

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF PATIENTS AT STARAYA RUSSA  
RESORT IN THE 1870-1880S**

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**Abstract**

The article deals with one of the problems of functioning of provincial medical institutions in pre-revolutionary Russia. The author traces the work of the mineral water resort in Staraya Russa in 1870-1880, emphasizing its role as a medical institution for poor and low-income patients. Special attention is paid to the pricing policy of the resort management. The article analyzes the already known and newly discovered materials, discusses possible reasons why the Starorussky Mineralnye Vody resort has become one of the leading water treatment centers in the North-West of Russia, and why it continues to be a prominent phenomenon in the field of medical services at the present time. Based on the discovered materials, an approximate contingent of patients treated at the old Russian mineral water resort in 1870-1880 was established. The article assesses the current practice of pricing policy and, in General, the economic activity of the mineral water resort in Staraya Russa in 1870-1880. Based on the study, the authors conclude that the Straya Russa mineral water resort became one of the most accessible centers of water and mud treatment in the North - West of Russia in 1870-1880, especially for low-income segments of the population. Of particular importance is the practice of providing services at the state (state expense) to such vulnerable segments of the population as the lower ranks of the tsarist army, children from orphanages and the poorest "Philistines" (residents) who received treatment for free.

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*Keywords:* Charity, mineral water, Novgorod region, pricing, resort, Staraya Russa



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## **1. Introduction**

Staraya Russa is one of the oldest resorts in Russia. Since ancient times, its mineral springs were more used for salt digestion, but even then the population used local waters for medicinal purposes (Rokhel, 1839). After the decline of salt production at the beginning of the XIX century, the healing properties of Staraya Russa mineral waters began to attract more and more attention.

## **2. Problem Statement**

This problem has remained on the periphery of researchers' attention. There are no special works on this issue, with the exception of individual articles in local publications that do not contain a deep analysis of the issue, although they involve statistical materials (Borisova & Ierusalimsky, 2009; Drobyshevsky, 1995; Kisilevich, 2017; Kovalev, 2019; Voskresenskiy, 1839; Weber, 1882). At the same time, researchers do not set themselves the task of analyzing the profitability of the old Russian resort of mineral waters, the sources of its income, and the main analysis is made on the useful qualities of mineral waters and mud. The problem of the social composition of people receiving treatment was raised only in connection with the direct description of the hospital's activities. If in Soviet times, the analysis of the contingent of resort residents was carried out, then in relation to the pre-revolutionary period, this was practically not done, but statistics of those treated are still available and can be used for scientific research. In connection with the commercialization of medical services, this issue is particularly relevant and can help solve many problems of modern resort management.

## **3. Research Questions**

The activity of the old Russian mineral water resort in 1870-1880 raises a number of questions for researchers. 1. What were the main principles on which the activities of the old Russian resort were based? 2. What was the composition of the contingent of people who were treated at the resort? 3. What were the resort's revenues and expenses? 4. Was the old Russian resort a profitable, profitable institution? 5. What categories of people received preferential treatment at the resort? 6. What impact did the resort's activities have on the social life of the population of Staraya Russa?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to study the social composition of patients at the mineral water resort in Staraya Russa in the 1870s and 1880s, the practice of obtaining various procedures, as well as the principles of forming a strategy for the resort, based on the characteristics of the social structure of the population of Staraya Russa and, in General, the North-West of the Russian Empire.

## **5. Research Methods**

Materials about the resort were deposited mainly in two GANO funds: on pre-revolutionary activities in the fund 415 and on work after the revolution in the fund 1068 (GANO, n.d. a, b).

The fund deposited materials of the old Russian assessment Commission on the assessment of real estate estates alienated for the development of the resort (including the noblewoman L. F. Dostoevsky) (1900— 1901); information about medical personnel (1910), correspondence about the appointment of employees of the resort, payment of benefits (1910); income and expenditure estimates and financial reports (1910-1916), documents (reports, statements, notifications, invoices) on the state of the resort and its audit; journal of incoming papers (1863-1864). the Fund also contains reports on the survey of mineral waters (1909-1910), on the economic situation and activities of the old Russian resort (1908-1910, 1916-1917); estimates, statements of income and cash flow, exacting statements, invoices harvested forest materials; correspondence about the maintenance of patients (1909-1914.) and wounded; statement on the number of treated on the resort, number of procedures, lists of past treatment (1900, 1904-1909 years); materials on the sale of therapeutic agents for nonresident patients and pharmacies; invoices, accounts, correspondence about the shipment of pine-scented salt, fallopian brine, mineral water and dirt to pharmacies and patients; about granting the right to free use of baths and showers of the children's medical colony in Staraya Russa (1900); correspondence about the conditions of treatment, including the provision of free treatment.

Also, materials on the activities of the Staraya Russa resort can be found in fund 138 (office of the Novgorod Governor, 1803-1916) as part of information on the state of medical institutions for 1847-1848.

The fund deposited a variety of materials for a wide period: orders for the management of Staraya Russa mineral waters and individual sanatoriums. Materials on the work of the Resort Council and Board (1919-1921). Information about lending to the resort, resort economy. Correspondence about the lease of land plots, inventory, fuel supply to the resort (1918-1920). Cases and correspondence about the maintenance of the sanatorium, remuneration of employees and equipment (1918-1921). Materials about subsidiary enterprises of the resort (state farm and dairy farm), about food supply for " patients and employees of the resort. Information and correspondence about the accommodation of patients and the organization of their food (1919). Minutes of meetings of doctors of the resort. Information about the state of the medical part of the resort (1920-1921). Reports on the number of patients. Materials on the appointment of balneological treatment for patients. Minutes of meetings, decisions of the local Committee of the professional Union of resort employees. Protocols and cases of commissions for the maintenance of children who arrived from starving areas of the Volga region (1921-1922) and other cases.

Materials on the activities of the party organization of the Staraya Russa resort were deposited in GANINO (and are also of considerable value for studying the history of the resort).

Thus, a certain part of the materials on the history of the old Russian resort was deposited in the Novgorod archives, which can be used to study its history and introduced into scientific circulation. However, the problem requires further research.

## **6. Findings**

The Staraya Russa mineral water resort was founded in 1828. It was located on the South-Eastern outskirts of Staraya Russa on the right Bank of the Porusya river (a tributary of the Polist river). The project "Establishment of mineral waters" in Staraya Russa was approved by Emperor Nicholas I on August 26, 1830. The Resort was under the jurisdiction of the military Department (1828-1854), the specific Department (1854-1865), the Ministry of internal Affairs (from February 19, 1865), the Ministry of

agriculture and state property (from 1899), the Ministry of trade and industry (from 1905). The resort became the property of the state.

What were the main principles on which the activities of the Staraya Russa resort were based? Although it was for a long time a military medical institution for military settlements (arable soldiers), it never served only the military. Moreover, over time, the bulk of those who used the waters began to be civilians. So, in 1870-1880, the lower ranks of the military Department were treated in it on average 450-500 people a year, and the number of civilians was stable at about 1300-1800 people a year, officers 50-60 a year.

In addition to the soldiers who were treated for free at the resort, the Novgorod Governor annually issued up to 400 free tickets to "really poor" patients. Everyone else had to pay for the treatment. Children under the age of four were charged half the cost of bathing in children's portable baths. A full course of baths during the season for adults cost about 20 rubles. Separately, you could buy tickets for "cold bathing" in the lake: a season ticket – 3 rubles, a half-season ticket - 1 ruble 50 kopeeks, a separate swim – 10 kopeeks.

What was the cost of individual procedures? For baths of different recipes prescribed by a doctor, it was from 15 to 60 kopeeks., and the most expensive was from a special coniferous decoction. Thus, the cost of bathing was quite high, and people of average and higher income could be treated at the resort. In this regard, Rachel first tried not to raise the price of treatment, the increase will only be in 1881 and in 1886.

The high cost of bathing at the resort was explained by the high costs of preparing mud, decocting coniferous extract, heating water, and so on. So, up to 6 packs of therapeutic mud were used for a mud bath. On a coniferous bath, two gangs of overcooking and 1 gang of driving pine needles and cones were required, and it was impossible to replace the overcooking with overtaking. If desired, the concentration could be increased, but for each gang over the norm, 10 kopeeks were paid. If the concentration of mud and coniferous baths was to be increased by order of the doctor, no additional fee was charged for this.

Baths were always to be prepared in the presence of the patient. On cold days, if the cabin with the bath was not sufficiently heated by steam, the bather could instruct the servants to heat the room. The bathing time was 1 hour.

Dr. Rokhel did not publish detailed reports on income and expenses, the amount of water used, etc., so it is difficult to judge the real profitability of the resort during its management (1868-1890). In this case, the simple statistics of visits to the resort treated does not give an idea of the intensity of their acceptance of procedures. However, some information about this appeared in the press after the audit of 1890 (extracts from the report of the Novgorod provincial medical inspector, Dr. S. V. Tilicheev (Rokhel, 1881)), as a result of which he was removed from management, and the lease with him was terminated.

So, in the season of 1890, the resort was open only from May 3 to August 19, which was 70 bathing days. Of the total number of 1519 patients treated, there were 515 paid patients, 435 free patients, 60 officers, and 509 lower ranks. 127 people could take baths at the same time (not counting the lower ranks in the pools). A total of 58,765 baths were taken (39 for each resort), of which 20,280 were paid, 21,941 were free (of which 18,290 were civil, 3,651 were officers), and 16,544 were lower ranks. It follows that

for each paid procedure there was one free (not counting swimming in the pool), i.e. the resort was half operating at a loss.

On average, up to 700 baths per day (24 buckets) and a pool of 7500 buckets were prepared, which required up to 50 thousand buckets per day (including baths for washing off dirt). In the season, this amounted to 3 million 600 thousand buckets.

However, the resort received significant income from other sources, primarily from entertainment, the main of which were music, dance and restaurant services. For example, all bathers, with the exception of children under the age of 14, paid 4 rubles per season for servants, music, and Newspapers, and a ticket to attend dance parties was issued free of charge. Family members of resort guests who wanted to use Newspapers and music in the garden, as well as attend evenings at the "station", each paid 2 rubles per season. For officers who were in command, and for persons who took baths ("bathed») according to the poverty certificates, this payment was mandatory if they wanted to use the Newspapers, attend family evenings at the train station, and go to the garden while the orchestra was playing. All other persons who did not take baths used the same rules, that is, one person paid 4 rubles, and his family members paid 2 rubles. Persons who did not have season tickets paid one ruble for admission to the dance evening each time (Rokhel, 1881).

Thus, the resort was also the cultural center of the city, a place of leisure for the vacationing and treated public. Moreover, according To S. N. Parenago, the number of people actually treated did not exceed 5% of the total number of people who bought a season ticket (as cited in Drobyshevsky, 1995). The Manager of the Novgorod branch of the State Bank, L. V. Astakhov, believed that Staraya Russa in the eyes of the public was not even a resort, but rather a very good dacha place, where people with average incomes came mainly – officials, officers (mostly pensioners) and people of liberal professions. Attendance, however, grew rather slowly – from 1,519 in 1890 to 4,600 in 1913 (as cited in Vasiliev, 1998).

Drinking mineral waters (including imported ones) as a method of treatment was not developed much, although the resort had a special pavilion for their sale. There was also limited demand for locally produced kumys of "excellent quality".

An important issue of profitability of the resort remained the provision of a large number of medical procedures for free. So, since the hospital was located in the military Department, its services have traditionally been used by many military personnel: annually about 450 lower ranks, 40-60 officers and (until the end of the 70s of the XIX century) 75 cadets. In addition, as noted above, the Governor could issue certificates for free use of baths for 400 people "really poor" (at the request of the leadership of state, provincial and educational institutions for family employees) (Andogskiy & Seligerskiy, 1882). Doctors who practice at the resort and their relatives, as a rule, were also treated at the resort for free. To compensate for these expenses, the tenant was paid 4,000 rubles annually. However, the "free patients" did not use common soldier pools, but separate soldier and cadet baths, since it was unprofitable and difficult to heat the water specifically for them.

In this regard, the tenant Rokhel (1881) was again met halfway – the cost of paid baths was doubled and an additional subsidy of 8150 rubles per year was assigned for servicing the steam engine, which, however, was never purchased.

When the mineral waters administration collected statistical data on the number of resort residents and their income, it turned out that up to 50 children from the colony and orphanages and up to 60 people used free treatment in soldiers' baths. "really poor" (almost all are local residents). The rest of the people who received free treatment were not really poor, because the minimum expenses for travel, housing, food, etc. they were about 150-200 rubles per person per season (not counting the cost of treatment-up to 30 rubles). Consequently, real poor people from other cities would not be able to be treated at the resort, since only free baths were provided, and other expenses were not compensated for them. Thus, most of the privileged resort residents were from the middle bureaucracy (local and St. Petersburg), as well as from the families of doctors and officers. Those who checked the work of the resort considered that: "the smaller part is made up of primary school teachers, artisans and retired lower ranks." (Andogsky & Seligersky, 1890, pp. 37).

The Commission estimated that the treatment of 60 officers in the 1890 season cost the Treasury about 1,120 rubles, 500 lower ranks, about 3,210 rubles, i.e. a total of 4,330 rubles. At the same time, 435 civilians were provided with free baths for 10,420 rubles and at half price – for 5,210 rubles (Andogskiy & Seligerskiy, 1890). The Commission also noted a significant decrease in the number of visitors to the resort: if with the holding in 1878 on the railway to Staraya Russa, their number for 7-8 years was 1600-1800 people. (with the military – more than 2200 people), then in 1888-1338, and in 1890 – 950 people. (with the military – 1519) (Andogsky & Seligersky, 1890).

Taking into account these circumstances, as well as the fact that the tenant practically did not invest in the development of the hospital or in current repairs, the Commission considered it necessary to carry out serious work to improve the material and technical base of the resort, build new medical buildings, a restaurant and a dance hall. In this regard, it was proposed to reduce the number of free baths and, accordingly, increase the number of at least half.

After Dr. Rochel in 1890-1895, the hospital was managed by the provincial doctor S. V. Tilicheyev, who carried out significant work on the improvement of the resort, the development of its infrastructure and the improvement of the medical process. By this time, he was already a fairly large medical institution. In 1909, S. N. Parenago, who worked at the resort until 1929, became the water Director (as cited in Drobyshevsky, 1995).

Writers F. M. Dostoevsky and A. M. Gorky, an outstanding literary critic N. A. Dobrolyubov, and D. I. Mendeleev repeatedly visited the health resort in Staraya Russa.

## **7. Conclusion**

The resort, founded as a Spa for the military department, quickly began to serve civilians, whose number significantly exceeded the number of military officials treated.

Preferential treatment of certain groups of visitors occupied a large place in the resort's activities. In addition to the soldiers who were treated for free at the resort, the Novgorod Governor annually issued up to 400 free tickets to poor people. Everyone else had to pay for the treatment. For children under the age of four, baths cost half the cost.

The resort's income consisted of two components—the actual provision of medical services and services for accommodation, food, leisure and entertainment. Revenues for the medical part (in 1890 –

14,261 rubles. 70 kopecks) were formed from the sale of season tickets – 1,798 rubles., the rest - from the payment of baths. 2497 rubles. they were received for: furnished rooms and restaurant rent-900 rubles, theater maintenance-900 rubles, for the premises of a pastry shop-175 rubles, for the premises of a photo with an apartment-225 rubles, for shooting galleries and skittles-125 rubles, for the rent of a store-75 rubles, for counters for the sale of local goods-50 rubles, for the sale of flowers-16 rubles 90 kopecks, miscellaneous receipts-30 rubles 70 kopecks. Total revenues amounted to 16 799 RUB. Also from the Treasury, the former tenant Rogel was issued 17,300 rubles. In total, the total parish was 34,059 rubles. 30 kopecks (Andogskiy & Seligerskiy, 1890). The expenses of the resort (calculated, however, only for may 5 – September 1, 1890) were made up of three groups: 1) annual Expenses: salaries for permanent employees, maintenance of horses and greenhouses, repair of buildings, etc. – 8363 rubles. 52 kopecks.; 2) seasonal expenses, for summer time: salaries for seasonal workers, bath attendants, heating, lighting, orchestra, entertainment, office, etc. – 9517 rubles). Emergency: initial acquisition, improvement of the resort, etc. – 8112 rubles, total – 25,993 rubles. After deducting 8,000 rubles spent immediately upon acquisition, the maintenance of the resort in the season cost 18 thousand rubles, and for the year-25-26 thousand rubles. (without management expenses) (Andogskiy & Seligerskiy, 1890). The resort in Staraya Russa was the cultural center of the city, a place of leisure for the vacationing and treated public. The number of people actually treated did not exceed 5% of the total number of people who paid for the course.

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