

Scientific article

УДК 94(47)+94(470.41)+930.23+61(091)

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-2-569-580

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Hospital History Sheets as a Historical Source: Clinical Records of the Surgical Department of the First Workers' Hospital in Kazan 1918–20

Abstract

The history of medicine and healthcare of the young Soviet state is a wide and developing research field. The topic is significant, as researchers face the necessity of comprehensive and profound study of the practices of the new Soviet society building. One aspect of this research

field is studying health care system. However, the scope of data used to address this problem needs to be expanded. The article analyses clinical records of the surgical department of the First Workers' Hospital in Kazan. It introduces them into scientific use as a new source for medical history. The specificity of this type of data lies in its dual origins. On the one hand, it is a source containing standard (medical) information, and on the other, a resource possessing unique private (personal) data. The potential of studying this kind of data can be unlocked by using modern approaches. The article describes and characterises the analysed data and raises important interpretative questions. Analysis of place and role of clinical records as a product of professional community of doctors in the new Soviet state is central here. Time and geographical frameworks are defined by events that were important to Soviet authorities. In 1918, Kazan was a strategic object of the Civil War. The city was one of the first large multinational provincial university cities to implement Bolshevik ideas. Thus, the study covers the period from September 1918 to May 27, 1920. The author concludes that clinical records can be used as a source on social history, as well as on history of science. Their data provide illustrative materials, it can answer many questions about transformation of medical professional community in the new Soviet state.

Keywords

Hospital history sheets as a historical source, First Workers' Hospital in Kazan, history of medicine, health care, Kazan, Civil War in Russia, source study, case study.

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Submitted 14.12.2020, published (for citation):

KHAZIAKHMETOVA, R. R. Skorbnye listy kak istoricheskii istochnik. Na primere istorii boleznei khirurgicheskogo otdeleniya Pervoi rabochei bol'nitsy g. Kazani 1918-1920 gg. [Hospital History Sheets as a Historical Source: Clinical Records of the Surgical Department of the First Workers' Hospital in Kazan 1918–20. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2021, no. 2, pp. 569-580. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-2-569-580

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .