [8, 9].

There were 49,400 suicides in 2022 (up from 48,183 in 2021), a 36% increase from 2000
National suicide rate increased by 2% between 2021 and 2022
Suicides were recorded twice as many as homicides (49,476 vs. 24,849)
Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10–14 and 25–34
Third leading cause of death among people aged 15–24
Fourth leading cause of death among people aged 35–44
12.3 million adults have thought about suicide
3.5 million have planned suicide
1.7 million have attempted suicide

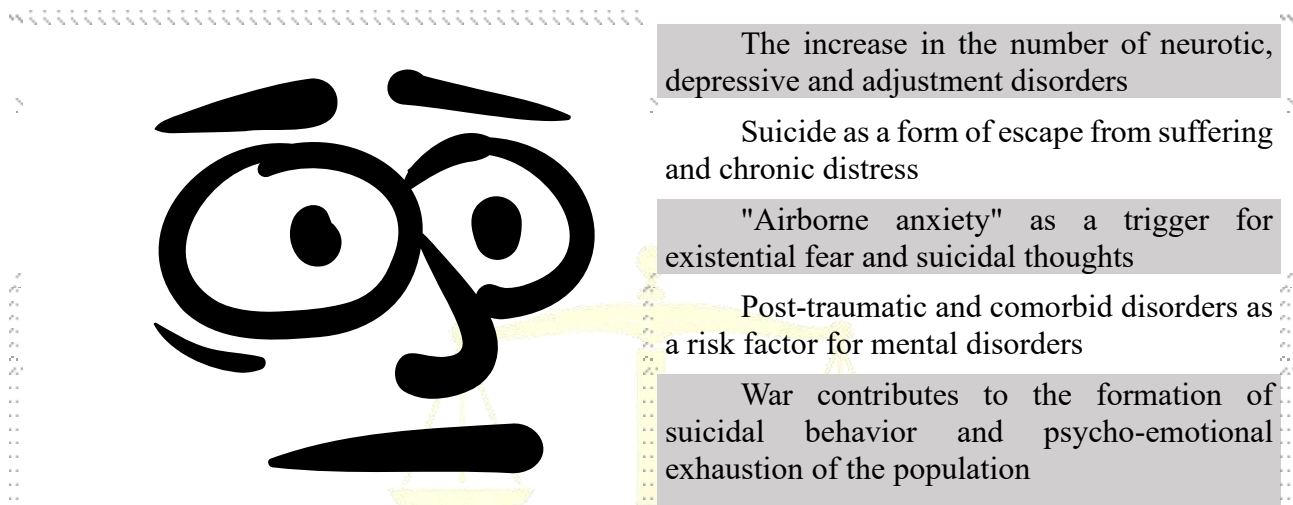
**Fig. 2.** Suicide statistics [6, 7].

During the COVID-19 pandemic and military conflicts, the attitude towards life, its values, and threats in civil society changes [10].

- Neurotic, depressive, adaptation disorders [11-15];
- Suicide as an option to get rid of suffering and problems;
- Every "air anxiety" can be perceived as a risk of losing health or life, and the fear of dying unexpectedly or in agony can lead to suicidal thoughts;
- Covid, post-Covid, long-Covid, comorbid disorders [16-24] are an ideal incubator for the increase in the burden on public health due to mental and neurological disorders in the population [25]
- Suicidal behavior because of war, moral state, and mental health of the population

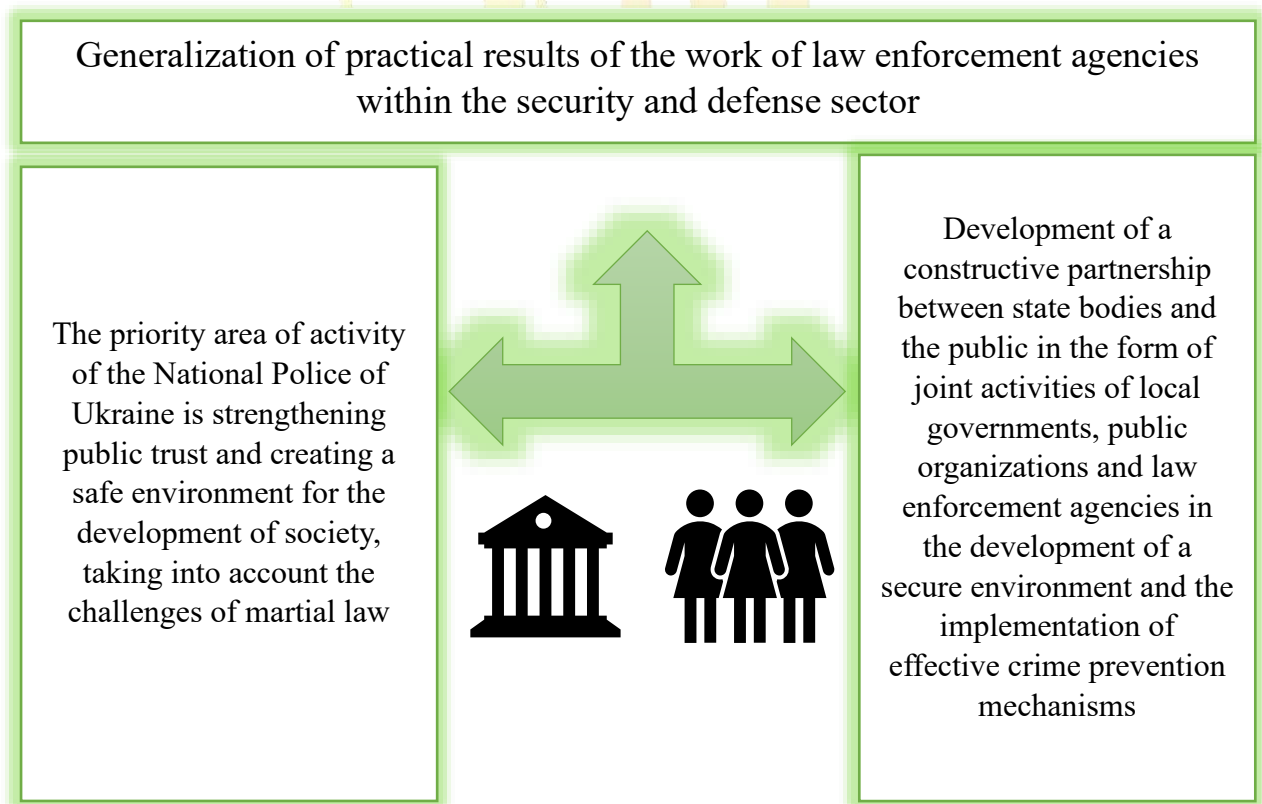
The illegal circulation of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors, ie the drug business, competes with the legal sector of the Ukrainian economy (pharmacies, health care institutions). It is the main cause of the deterioration of public health and the illegal use of psychoactive substances by minors and young people. It is in causal relationships with morbidity (addiction, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diseases of the circulatory system, cardiovascular system, psychoneurological, etc.) and fatalities, including suicides. This requires an increase in the level of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary cooperation in the chain "organized drug business/drug crime-criminal-psychoactive substance (amphetamine, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, cannabis,

cathinone, mephedrone, MDPV, methcathinone, ecstasy, mushrooms (psilocybin), cactus (mescaline), 251-NBOMe, LSD, SSR, etc.)-victim/citizen with drug addiction (patient)-police officer-expert-lawyer-doctor-judge" [26].



**Fig. 3.** Anxiety and depressive disorders in conditions of war distress [11-25].

During the II All-Ukrainian Round Table (Kropyvnytskyi, March 27, 2025) "Interaction of security, defense and public sector bodies in the field of combating criminal offenses", it was emphasized that the issues of establishing interaction between state institutions and the public sector remain relevant for theoretical understanding [27], which is shown in Fig. 4.



**Fig. 4.** Ways of interaction between state institutions and the public sector [27].

At the same time, during the round table, the studies conducted by Glushkova D., Dobrovolsky A., Varava V., Klymenko V., Dragonenko A., Karpenko A. and Nazimko E. [28-32] deserve attention:



In 2024, the customs authorities of Ukraine detected 1140 facts of illegal movement across the state border of Ukraine of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors (this is 40% more than in 2023 - 829 criminal offenses were documented)

It was recorded that:

- 899 cases of detention of narcotic drugs occurred during their import into Ukraine;
- 241 cases of export of narcotic drugs outside the state;
- 599 facts of smuggling were committed using motor transport;
- 495 crimes were committed using international postal channels;
- the most criminogenic borders are with Poland and Moldova, where 278 and 293 facts of drug smuggling were documented, respectively.

Martial law changes the role of organized crime groups in the country due to the crisis, criminals adapt to new conditions, the activity of organized crime groups involved in smuggling weapons, ammunition, food, and drugs has increased. Mass resettlement of citizens from the combat zone leads to an increase in criminal manifestations (burglary, looting, fraud, drug trafficking and other crimes). Most of these crimes are committed by those who were forced to leave their homes due to hostilities. In cities where there are many displaced persons, the unemployment rate is increasing, which may cause a surge in criminal activity.

The problem of drug crime remains an acute threat to the health of citizens. The illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors causes significant negative social, economic, and medical and pharmaceutical consequences.

Article 49 of the Constitution of Ukraine stipulates that the state guarantees the right of everyone to health care, and combating drug crime is one of the elements of ensuring this right in modern conditions. Drug crime under martial law is a serious threat to national security and public health. To effectively combat drug crime, it is necessary to use a comprehensive approach that combines legal, investigative and operational, expert and forensic, operational, and technical and international aspects

In the cities of Ivano-Frankivsk, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Kyiv, Kropyvnytskyi, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odessa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Kharkiv, 110 public organizations have joined forces to draw advertisements on the walls of drug houses and Internet addresses of online stores that carry out contactless illegal sales of drugs. In place of drug advertising, the slogans "Respect your parents", "It is fashionable to be healthy", "Play sports", "Develop" appear.

Police and public associations are actively taking preventive measures against illegal contactless sales in cyberspace, by blocking channels in messengers. Thus, students of the cyber police of the KhNUVD created a chat bot "Stop-drugs" (with an attachment algorithm) in the Telegram messenger, which allows you to collect, systematize and archive information. The chat bot allows you to collect, systematize and archive information. The chat has an online map, to which you can upload photos with geotags that illustrate the inscriptions 165 'with advertising of narcotic drugs on the streets, this data will be applied to the online map for their drawing or erasure. The police and the public in the city of Kyiv have created a Telegram channel "No\_Drugs\_Ukraine", in which drug addresses are blocked, sending the relevant complaints to the messenger administration, all connected people can send complaints. To block a criminal chat, 5 complaints are enough, to block a criminal Internet drug group, much more is needed.

The experience of the foreign program "Approach 600", which combines cooperation between the police and public organizations in Amsterdam:

- individual preventive work with the participation of police officers, prosecutors, specialists from health care and social services institutions, 40 public organizations with 600 of the most dangerous criminals, as well as with drug addicts;
- if preventive measures contributed to the offender's path to correction or the drug addict's referral to substitution maintenance therapy programs, the citizen was removed from the list of 600, and another person was registered;

- the program allowed to significantly improve the crime situation in Amsterdam, significantly reduce the level of HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, reduce the socio-economic consequences of these epidemics on the city budget;
- the program has become widespread thanks to sports training by police officers and assistance with homework.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned II All-Ukrainian Round Table on the topic "Interaction of Security, Defense and Public Sector Bodies in Combating Criminal Offenses" did not provide answers to questions regarding the consequences associated with the spread of addiction among minors and youth, risks to psychoneurological (mental) and public health, as well as the strengthening of medical care to prevent depression, stress, and suicide among the carriers of the state's gene pool.

**The purpose of the study** was to conduct forensic and pharmaceutical research into the level of illicit drug trafficking and the consequences associated with the spread of addictive disorders among minors and youth, risks to psychoneurological (mental) and public health, as well as to strengthen medical and pharmaceutical care and conduct physical therapy, occupational therapy, physical education and rehabilitation to prevent depression, stress and suicide among the carriers of the state's gene pool.

**Materials and methods.** The research materials are examples from forensic pharmaceutical practice, which are provided on the website of the Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office, the National Police of Ukraine, publications of WHO specialists, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, ICD-11, laws and regulatory legal acts, scientific articles, etc. Used methods: graphic, documentary, regulatory, systemic, sociological, forensic, forensic and pharmaceutical, operational and detective, forensic, tabular analysis. Internet resources included: Google Scholar, Google Classroom services, Google Workspace, Viber, Zoom, Telegram, and others.

The article is a fragment of the following interdisciplinary research works: State Institution "Institute of Neurology, Psychiatry and Narcology named after Academician P.V. Voloshin NAMS of Ukraine" on the topic "Study of the mechanisms of inheritance of multiple sclerosis in individuals born from parents with this disease" (state registration number 0121 U 111900, implementation period 2022-2024); Private Scientific Institution "Scientific and Research University of Medical and Pharmaceutical Law" on the topic "Multidisciplinary study of post-traumatic stress disorders during war in patients (primarily combatants)" (state registration number 0124U002540, implementation period 2024-2029); Private Scientific Institution "Scientific and Research University of Medical and Pharmaceutical Law" on the topic "Interdisciplinary research on the system of quality, standardization, validation, certification, safety and availability of medicines" (state registration number 0125U001529, implementation period 2025-2033); Lviv Medical University on the topic "Improvement of the drug circulation system during pharmacotherapy on the basis of evidence-based and forensic pharmacy, organization, technology, biopharmacy and pharmaceutical law" (state registration number 0120U105348, implementation period 2021-2026).

**Results and discussion.** Research conducted by professors, doctors, pharmacists, and law enforcement officers in the system of studying the level of criminal and legal counteraction to organized drug trafficking contributed to the study of the socio-economic causes and conditions of the spread of drug trafficking, the availability of various types of assistance for patients (victims) with addictive disorders in accordance with ICD-10, and in modern conditions – ICD-11 [33-36].

Study of anxiety – depressive disorders in conditions of war distress in Ukraine showed that [25]:

- ❖ The WHO notes that every 5<sup>th</sup> person affected by war is at risk of developing mental illness, and for Ukraine this is already almost 8.5 million people;
- ❖ The Ministry of Health of Ukraine predicts that psychological and psychiatric assistance due to the consequences of the war is necessary for 15 million citizens, and of these, 3-4 million citizens need to be prescribed vital medicines by doctors.

In turn, WHO experts note that Mental health is a state of mental well-being in which people can cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, study and work well, and contribute to their community [37, 38]:

- mental health has intrinsic and instrumental value, is an integral part of our well-being;
- at any moment diverse set individual, family, community, and structural factors maybe to combine to protect or to blow up mental health;
- although most people are resilient, people who experience adverse circumstances, including poverty, violence, disability, and inequality, are at increased risk of developing a mental disorder.
- a lot of mental disorders can effectively to treat relatively low expenses, however systems security health remains much underfunded, and gaps in treatment exist in everything world;
- people with mental disorders are also often encountered with stigma, discrimination, and human rights violations.

The above indicates the need to preserve the gene pool in the country, which is the task of all, without exception, state authorities, local governments, the education and healthcare sectors, social and law enforcement agencies, and parents.

Forensic pharmaceutical research shows that in all cities of Ukraine, without exception, law enforcement agencies detect organized criminal groups that engage in illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors, and the main consumers of psychoactive substances prohibited for circulation are minors and young people.

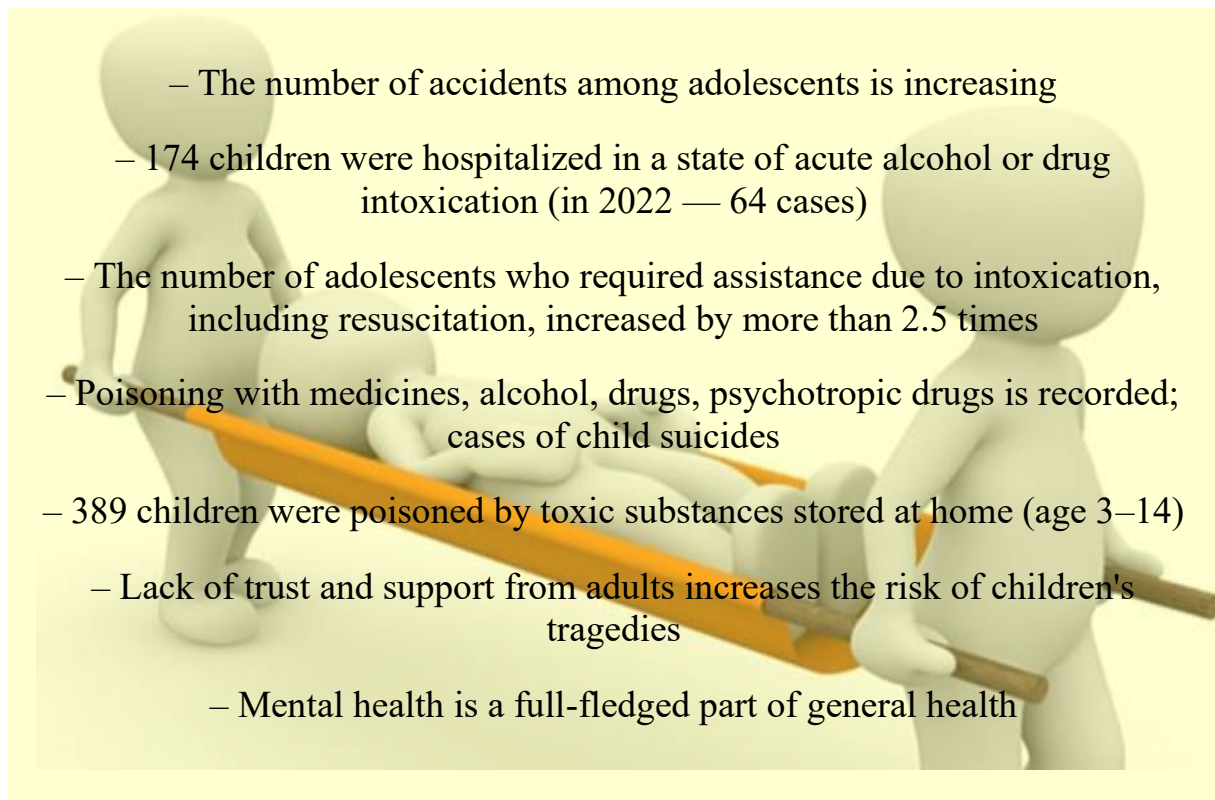
Drug trafficking poses a major threat to the preservation of the gene pool in the state, a threat to legal culture and legal awareness. The consequences of drug trafficking cause the spread of addictive diseases such as drug addiction, substance abuse, smoking and alcoholism, the development of concomitant health disorders (deterioration of the functioning of individual organs: kidneys, vision, hearing, musculoskeletal system, thyroid gland, digestion, etc. ) in accordance with ICD-11 (depressive states, tuberculosis, psychoneurological, cardiovascular, multiple sclerosis, circulatory system, HIV/AIDS, oncological, etc.) [39-41].

In addition to increasing the burden on the state budget and the level of funding for law enforcement agencies, the state is forced to increase funding for the medical, pharmaceutical, and socio-economic spheres, in order to eliminate the criminal and legal consequences of the impact of the drug trade on public health in general and individual citizens (as a rule, the most able-bodied part of the population), in particular.

According to the Department of Health of the Kyiv City State Administration, in 2023, children who have families, parents, loved ones who take care of them, and children who were left without supervision, or adolescents who were without proper attention, for one reason or another and deprived of psychological support from adults, suffered as follows [42]. Fig. 5 shows the facts of accidents among minors and young people.

- ✓ The number of accidents involving teenagers is increasing noticeably;
- ✓ To healthcare institutions 174 children were in the state acute alcoholic or narcotic intoxication (in 2022 such cases recorded total 64);
- ✓ More than 2.5 times increased number children, mostly adolescent of age, which due to alcohol consumption or drugs needed help doctors, including intensive care physicians;
- ✓ Cases of poisoning with medications, alcohol, narcotics, and psychotropic substances are recorded. substances, children's suicides;
- ✓ About poisoning medicines and biologicals substances, medicines, household chemistry, others toxic substances that mainly are stored at home, 389 children were poisoned (this is the case in most happens to younger people children from 3 to 14 years old);
- ✓ Deficiency frank, close relations from adults maybe lead to tragedy – suicide. Lose child because she has not coped with personal problems, traumas, dramatic events experiences that precisely in adolescence age take on particularly acute forms;
- ✓ We must understand that mental health is the same component general health, both physical and mental.





**Fig. 5.** Accidents among minors and young people [42].

In addition, for according to the Emergency Center medical aid and disaster medicine of Kyiv, in 2022 ambulance crews on call " attempt " "child suicide " was reported 93 times (11 children died, in 2023 – 135 (17 such attempts ended fatally. 16 of them were due to falls from a height), in addition [43]:

- ✓ the most number attempts shorten life do children 14-16 years old, and girls more often are contemplating suicide and much more often before drink alcohol;
- ✓ often cases suicide precedes changes behavior teenager, so you need to pay attention to such signs:
  - depressed mood child or her strength irritated;
  - sharp mood changes, sleep, and appetite disturbances;
  - refusals from communication;
  - sudden loss interest in activities that used to bring pleasure.

Studies in various countries of the world, including Ukraine, show that 44% of young people believe that talking about mental health is embarrassing, and 38% believe that such conversations would upset their family and friends too much [44].

It is important to note that mental health is a state of mental well-being that allows minors, young people and other categories of citizens to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, study well and work effectively, as well as contribute to the development of their community, and it has intrinsic and instrumental value and is an integral part of our well-being [45]. Mental health is a balance of work and rest; sometimes feeling not okay; finding your own way of self-help; taking care of yourself; understanding your own emotions; enjoying pleasant things; realizing your potential, etc.

It was noted that [46-48]:

- at any moment diverse set individual, family, community, and structural factors maybe to combine to protect or to blow up mental health;
- majority citizens are resistant to mental disorders;
- citizens who undergo unfavorable circumstances, including poverty, violence, disability, and inequality have increased risk development mental disorder;

- a lot of mental disorders can effectively to treat relatively low expenses, however sphere security health at the level of local government bodies remains much underfunded;
- citizens (patients) with psycho-neurological disorders are also often encountered with stigma, discrimination, and human rights violations.

A significant role in the public (mental) health and life of young people and minors is played by the actions of criminals who distribute prohibited psychoactive substances. They are used not as prescribed by a doctor by victims in stressful situations, for entertainment purposes or in depressive states (conflict in the family, schools, night explosions, guns being fired/, loss of parents (house, apartment, material support), loss of job, inability to continue education or career growth, etc.) or for pleasure. The mentioned categories of citizens use the appropriate means and substances, as evidenced by examples from forensic pharmaceutical practice (No. 1-7). As the National Police of Ukraine emphasize, drug crime during the war, like many other crimes, has also moved into cyberspace, and it is the effective team of police officers of the Department for Combating Drug Crime that has learned to document crypto exchangers, crypto wallets, and illegal schemes for selling drugs via the Internet [49].

*Example from forensic and pharmaceutical practice No. 1.* The investigator of the Main Investigation Department of the State Police in Kyiv under the procedural guidance of the Desnyan District Prosecutor's Office of Kyiv initiated criminal proceedings. Subsequently, 6 citizens of Ukraine, who are members of an organized criminal drug group, were notified of suspicion under Parts 2 and 3 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [50, 51].

During the pre-trial investigation it was established that in the city of Kyiv on 05.05.2025, 6 members of an organized criminal drug gang were detained, who bought in large quantities psychotropic substances and narcotics. The organizer, a citizen of Ukraine (a 44-year-old Kyiv resident, who was previously sentenced by the capital court to 9 years in prison under Part 2 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine), and the perpetrators, members of the group who are residents of Kyiv, illegally trafficked amphetamine, cannabis and 4-MMS, which were packaged with chocolate cookies and subsequently sold to citizens "hand to hand" in the indicated places or sent to the addressees in parcels through post offices.

Illegal drug trafficking was carried out in several hours rented apartments in which searches were conducted with the sanction of the court, during which narcotics were seized and psychotropic and substances and worth 1 million UAH, namely:

- ✓ more than 2 kg (cannabis, amphetamine, alpha- PVP);
- ✓ MDMA pills and psilocybin mushrooms;
- ✓ electronic scales, zip-lock bags;
- ✓ laptops and mobiles telephones;
- ✓ rough notes;
- ✓ 3 cars.

The criminals received a monthly reward of drug trafficking about 1.5 million UAH. To everyone of 6<sup>th</sup> citizens of Ukraine, by the court selected precautionary measures in the form of holding under custody without definition size bail. Investigators have ordered forensic pharmaceutical and other examinations. The investigation is ongoing.

*Example from forensic and pharmaceutical practice No. 2.* An investigator of the Main Directorate of the State Emergency Service in Kyiv, under the procedural guidance of the Holosiivska District Prosecutor's Office, initiated criminal proceedings, and a citizen of Ukraine was notified of suspicion of committing a crime under Part 2 and Part 3 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [52].

During the pre-trial investigation established that on May 23, 2025, in the city of Kyiv, during operational and search operations law enforcement officers arrested the criminal when he went to the post office department for sending to consumers next time batch of "goods" that was found in light bulb, inside whose there were 28 packages of psychotropic substance alpha-PVP, packaged in zip-lock bags, worth 500 thousand hryvnias. Operational and investigative measures and documentation of illegal activities of drug dealer was conducted by operatives of the Holosiivskyi Police Department



of the Main Police Department in Kyiv together with operatives of the Department for Combating Drug Crime in Kyiv, who found out that the 35-year-old local resident accepted orders from buyers via messengers and sent psychotropic substances using postal services.

With a place residence criminal police conducted an emergency search and seized from illegal circulation:

- ✓ packaged packages of cannabis, which is a narcotic;
- ✓ zip packages with MDMA, amphetamine, Alpha-PVP, which is a psychotropic substance;
- ✓ electronic scales;
- ✓ items for packaging.

Regarding the criminal by the court selected precautionary measures in the form of holding under custody without definition size pledges. A complex of operational and investigative measures is being carried out aimed at establishing a laboratory to produce psychotropic substances, a circle of individuals and victims-users of psychoactive substances. Investigative actions are ongoing.

*Example from forensic pharmaceutical practice No. 3.* The prosecutor of the Sviatoshyn District Prosecutor's Office of Kyiv, for supporting a public accusation, pronounced a guilty verdict against a 20-year-old citizen of Ukraine on charges under Part 2 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [53].

In court, the prosecutor proved that the accused in the city of Kyiv during 2023 committed illegal actions related to the illegal trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, namely systematically stored and sold through postal items amphetamine, PVP, MDMA and cannabis, which, according to forensic and pharmaceutical expertise, were classified as narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances [54].

To mask his illegal activities, he sent narcotics and psychotropic substances to buyers (drug addicts) in packages with peanuts.

During the pre-trial investigation, detention, and search in accordance with the court decision, the criminal was found to have: The following has been removed from illegal circulation:

- psychotropic substances (amphetamine, PVP and MDMA), narcotics (cannabis);
- vacuum packaging devices;
- a bag of peanuts.

By the court for a collection collected by the investigator evidence husband – citizen of Ukraine recognized guilty of the charged offense crime and sentenced to 6 years

*Example from forensic pharmaceutical practice No. 4.* With the investigator of the Dnipro Police Department of the Main Police Department in the city of Kyiv, under the procedural guidance of the Dnipro District Prosecutor's Office of the city of Kyiv, criminal proceedings were initiated and suspicions were reported to 2 citizens of Ukraine (aged 20 and 21), residents of the capital, under Part 2 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [55].

During the pre-trial investigation, it was established that on June 12, 2025, during the conduct of operational-search activities in the city of Kyiv, police officers of the Main Department of National Police of Kyiv detained 2 citizens who committed illegal actions related to the circulation of psychotropic substances. Thus, the criminals purchased and stored psychotropic substances for the purpose of sale via the Internet, after which they sold them to sick consumers in small batches by placing them in separate places.

According to the court decision, during the search in criminals were identified and removed from illegal circulation the following:

- ✓ 50 plastic flasks with crystal substance;
- ✓ 28 plastic flasks with crystal substance;
- ✓ more than 1 kg of substance.

The substance was sent for forensic examination. The criminal was selected by the court precautionary measures in the form of holding under in custody, and before trial investigation continues.

*Example from forensic and pharmaceutical practice No. 5.* The investigator of the Solomiansky District Police Department of the Main Police Department in Kyiv, under the procedural guidance of

the Solomiansky District Prosecutor's Office of Kyiv, initiated criminal proceedings and exposed 2 organizers (aged 43 and 64) and 7 accomplices who organized 3 drug laboratories in the city, and also organized the sale of psychotropic substances in the territory of Ukraine, under Part 3 of Article 307, Part 2 of Article 313 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [56].

During the pre-trial investigation, it was established that on June 09, 2025 in Kyiv, the criminal activities of the drug business - an organized criminal drug group – were stopped by the operative officers of the USR in Kyiv of the State Drug Control Service of the National Police of Ukraine. It included 9 criminals who carried out the following actions:

- set up laboratories in apartments to produce amphetamine and LSD tablets;
- purchased laboratory equipment and precursors via the Internet and trusted citizens;
- personally manufactured psychoactive substances.

The organizers of the drug business transferred the packaged "goods" to the 7 perpetrators, after which they sold (sold) it in bulk or in small batches by the "hand to hand" method and by means of deposits. The drug laboratories had a production capacity for the production (synthesis, modification) of about 25 kg of amphetamine and LSD tablets per month, which is classified as psychotropic substances, with an estimated value on the "black market" of about 2.5 million UAH.

During court-sanctioned searches in the premises of the drug laboratories, the following were seized:

- about 3.5 kg of psychotropic substances in powdered form;
- 98 tablets;
- narcotic mushrooms;
- laboratory equipment.

The court has chosen preventive measures in the form of detention for 7 suspects, and house arrest for 2 criminals. A pre-trial investigation is underway.

*Example from forensic and pharmaceutical practice No. 6.* The investigator of the Criminal Investigation Department of the State Crime Prevention and Investigation Service in the city of Kyiv under the procedural guidance of the Podil District Prosecutor's Office of the city of Kyiv initiated criminal proceedings and informed the 23-year-old defendant, a citizen of Ukraine, of suspicion under Part 3 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [57].

During the pre-trial investigation, it was established that on May 21, 2025, during operational and search measures in the city of Kyiv, a criminal was exposed and detained who had been selling narcotics for a long time. Thus, in March 2035, operational officers of the Podil Police Department of the Main Department of the State Police of Kyiv established that the criminal rented an apartment in the capital's Podil, which he equipped as a packaging shop and warehouse, where he packaged narcotics and psychotropic substances in doses and packed them in boxes from headphones and phones.

During a court-sanctioned search of the criminal's residence, investigators seized the following:

- over 3 kg of psychotropic substances: Alpha-PVP, mephedrone, MDMA, DMT (dimethyltryptamine), gamma-butyrolactone, ketamine, methamphetamine;
- over 3 kg of narcotics: cannabis, cocaine;
- electronic scales;
- devices for vacuuming packages, packaging rolls;
- many empty boxes from under headphones and telephones.

The court has chosen a preventive measure of detention for the accused for the duration of the investigation. The investigation is ongoing.

*Example from forensic and pharmaceutical practice No. 7.* The investigator of the Joint Investigation Unit under the procedural guidance of the Desnyansky District Prosecutor's Office of Kyiv initiated criminal proceedings and notified of suspicions against 3 citizens of Ukraine who established illegal circulation – sale of psychotropic substances (amphetamine, ecstasy pills) and a particularly dangerous psychotropic substance (4-MMS) in the city of Kyiv, under Part 3 of Article 307 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [58].

During the pre-trial investigation, it was established that on June 28, 2025, 3 criminals were detained in the city of Kyiv who purchased psychotropic substances via the Internet, and then sold them in small batches by placing orders and sending them to clients by mail. The men used a rented apartment in the Desnyansky district of Kyiv as a warehouse for packaging and storing the "goods". During the searches, amphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy) pills, 4-MMS crystals, electronic scales, empty plastic, and paper packaging bags, as well as bags with already packaged psychotropic substances for further sale were seized from them. At the request of prosecutors, the suspects were selected as preventive measures in the form of detention without determining the amount of bail. The sanction of the article provides for a sentence of imprisonment for a term of nine to twelve years with confiscation of property.

Summarizing examples from forensic and pharmaceutical practice, we emphasize that:

- ✓ the criminogenic situation regarding the drug trade remains complex;
- ✓ police officers, forensic experts, prosecutors, and judges are conducting painstaking operational and investigative work to identify, record, document, and stop the drug trade;
- ✓ organized drug trafficking has mastered the synthesis and modification of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances prohibited for circulation, which are psychoactive substances (amphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), 4-MMS, alpha-PVP, mephedrone, DMT (dimethyltryptamine), gamma-butyrolactone, ketamine, methamphetamine, cannabis, cocaine, LSD, narcotic mushrooms, precursors);
- ✓ the sale of psychoactive substances is carried out using the Internet, postal items and other modern telephone and electronic networks;
- ✓ criminals are familiar with the methods of operational and investigative activities, have connections in the criminal environment, commit serious and especially serious crimes to receive "easy money", committing crimes that have signs of murder, serious bodily harm or those that have causal connections with suicides;
- ✓ the prohibited substances and means sold by criminals are of poor quality and dangerous, have serious side effects for all organs of children and youth and act as poisons for their body.

Noteworthy is the article by Tienenov Yu. about the fact that 3 children in the city of Kyiv were poisoned by sweets that probably contained narcotics [59]:

- two children tasted chocolate from humanitarian aid, which, as doctors reported, contained cannabis;
- the third child consumed chocolate given to her father, which contained psilocybin.

Information about the poisoning of children with "narcotics" appeared on 04/05/2024 on the Facebook page of the Kyiv City Children's Clinical Hospital No. 1, as reported by doctors:

- On March 23, 2024, 2 children from the same family were hospitalized with signs of drug intoxication (the younger child is in the intensive care unit). The cause of their condition was cannabis. Both children had consumed humanitarian chocolate in unlabeled packaging the day before.
- On March 26, 2024, another child was hospitalized with symptoms of drug poisoning. The day before, she had eaten chocolate with psilocybin (a psychoactive substance found in some types of hallucinogenic mushrooms), which her father had received as a gift.

The editorial staff of "Kashtan NEWS" investigated the reports published on the website of the Metropolitan Police and Kyiv Customs. It identified at least five such cases that became known over the past two years:

- ❖ in October 2022, a 19-year-old dealer was detained in Kyiv, who worked for an online store selling psychoactive substances;
- ❖ among the "goods" seized by law enforcement officers in the young man's apartment were candies and cookies containing cannabis;
- ❖ the candies were wrapped in colored foil and looked little different from ordinary chocolate treats.
- ❖ in January 2024, "edible" drugs were involved in the case of a criminal group that was exposed;



- ❖ the suspects with fake volunteer and journalist IDs moved around the capital during the curfew and delivered prostitutes and psychoactive substances disguised as sweets, tea bags or "single-use" cigarettes to VIP clients.
- ❖ Kyiv customs officers had to detect cannabis under the guise of tea;
- ❖ Kyiv resident tried to send such "tea" by mail to Thailand, packing his goods in metallized bags with labels of a famous Ukrainian tea brand. However, the dealer was let down by his lack of school knowledge in economic geography: since Thailand is one of the world's tea producers, customs officers suspected that residents of this country would hardly be interested in Kyiv tea. The mail was sent for examination, which exposed the drug dealer's cunning plan.
- ❖ another Kyiv resident sold Alpha-PVP salts (a particularly dangerous psychotropic substance, the circulation of which is prohibited in Ukraine) in coffee bags, and a 20-year-old native of Donetsk who moved to the capital sold amphetamine in peanut bags.
- ❖ in January 2022, an online store was exposed that sold amphetamine in bags of a popular brand of cat food sent by mail;
- ❖ in March 2024, a similar online store was discovered that packaged a very wide range of its "goods" in this way: from ecstasy to cocaine in bags of a popular brand of cat and dog food sent by mail.

As the experts of the Kyiv City Council emphasized during the round table "Prevention of drug addiction among adolescents and youth of the city of Kyiv" at the initiative of the Kyiv City Council Standing Commission on Education, Science, Youth and Sports, it is planned to strengthen the work on the prevention of drug addiction among youth [60]. This is due to the data compilation (as of the beginning of the year) of the Kyiv City Narcological Clinical Hospital "Sociotherapy", namely:

- the number of officially registered patients with mental and behavioral disorders due to drug use is 8411 people;
- most of them are young citizens;
- the estimated number of Kyiv residents who use non-injection forms of psychoactive substances is at least 40 thousand people (according to unofficial statistics).

The experts believe that:

- work on the prevention of drug addiction in the capital should be more coordinated and result-oriented;
- city services should work not only with youth and adolescents, but also with parents;
- city authorities (for example, members of the Kyiv City Council Standing Committee on Education, Science, Youth and Sports) together with law enforcement agencies should ensure the destruction of street signs that advertise links to websites and electronic resources that distribute narcotic and psychotropic substances;
- need to implement new comprehensive solutions at the city level to reduce the dynamics of drug addiction among young Kyiv residents;
- specialized public organizations of the city and institutions are invited to submit their proposals on the prevention and counteraction to drug addiction in the capital, which, after generalization and analysis, will be maximally considered as initiative proposals when forming the City Target Program "Children. Family. Capital" for 2019-2021;

The Kyiv City Center for Social Services for Families, Children and Youth, together with specialized institutions, organized work to provide free services to dependent Kyiv residents (in 2018, as of July 1, 2019), the following work was carried out:

- 2,268 individual services were provided to citizens;
- 64 citizens completed a full course of study at the school for co-dependents; 189 citizens were involved in the rehabilitation program;
- 150 group events for adolescents were held.

Advisor to the Kyiv Mayor on Legal Issues Shevchuk O. emphasized that for 34 years, the problem of the harmful effects of psychoactive substances has remained relevant and striking for Ukraine, because, referring to the data of the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug

Addiction, he noted that in Ukraine the number of deaths from poisoning with psychoactive substances is increasing every year (and this is the loss of the gene pool: -unformed families; -unborn children):

- ❖ 2017 – 202 citizens;
- ❖ 2018 – 335 citizens;
- ❖ 2019 – 421 citizens;
- ❖ since 2015, the dynamics indicate an increase in the illegal use of psychoactive substances among schoolchildren (15-17 years old) – from 14.8% to 17.6% (2021).

However, the facts indicate that [61]:

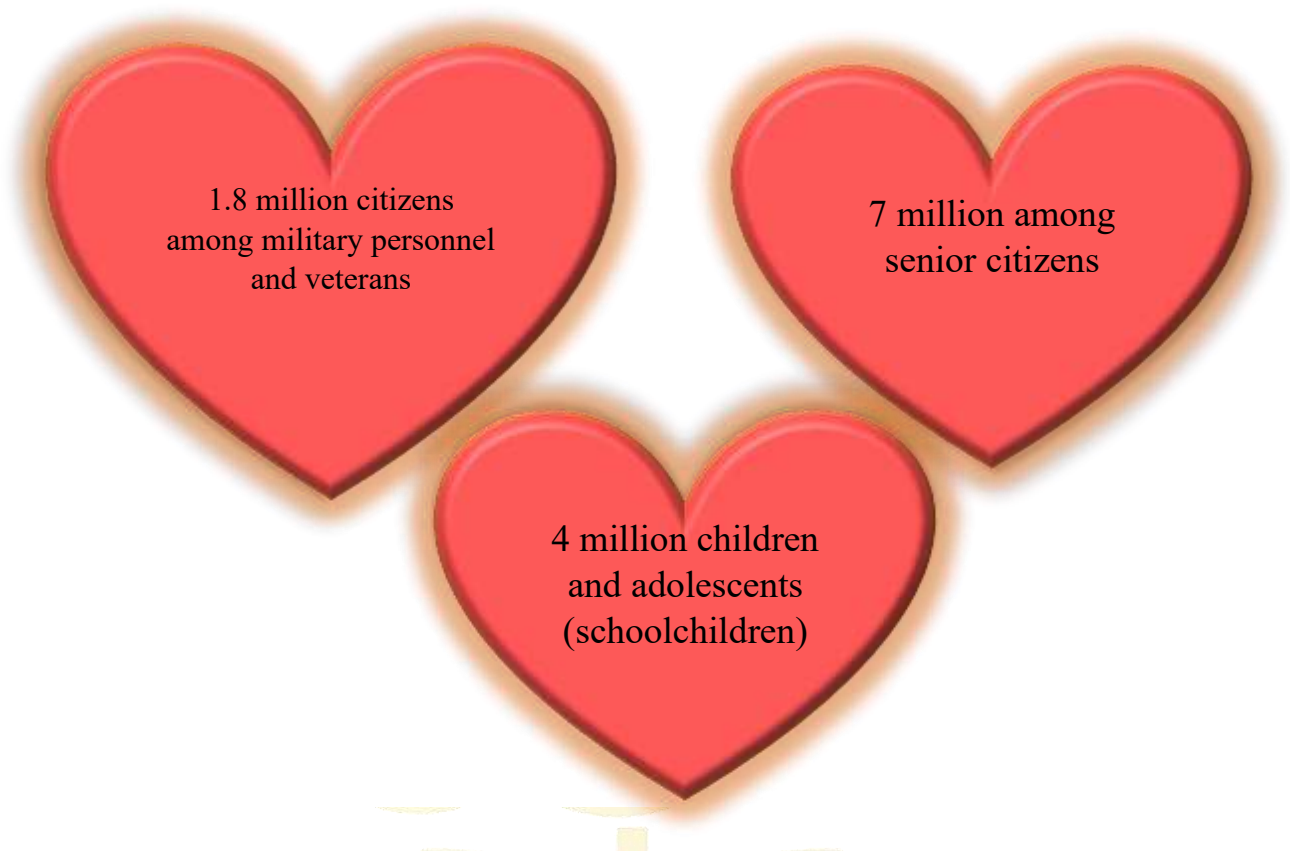
- drug crimes are hidden – those that require comprehensive exposure, if such crimes have not been detected, they are not reflected in statistical data, and therefore drug crime statistics have a reduced relevance and do not fully reflect the current situation;
- an obvious fact is confirmed – "drugs", as a commodity, have absorbed a significant part of the market and are on the pedestal of the shadow economy;
- drug dealers are getting rich, someone (meaning young consumers) is taking the last money out of the house to get even for the next dose;
- there is a whole scheme of drug trafficking;
- an extensive drug network begins with drug laboratories (greenhouses, plantations, where farmers grow narcotic substances of plant origin, or closed premises equipped with special equipment, where chemists brew heavy narcotic drugs;
- the manufactured "drug" needs to be distributed - typical marketing, therefore, at this stage of circulation, most of the "dealers" fall into the hands
- parental upbringing and the level of their tolerance for drug addiction are of great importance, i.e.:
- parents should know the algorithm of actions in case the child falls under the harmful influence of "drug addiction", and specialists of the Main Directorate of the National Police in the city of Kyiv carry out the following actions, namely:
  - an anti-drug media campaign on its website, in social networks, in the columns of the periodical and on the "Police of Kyiv" channel;
  - specialized offline trainings on pedagogical support of social service specialists;
  - popularization of a healthy lifestyle, sports lead to the formation of useful skills that help avoid bad habits;
- old levers of influence on adolescents have lost their former persuasiveness, and therefore preventive work should concern not only children, but also adults.
- leads to the formation of useful skills that help avoid bad habits.

What should the public, parents, teachers at school, doctors in health care institutions, pharmacists in pharmacies, police officers, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers do to counteract the drug business and its consequences of drugging minors and youth and prevent the causes and conditions that contribute to health disorders, threaten the carriers of the gene pool, and commit poisonings and suicides is:

- consolidation of all around the problem of abuse of "psychoactive substances" among minors and youth;
- with the participation of state authorities and local self-government bodies, a multidisciplinary search for ways to effectively solve it to minimize harm caused by psychotropic drugs;
- improvement of laws and regulatory legal acts on the protection of the rights of minors and young people to socio-economic assistance and medical and pharmaceutical support;
- all those who have an influence (law enforcement officers, teachers, officials, doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, stakeholders, sports coaches, child psychologists, psychiatrists, neuropathologists, narcologists) on the formation of legal culture and legal awareness among schoolchildren and the younger generation should make every effort to protect the future generation from critical consequences, and the state (state authorities and local governments)

should create conditions for financing these programs, and not in words but indeed, attract these specialists to relevant positions.

In addition to the above problems and critical consequences, according to expert estimates, 40-50% of the population of Ukraine will need various forms of psychological support (Fig. 6) [62].



**Fig. 6.** Psychological support of the population of Ukraine [62].

At the same time, because of hostilities, the number of citizens and patients in need of psychiatric or psychological care is increasing. As Yurtsenyuk O.S., Sumaryuk B.M. emphasize, there is a tendency towards [63]:

- an increase in the number of neurotic and stressful mental disorders;
- solving the issue of changing the socio-economic status, citizens can satisfy their needs at the subsistence level;
- loss of working capacity and an increase in the number of unemployed people provoke the development of mental and behavioral disorders;
- an increase in the number of victims of sexual violence;
- an increase in factors that provoke the development of neurotic and stressful disorders in citizens of different age groups (the impact of forced relocation of people outside their homes and homeland, loss of property, land, social infrastructure, acquaintances, friends, etc.).

Experts from the Eastern Interregional Department of the State Labor Service of Ukraine note that the state of mental health depends on many factors [65]. These include conditions of martial law, post-war time, socio-economic, medical-pharmaceutical, criminal-legal, ecological-biological, fire-technical, and even mental and neurological health problems of citizens (schoolchildren, students, workers, civil servants, military, doctors, pharmacists):

- emotions, management, functioning;
- communication and relationships with others;
- development, learning;
- self-esteem;
- making one's own decisions;



- adaptation to new living conditions;
- problem solving;
- employee health becomes the focus of attention from employers and requires appropriate actions at the level of corporate interests, where there are:
- vulnerable categories of employees who need support;
- internally displaced employees;
- pregnant women;
- employees with physical and/or mental health disorders;
- employees who have loved ones in active combat zones, who are returning to work after a traumatic experience, who have lost loved ones and property;
- combatants, veterans, former military personnel, and those disabled because of participation in combat.

According to Tvardovska M., significant shortcomings in the organization of counteraction to drug addiction among minors today are [65]:

- insufficient activity of educational institutions in the field of individual prevention of drug addiction;
- educational institutions are currently responsible for raising the spirituality of young representatives of the Ukrainian nation, for raising patriotism during wartime, public morality, and legal awareness among young people;
- the key to the successful implementation of such areas of activity by educational institutions is the latest concept of educational work with youth at the state policy level, which must necessarily include means of preventing drug addiction (in particular, drug addiction);
- preservation and development of established patriotic and spiritual national traditions, development of various social programs and implementation of preventive work to protect minors from negative phenomena present in a difficult period for the state, which affect the change in the worldview and value orientations of the minor;
- there is a need to develop a state preventive policy to reform the systems of upbringing and education of youth, develop effective methods for implementing the socio-economic and spiritual needs of minors;
- requires the development of a range of leisure activities;
- expanding the number of cultural, sports and other leisure facilities for minors and youth and promoting a healthy lifestyle;
- strengthening state control over compliance with current legislation in the trade fair, regarding the regulation and control of the circulation of alcoholic beverages (including beer, energy, etc.), tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes), medicines that have psychoactive properties, narcotics, and the gaming business.
- regulating at the legislative level the issue of mandatory medical examination of minors at the place of study or work;
- developing programs to ensure the activities of various institutions for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and their return to normal life.

According to Tychyna D.M. and Gelemey M.O., one of the problems of modern youth and minors is the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances prohibited for circulation, which requires setting the following important tasks for modern civil society [66], which is shown in Fig. 7.

Prevention of criminal offenses – to solve general socio-economic measures aimed at preventing youth from engaging in the use of psychoactive substances.

The ability of the state to develop and implement effective complexes of preventive measures in the following areas:

Legal creating a system of special measures at the national level to combat criminal drug trafficking, based on international legal acts and including national regulatory and legal acts in this area;

Economic – provides for the establishment of a state monopoly on the circulation of narcotic drugs, the development and support of economically profitable alternatives to the cultivation of drug-containing plants;

Organizational and legal – improving the organizational structure of the system of security sector bodies and non-governmental organizations, which have as one of the main functions aimed at preventing the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs.

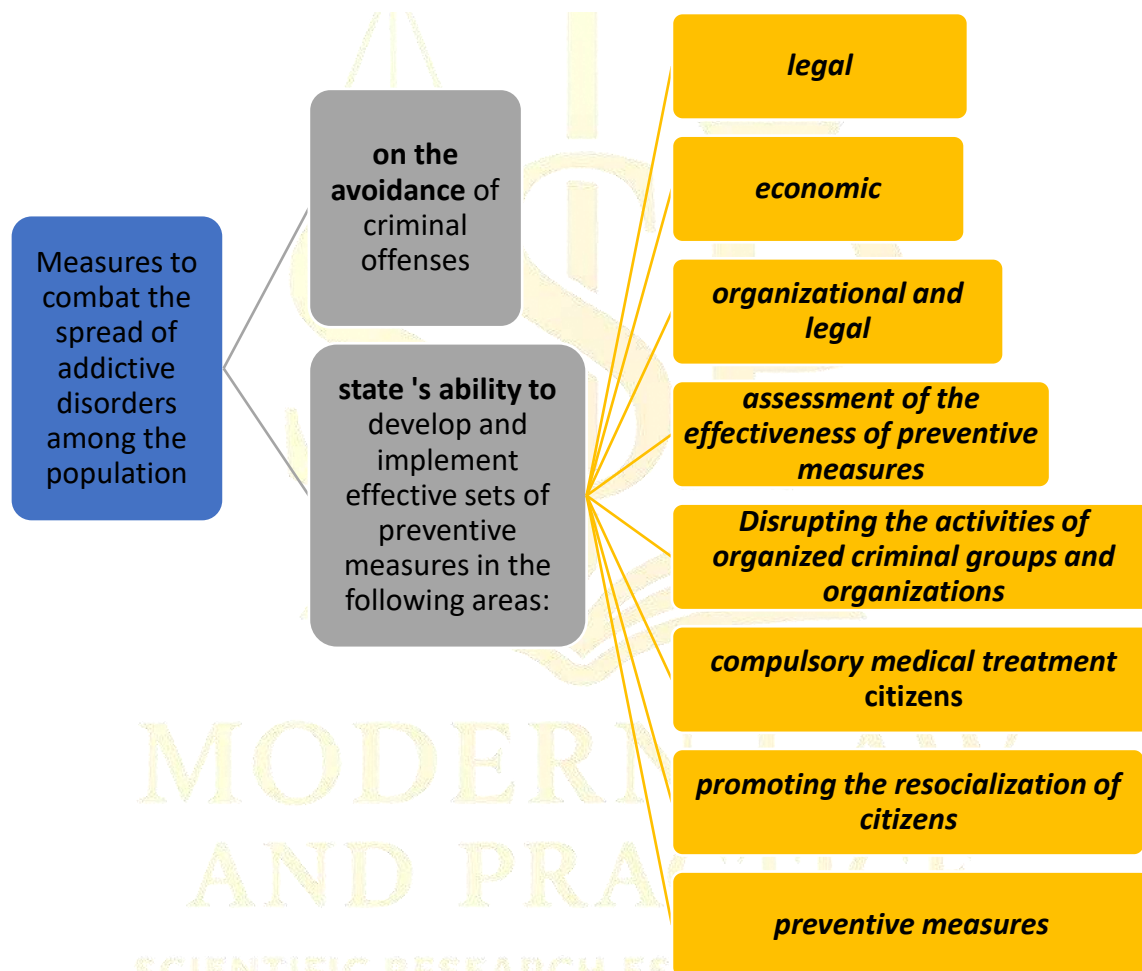
Assessment of the effectiveness of preventive measures – protection of objects related to the production, storage, and use of narcotic drugs from criminal encroachments.

Termination of the activities of organized criminal groups and organizations.

Compulsory medical treatment of citizens with addictive disorders, rehabilitation of patients, support of their working capacity and interest in life values.

Promotion of resocialization of citizens serving sentences.

Preventive and preventive measures – conducting social anti-drug propaganda and education.



**Fig. 7.** Measures to counter the spread of addictive disorders in the population [66].

A systematic review of suicide mortality and substance use by Athey A., Shaff J., Kahn G., Brodie K., Ryan T.C., Sawyer H., DeVinney A., Nestadt P.S., Wilcox H.C. found an association between substance use and suicide mortality in peer-reviewed longitudinal cohort studies published from 2003 to 2024. It was emphasized that substance abuse remains a significant risk factor for suicide [67]:

- ❖ The risk of bias was assessed using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale;
- ❖ The pooled data were analyzed using a quality effects model;
- ❖ Meta-regression was used to assess the effect of moderation on study quality;
- ❖ Asymmetry in funnel plots and Doi plots was used to detect reporting bias;
- ❖ Substance abusers had a 5.58 times higher risk of suicide than controls;

- ❖ The association between substance use and suicide was stronger in women than in men;
- ❖ Abuse of alcohol, cannabis, opioids, amphetamines, and tobacco products increases the risk of suicide;
- ❖ The lack of disaggregated data limits the field's ability to identify potential health inequalities;
- ❖ The need for universal and targeted prevention of drug and substance abuse and equal access to effective interventions to prevent the causes and conditions that contribute to suicide.

It should be noted that the psychoneurological health and moral and ethical state of patients are in the system of clinical and pharmaceutical care and research in separate areas: mental health, depression, thyroid gland, stress, multiple sclerosis, pharmacotherapy, rehabilitation, physical therapy, occupational therapy, sports medicine, physical education, musculoskeletal system, work capacity, etc. They are aimed at studying the level of prevalence of addiction - drug addiction, substance abuse, alcoholism, smoking, gambling, and related health disorders. The topic is covered in the publications of leading domestic scientists Voloshyna N.P., Linsky I.V., Shapovlova V.O. and others [68-107].

However, multidisciplinary, forensic-pharmaceutical, forensic-narcological, forensic-psychiatric and expert-criminalistic studies related to countering drug crime in Ukraine, the consequences of illegal acquisition, abuse of psychoactive substances in adolescence and youth have not been conducted. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of cause-and-effect relationships in the chain "drug crime (sale-use)-morbidity in accordance with ICD-11-mental health (depression, stress, multiple sclerosis)-suicidal behavior-treatment-rehabilitation" of minors and youth. The current search for ways to combat the illegal trafficking of psychoactive substances, timely medical, pharmaceutical, social, physical therapy, occupational therapy, sports medicine, physical education, rehabilitation, and career guidance assistance with effective and real (financial and economic) support for health care institutions, schools, and lyceums at the level of state authorities and local governments.

Specialists of the psycho-social training center recommend starting the conversation in the period from 5 to 11 years of age, as mandatory. Later, when the child gradually grows up, it is worth supplementing it with information from time to time as a preventive measure. An example for a child (adolescent) is his family (mother and father), because it is the parents who lay the foundations of spiritual, moral, and legal values and behavior. As Feshchuk P.P. emphasizes, rehabilitation centers play an important role in the treatment of people with addictive disorders (Table 1) [108].

**Table 1.** The role of rehabilitation centers that play an important role in the treatment of citizens suffering from drug addiction and its consequences for health and working capacity.

Treatment of drug addiction and its consequences	The role of rehabilitation centers in the fight against drug addiction
<p>Treatment of drug addiction and substance abuse and its consequences (comorbid health disorders: tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, thyroid gland, cardiovascular system and blood circulation, kidney, liver, joint diseases, etc.) is a complex and multi-stage process, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ drug pharmacotherapy to combat physical dependence on drugs;</li> <li>✓ psychological and psychiatric support to overcome psychological dependence and carry out a complex of rehabilitation activities;</li> </ul>	<p>Rehabilitation centers play an important role in the fight against drug addiction and its consequences, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ they provide comprehensive treatment and support to drug addicts, helping them get rid of addiction and restore their health;</li> <li>✓ have Rehabilitation Programs that include pharmacotherapeutic treatment with the use of life-saving drugs, psychotherapy, rehabilitation measures and social support;</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ study of somatic disorders and diseases (musculoskeletal system), which require specialized treatment aimed at restoring the affected organs and systems, namely:</li> <li>✓ treatment of HIV infection, which includes antiretroviral therapy to suppress the reproduction of the virus, as well as a complex of measures to strengthen immunity and prevent complications;</li> <li>✓ treatment of tuberculosis, diabetes mellitus of the I and II degree, psychoneurological, cardiovascular and other health disorders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a key aspect of the work of rehabilitation centers is the prevention of relapse and assistance to former drug addicts in adapting to everyday life, study, and work, without the use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, or drugs with psychoactive properties;</li> <li>✓ includes training in self-control skills, development of alternative strategies to cope with stress and support in employment, education, sports, physical activities, and socio-pedagogical rehabilitation.</li> </ul>
<p>Addictive disorders pose a serious threat to the health of drug addicts, relatives, parents, close friends, employers, stakeholders, schools, public health colleges, state authorities and local governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Somatic disorders caused by addiction can have serious consequences and require comprehensive treatment;</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation centers play an important role, providing drug addicts with the necessary assistance and support on the path to recovery and social rehabilitation;</li> <li>✓ Need to increase financial and economic assistance, medical and pharmaceutical support (exclusively on preferential terms) and psychological and pedagogical support (free of charge).</li> </ul>	

In our opinion, the organization of the work of private rehabilitation centers should be closely monitored by regulatory and law enforcement agencies, which is why there have already been numerous publications in the press about serious offenses during the rehabilitation and treatment activities of personnel or theft of funds from budget financing programs.

Example from forensic pharmaceutical practice No. 8. The investigator-detective of the Territorial Department of the Bureau of Economic Security in the Odessa region, under the procedural guidance of the prosecutor of the Odessa Regional Prosecutor's Office, initiated criminal proceedings, and subsequently each of the 7 participants of the criminal group was declared suspicious under Part 5 of Article 191 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine [109, 110].

During the pre-trial investigation, it was established that in the city of Odesa on June 18, 2025, Detectives of the Territorial Department of the Bureau of Economic Security in the Odessa region detained a deputy of the Odessa City Council and stopped the activities of a criminal group and exposed a scheme to appropriate budget funds that were intended for the implementation of a targeted program to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis and drug addiction. Thus, a citizen of Ukraine, who is a deputy of the Odessa City Council, organized a scheme to appropriate more than 2 million UAH of budget funds. To implement the appropriation, embezzlement of property or appropriation by abuse of office, the woman involved:

- the head and co-founder of a public organization engaged in the rehabilitation of drug addicts;
- an employee of the Department of Health of the Odessa City Council;
- 3 managers of individual entrepreneurs (private entrepreneurs);
- director of the municipal enterprise "Health Care Institution", which specializes in aiding drug addicts. He helped ensure the conclusion of contracts with individual entrepreneurs controlled by the deputy.

To commit the crime, having received budget funds for the implementation of the program, the criminals did the following:

- drew up fictitious acts of work performed, in which the number of citizen patients who were helped was overstated and services were recorded that were not actually provided;
- the facts contained false information about the nutrition of persons who underwent treatment and rehabilitation within the framework of the program (provided by a relative of the deputy);
- the organizer of the scheme (a deputy of the Odessa City Council) ensured the development of a similar project for 2024-2026 worth over 4 million UAH.

The investigator, with the support of the prosecutor, filed a petition with the court for the selection of a preventive measure in the form of detention for a period of 60 days with the alternative of posting bail in the amount of UAH 2 million for all suspects. The investigation is ongoing.

Various approaches to the classification of subjects of counteraction to illicit drug trafficking are proposed by Davydenko V.V., among which he highlights the following classification criteria, namely [111]:

- by level of influence (international, national, and local bodies), level of competence (general, special, and mixed), by functional competences (legislative, executive, law enforcement, etc.);
- modern state policy in the field of control over the circulation of narcotic drugs and counteraction to their illegal distribution is implemented by a wide range of subjects, among which legislative, executive and law enforcement bodies that provide strategic management, regulatory and legal regulation, coordination, and direct fight against drug crime can be noted;
- medical and rehabilitation institutions, international institutions, public organizations, and local governments that promote prevention, treatment and social adaptation of persons addicted to narcotic substances;
- classification of subjects of counteraction to illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs includes the following criteria: 1) by authority (international subjects, national subjects, regional and local subjects); 2) by functional purpose (subjects of regulatory and legal regulation, subjects of control and coordination, law enforcement subjects, subjects of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation); 3) by level of competence (bodies of general, special, and mixed competence);
- the system of counteraction to illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs in Ukraine has several shortcomings, including:
  - duplication of functions of state institutions;
  - insufficient coordination between law enforcement, executive, and rehabilitation bodies;
  - weak interaction with international structures;
  - outdated mechanisms for combating drug crime;
  - lack of a unified state policy on the legal circulation of medicinal drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes;
  - insufficient involvement of public organizations in prevention and rehabilitation;
  - it is considered urgent to make changes at the legislative level to the circle of subjects of combating illicit drug trafficking, which would expand the list of subjects, changing the concept of the law, since inter-sectoral cooperation is important – involving not only executive and law enforcement bodies, but also legislative institutions, strategic-level state authorities, as well as public organizations in combating it, which will contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated approach to combating the drug trade.

It is important that the laws and regulatory legal acts of Ukraine and the instructions and methodological guidelines of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine meet the requirements aimed at protecting minors and youth, protecting (restoring) their rights and freedoms, life, and health. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Resolution of 27.12.2017 No. 1018-r “On approval of the Concept for the development of mental health care in Ukraine for the period until 2030”, which was adopted based on a situation monitor, which indicated that in Ukraine [112]:

- disability rates due to mental disorders and mortality rates from intentional self-harm reflect insufficient effectiveness of rehabilitation measures in the field of mental health care;
- 1673328 residents of Ukraine (as of 01.01.2017) were registered in connection with mental and behavioral disorders, including 694928 – due to disorders related to alcohol and drug use (or 3.9 percent of the population);

- 182415 patients were hospitalized in psychiatric care institutions (in 2016), citizens stayed in the hospital for an average of 53.4 days;
- 261240 patients with mental disorders had a disability group (at the end of 2016), of which:
  - 8.5% – children aged 0-17 years;
  - 9893 patients were initially recognized as persons with disabilities due to mental disorders;
  - the mortality rate (lethality) of the population from intentional self-harm in 2015 was 17.7 per 100 thousand population.

Due to the fact that in Ukraine, criminal drug gangs sell illegal narcotics and psychotropic substances to minors and young people, the state has not provided an appropriate level of protection for minors and young people from illegal psychoactive substances, therefore, the state must assume the burden of responsibility and guarantee minors and young people free medical care, free provision of medicines and free rehabilitation measures, that is, in accordance with the norms of medical law and pharmaceutical law, conduct interdisciplinary cooperation and coordination of the activities of state authorities and local self-government bodies in the field of public health, which are based on:

- Article 3. Basic principles of the public health system, the Law of Ukraine “On the System of Public Health” [113];
- Article 4. Basic principles of health care, the Law of Ukraine “Fundamentals of the Legislation of Ukraine on Health Care” [114];
- Article 5. State guarantees for the provision of psychiatric care and social protection of persons suffering from mental disorders, of the Law of Ukraine "On Psychiatric Care" [115].
- To bring certain regulatory legal acts into line with the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1018-r dated 27.12.2017, there is a need for a legislative initiative, which we propose:
- Law of Ukraine "On Measures to Counteract Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors and Their Abuse" defines a system of measures in Ukraine aimed at combating the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors and their abuse, and defines the rights and obligations of legal entities and citizens in connection with the application of this Law [116]. At the same time, the rights of minors (up to 18 years old) to:
  - free treatment in both state (municipal) and private healthcare institutions are not distributed, and free treatment in private hospitals should be taken care of by state authorities and local self-government bodies, this should be prescribed and they should be entrusted with financing the treatment of minors;
  - it is necessary that the terminology meets the requirements of the time, for example, it is necessary to introduce the concepts of:
    - “Drug addiction”;
    - dependence on psychoactive substances;
    - free provision of medicines;
- In general, at the level of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The Ministry of Health of Ukraine should create a working group and instruct it to work on the draft law of Ukraine “On Narcological Care” or include a separate section “Narcological Care” in the Law of Ukraine “On Psychiatric Care”;
- The main goal of the Law of Ukraine “On Measures to Counteract Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors and Their Abuse” is to conduct operational procurement, controlled delivery, and coercive actions against citizens who, because of ineffective counteraction to the drug trade, were involved in the use of psychoactive substances prohibited for circulation. This requires the development of the Law of Ukraine “On Narcological Care” or its introduction as a separate section “Narcological Care” and inclusion in the Law of Ukraine “On Psychiatric Care”.

Specialists in the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, while reforming secondary education, are initiating innovations so that from 2027, using the example of vocational education



institutions, schools will have the opportunity to introduce the opportunity for graduating students to acquire a working specialty, i.e. [117]:

- To help determine professional choice in schools, the position of a career counselor will be introduced;
- Upon graduation, graduates could receive a certificate of complete secondary education and a specialist diploma in the chosen professional profile;
- Immediately after school, graduates will be able to find employment in labor collectives and work in their chosen specialty
- This will require changes in the teaching methodology of individual subjects and a radical and rather costly update of the material and technical base of educational institutions.

The following is relevant in the opinion of the authors:

The 1<sup>st</sup>, to appoint a part-time representative of stakeholders to the position of career counselor, companies that will be able to create a chain of legal relations "school-production-profession" and equip classrooms with appropriate equipment;

The 2<sup>nd</sup>, it is necessary to work out the cooperation of schools and vocational education, in which conditions have already been created for the training of relevant specialists in the relevant specialty;

The 3<sup>rd</sup>, significant shortcomings in the organization of counteraction to drug addiction in schools among minor schoolchildren today are:

- insufficient level of educational institutions in the field of individual drug prevention "teacher-psychologist-schoolchildren";
- schools are responsible for raising spirituality, morality, legal culture, and legal awareness in the school environment;
- in schools it is necessary to create favorable conditions for the work of sections (at the expense of state authorities and local governments): sports, aircraft modeling; embroidery; veterinary; pharmaceutical; medical, etc.;
- requires the development of a range of leisure activities, the expansion of the number of cultural, sports and other leisure facilities, the real promotion of a healthy lifestyle;
- improving at the legislative level the issue of mandatory medical examination of minor schoolchildren at the place of study or work, the development of programs to ensure the activities of various institutions for the detection of mental disorders, and if necessary, the rehabilitation (anonymously) of drug addicts and their return to normal life;
- strengthening state control over compliance with current legislation on the circulation of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, medicines with psychoactive properties, as well as the sphere of the gaming business and the Internet.

As authors suggest with other scientists, it is necessary to introduce an updated terminology and combine the two branches of medical law and pharmaceutical law into one branch of law in the fields of medicine and pharmacy (medico-pharmaceutical law) – this is a set of legal norms that regulate relations arising in the field of health care and the pharmaceutical industry during pharmaceutical activities related to the circulation of medicines of all classification and legal, nomenclature and legal, clinical and pharmacological groups.

Law in the fields of medicine and pharmacy is a set of legal norms that regulate relations arising in the field of health care and pharmaceutical activities. It covers issues related to:

Medical care:

- ✓ patients' rights, obligations of medical professionals, licensing of medical practice, medical insurance, liability for harm caused to health.

Pharmaceutical activities:

- ✓ production, circulation, storage, sale of medicines, licensing of pharmaceutical activities, advertising of medicines.

Ethical and deontological aspects:

- ✓ professional ethics of medical and pharmaceutical workers, rights, and obligations of patients in the context of treatment and pharmaceutical care.

Medical and pharmaceutical law is closely related to other branches of law, civil, administrative, and criminal.

Some key aspects regulated by this branch:

Patient rights:

- access to medical care, obtaining information about health status, consent to medical intervention, protection of personal data.

Obligations of medical workers:

- ❖ provision of quality medical care, observance of medical confidentiality, ensuring patient safety.

Licensing and accreditation:

- issuance of licenses for medical and pharmaceutical activities, accreditation of medical institutions.

Pharmaceutical safety:

- quality control of medicines, prevention of falsification, ensuring safe circulation of medicines.

Advertising of medicines and medical products:

- ✓ regulation of advertising of medicines, protection of consumers from unfair advertising.

Medico-pharmaceutical law is of great importance for ensuring the rights and safety of patients, as well as for regulating pharmaceutical activities.

Thus, we conducted forensic and pharmaceutical studies of the level of illicit trafficking of psychoactive substances and the consequences associated with the spread of addictive and related health disorders among minors and youth. There are certain risks for the deterioration of psychoneurological (mental), public health. This requires state authorities and local governments to strengthen and increase funding, medical and pharmaceutical assistance, as well as carrying out measures of physical therapy, occupational therapy, physical education (sports medicine) and rehabilitation assistance to prevent depression, stress, which are the basis of the disease, and as a result, eliminate the causes and conditions that contribute to suicidal behavior among the carriers of the state's gene pool.

**Conclusions.** The problem of illicit trafficking of psychoactive substances and their abuse by minors and youth in Ukraine remains insufficiently studied from the standpoint of an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. It is necessary to implement comprehensive forensic-pharmaceutical, forensic-narcological, forensic-psychiatric and expert-forensic research in regions with the highest risks (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, etc.), in order to study the cause-and-effect relationships between drug crime, psychoactive substance abuse, the development of mental disorders and suicidal behavior in accordance with the ICD-11.

To effectively combat these phenomena, minors should be provided with free medical, pharmaceutical and rehabilitation assistance at the state level. This requires strengthening the role of medical-pharmaceutical law as a single comprehensive legal branch that regulates legal relations in the field of health care and pharmacy. It is necessary to establish in regulations terms such as "drug addiction", "dependence on psychoactive substances", "free provision of medicines".

There is an urgent need for a legislative initiative to improve the Law of Ukraine "On Measures to Counteract Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors and Their Abuse" taking into account the rights of children and adolescents to guaranteed free care, including in private medical institutions.

It is proposed to create an inter-sectoral working group under the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine to develop a separate Law of Ukraine "On Narcological Care" or include the relevant section in the Law of Ukraine "On Psychiatric Care". The law should not only establish standards of care, but also provide for the possibility of operational intervention, controlled delivery, and protection of the rights of persons who have become victims of drug trafficking.

The comprehensive implementation of these measures will increase the effectiveness of the protection of children and youth, strengthen the public health system, and ensure interdepartmental

coordination on the basis of current legislation, in particular: Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Public Health System”; Article 4 of the Law of Ukraine “Fundamentals of the Legislation of Ukraine on Health Care”; Article 5 of the Law of Ukraine “On Psychiatric Care”.

It is necessary to introduce an updated terminology and combine the two branches of medical law and pharmaceutical law into one branch of law in medical and pharmaceutical law – this is a set of legal norms that regulate relations that arise in the field of health care and the pharmaceutical industry during medical and pharmaceutical, rehabilitation, social and psychological activities related to the circulation of medicines of all clinical and pharmacological, classification and legal, nomenclature and legal groups.

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