Scientific Center of Children’s Health –
leader of the federal pediatric healthcare

Moscow
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Scientific Center of Children’s Health –
250 years for the good of children’s health in Russia

Two and a half centuries in the history of the first children’s hospital in the country is a vivid proof of formation, development and succession of children’s health protection service, which appeared in Imperial Russia, consolidated in Soviet Russia and received a new impetus in modern Russia.

The foundation of the Moscow Imperial Orphanage is the time when the state child health care system began in Russia. This long-standing institution was transformed into the Scientific Center of Children’s Health as a result of a range of reforms and reorganizations of the XX century.
The measures to save children from starvation were first being made during the reforms of Peter the First. The idea not only to save life, but also to bring up charity children to become good citizens evolved further in the Age of the Enlightenment.

It was 1 September 1763 that Russian Empress Catherine the Great signed the Manifesto on establishing a «Foundling Hospital» with a children’s hospital and a hospital for poor puerperae in Moscow, which has been historically known as the Moscow Imperial Orphanage. «This charitable and godly state institution is for saving life and educating infants born in poverty in a way that they are useful for the society and it will forever stay under special Monarchic patronage and care…».

Since the Orphanage’s foundation, its organizer – a famous scientist and statesman I.I. Betskoy – introduced advanced (though rare then) principles of rendering medical help, such as succession of obstetric and neonatal services (the Orphanage included a maternity hospital and a children’s hospital), infant nutrition control and observation of strict sanitary-epidemiologic measures, together with the first head doctor C. Mertens (German-French). Thus, Dr. Mertens organized a special isolation ward for new orphaned children received into the Orphanage during the plague epidemic in Moscow (1771-1772). In that department, children remained under doctoral observation for a month and could only be transferred to a department with other healthy children only if there were no signs of the disease. All other inmates were examined daily.
and isolated into a special isolation ward on the smallest signs of the disease. The personnel were forbidden to go to the city during the epidemic. The measures taken allowed avoiding the plague epidemic among the children. It is logical that the Orphanage’s first scientific publication – Dr. Mertens’s monograph «Treatise on the plague epidemic in Moscow in 1771» published in Paris in 1784 – described not only plague diagnostics and treatment, but also listed the first such complex of preventive measures, which allowed stopping the spread of the terrible disease.

The institution has survived numerous dramatic situations. During the war against Napoleon, the Imperial Orphanage was spared thanks to the heroic effort of its personnel when the French army occupied Moscow. Not only the Orphanage’s inmates, but also wounded soldiers of the Russian and French armies found help and shelter at the Orphanage’s hospital in that bad time. Our courageous colleagues reaffirmed the main doctoral precept – to exceptionally address the needs of patients regardless of their gender, race, nationality, language, descent, property status, job title, religion or beliefs.

Children’s morbidity and mortality, their dynamics and main causes have been accounted in detail at the Moscow Orphanage since the second half of XIX century. The first vaccination center of Russia was organized there. Variolation at the Moscow Orphanage appeared
only 4 years after E. Jenner had started smallpox vaccination in England. Since 1805 the institution had been ordered to produce and distribute smallpox vaccine around the country, variolate and teach variolation to all volunteers.

With the lapse of time, the Orphanage accumulated wide material on the course of diseases in children and methods of treating them. Doctors were actively studying certain areas of clinical and social pediatrics.

Imperial Orphanage also became the first medical center where obstetrics was not only one of the main activity areas, but was also studied as a subject. That is why the Moscow Orphanage may rightfully be called the cradle of national pediatrics and obstetrics. After the October Revolution of 1917, the new Soviet healthcare system was also aimed at preserving health of mothers and children. The main principles of the Soviet and the future Russian system of pediatric medical help were set by a great pediatrician, academician, professor G.N. Speranskiy. The Moscow Imperial Orphanage itself was transformed into the Institute of Pediatrics as a result of a range of reforms in the middle of XX century:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1763–1918</td>
<td>Moscow Imperial Orphanage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918–1922</td>
<td>House of Infant Protection</td>
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<td>1922–1940</td>
<td>State Research Institute of Maternity and Infancy Protection</td>
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<td>1940–1998</td>
<td>Institute of Pediatrics</td>
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<td>1998 onwards</td>
<td>Scientific Center of Children’s Health</td>
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In the second half of XX century the Institute of Pediatrics had successfully been developed as a scientific and clinical pediatric institution. The nephrology, hematology, allergology, surgery, gastroenterology, clinical virology, exercise therapy and sports medicine departments, functional diagnostics laboratory and many other departments first appeared in the 60s. Active and coordinated work of the contagious isolation ward’s personnel significantly contributed to the development of vaccinal prevention, thus reducing considerably children’s morbidity and mortality. In 1998 the Institute of Pediatrics and the Institute of Hygiene and Children’s and Adolescents’ Health Protection were merged into a single institution – Scientific Center of Children’s Health (SCCH).

Nowadays, the Center is comprised of 3 reserch Institutes – Institute of Pediatrics, Institute of Hygiene and Institute of Preventive Pediatrics and Medical Rehabilitation with a Consultative-Diagnostics and Rehabilitation Center. Thus, the unique and progressive idea of the Center’s director, academician A.A. Baranov, on rendering
diagnostic, medical, preventive and rehabilitation help together to children of 0-18 years of age in the conditions of both outpatient and inpatient care has become true. Nowadays, tens of thousands of small patients receive qualified medical help at the SCCH annually.

Today, in the XXI century, the SCCH is a constantly developing and evolving multi-profile federal-level institution, in which the development and implementation of scientific fundamentals for perfecting the whole health care system is being conducted. The Center is the core institution of the RAMS and Ministry of Health Pediatric Scientific Councils.

Scientific Center of Children’s Health is also the biggest center of postgraduate professional education and a base of the professional association of pediatricians – of the Union of Pediatricians of Russia.

The Center is confidently facing the future. The high technology clinic will start operating in 2013; it will multiply the range of the rendered surgical help to children and will also considerably broaden the Center’s diagnostic, medical and preventive capabilities.

Pediatricians have always been true to their history, venerated the traditions of national pediatrics and worked under the slogan «Preserving the children’s health – preserve Russia». 
1763 – 2013