Kharkiv National
Medical University

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

of Young Scientists and Medical Students

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Kharkiv, Ukraine



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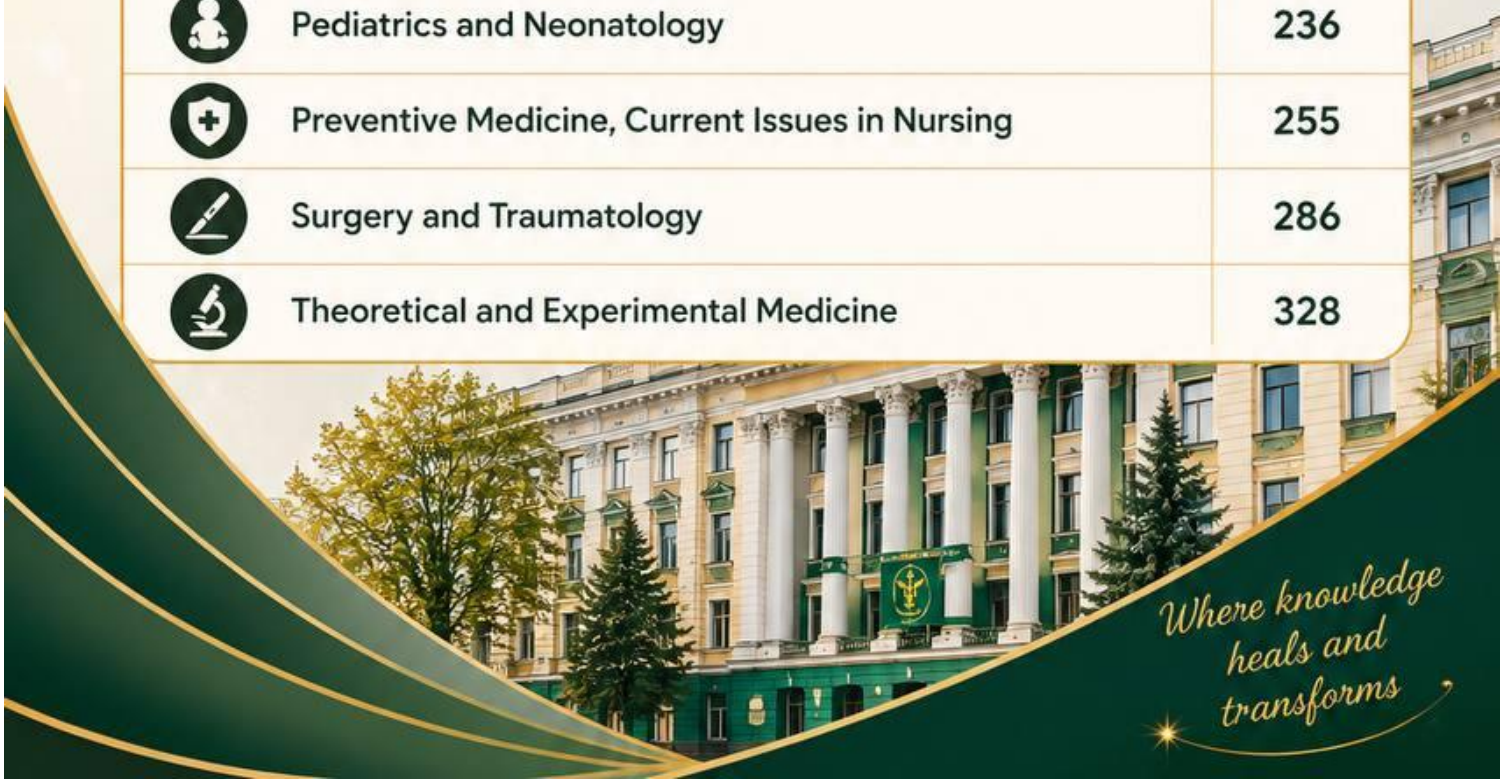

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DENTISTRY AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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Dentistry and Maxillofacial Surgery

Grygorov Mykhailo

THE EVOLUTION OF DENTAL EDUCATION AND CARE ORGANIZATION IN UKRAINE (LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)

Kharkiv, Ukraine

Kharkiv National Medical University Scientific advisor: Ass. prof. Martynenko Nataliya

Introduction. The turn of the 20th century was a pivotal period for Ukrainian medicine, marked by the transformation of dentistry from a localized craft into an academic, scientific discipline. This study analyzes the structural reforms, the role of public professional societies, and the transition to a state-controlled, unified system of dental education and public health care in Ukraine.

In the late 19th century, dental care in Ukraine's university cities (Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv) was highly fragmented. According to the 1891 imperial decree, two tiers of non-physician specialist existed: "dentists" (trained via private apprenticeships) and " dental physicians" (trained in private schools for 2.5 years). Neither held general medical degrees. True maxillofacial specialists, or "odontologists", possessed higher medical education but were scarce. Consequently, professional care remained an expensive luxury for the urban wealthy, while the rural population relied on Zemstvo doctors and feldshers.

During this era, scientific-practical odontological societies in Odesa, Kyiv, and Kharkiv became the primary drivers of progress. They published influential journals (e.g., Practical Dentistry, Dental Monthly), organized congresses, and introduced preventative initiatives. However, systemic issues prevailed. At a 1913 meeting, dentist I. Gershansky reported catastrophic childhood caries rates (up to 95.5% in Kharkiv) and contrasted Germany's 200 free clinics with Odesa's single charitable facility.

Before 1917, care for ordinary citizens relied solely on uncoordinated, private donations. The October Revolution of 1917 brought radical changes led by Mykola Semashko, introducing a centralized, tax-funded, and nationalized healthcare system. Private practice was abolished, and dental care was declared a universal, free public right. The fundamental turning point occurred with the Decree of October 1, 1918, which reformed dental education. Private dental schools were

closed, and Odontological Departments were established within university medical faculties. Students now spent their first three years integrated with general medical students, acquiring enhanced clinical training. Specialized sub-departments emerged: pathology/therapy of dental diseases, prosthetic techniques, and jaw/mouth surgery. In 1919, Professor M. O. Astakhov organized the Department of Odontology at the Donetsk Medical Institute.

Despite military and political instability, the Kyiv State Odontological Institute was chartered in 1920 (headed by L. Bileikin), followed by the Kharkiv Faculty of Odontology in 1921. Odontological societies played a vital role here, providing the initial teaching staff, curricula, and material bases.By June 1920, aggressive mobilization and rapid structural shifts caused severe shortages in dental personnel, particularly in rural areas. To combat this, a temporary resolution resumed the operation of state-controlled dental schools from November 1, 1920. The curriculum was extended to 3 years, introducing rigorous new disciplines like bacteriology, X-ray diagnostics, and maxillofacial trauma management.

Conclusion. The transition from private, unregulated apprenticeships to a statemanaged, academically rigorous system laid the foundation for the modern Ukrainian scientific dental school, elevating dentistry to an independent branch of medical science.