

## **Republic of Moldova**



### **Presentation for the UN Universal Periodic Review**

**The Association for the Support of Children with Convulsive Syndrome is a nongovernmental organization for parents of children suffering from epilepsy and other disabilities, which defends the rights and promote the observance of rights of these children.**

## **Chapter I**

Non discrimination

### **The Problem**

The Association for the Support of Children with Convulsive Syndrome exposes concerns on issues relating to stigmatization and precocious invalidity of children with convulsive syndrome, epilepsy. Epilepsy is considered a mental illness by the Moldovan society.

According to World Health Organization classification, epilepsy is classified in neurological diseases. In the Republic of Moldova epilepsy is considered a mental illness, because children with epilepsy, starting at the age of 2-3 years old are required to be consulted, examined and treated by the psychiatrist. Subsequently, children who require a degree of disability are obligated to be hospitalized in the Children's Ward of the Republican Psychiatric Hospital in town Codru, Chisinau municipality. Therefore, epilepsy categorized as a mental illness, leads to the stigmatization of these children and their families, segregation and exclusion from social life, and, as a result, reduced opportunities to further integrate into society and to lead a normal life.

Given that anticonvulsant treatment should be continuous and of long duration, and that the parents usually can not bear the cost of medications, most people give up their children's treatment and investigations, which eventually leads to worsening of the child's health, to the invalidity. Another situation is when the parent of the child insistently persuades for his child be provided the degree of disability (regardless of the form of seizures), to be able to receive a pension or some other compensation, to cover costs for investigations and treatment, or even to receive free anticonvulsant drugs from the Psychiatric Hospital. And, the Psychiatric Hospital can occasionally offer them medications, if they have the required ones, or perhaps they can provide a different medication, available at that time, which can be tested by the patient, and of course, which can often lead to worsening of the child's health.

## **Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Moldova**

1. To exclude epilepsy from the classification of mental diseases and to include it only in the category neurological diseases.
2. To close the epilepsy bedding for children in the Psychiatric Hospital and to include bedding only in neurological wards of hospitals for children in Moldova.
3. Anticonvulsants and antiepileptic treatment for children to be carried out only by Neuropediatric physicians.
4. The anticonvulsant, antiepileptic treatment and investigations necessary for children with seizures between 0-5 years old to be provided by the state free of charge.
5. To sensitize the society on the fact that the epilepsy is a neurological disease and not a mental one.

## **Chapter II**

Protection from abuse and neglect.

### **The Problem:**

Autistic children are in a worrisome situation in terms of medical and educational assistance.

Autistic children in Moldova are considered to be seriously ill. The medical system does not take into account the particularities and needs of such a child, which is treated only from the medical perspective of a mental illness, recommending a treatment for reducing aggression by drugs leading to the inhibition of behavior and mental development. Subsequently this leads to mental retardation of these children.

When it comes to the award of the degree of disability, this procedure requires the hospitalization of the child with Autism with the Republican Psychiatric Hospital in the town Codru, Chisinau municipality. Subsequently, the child is placed in the room for the most serious mentally ill children, are being tortured by tying bed or worse, in the ward there is a nurse watching over the children and if children do not behave properly or become aggressive, they are being applied blows all over their body with hard objects (parents' stories and photos of children who had been beaten, after discharge). During hospitalization, parents are forbidden to visit the ward or to be with their children to care. Unsanitary and inhumane conditions are disastrous; on that floor, the toilet and the bathroom do not function.

Autistic children are awarded the degree of disability, to be reviewed by the Medical Commission of Vitality Expertise every two years, although it is scientifically proven that autism is a disability for the rest of life and will never be treated.

Subsequently, the state will not have to spend money on hospitalization and treatment of children with autism in the hospital and the parents will not have to spend fortunes on "anti-autism" drugs. Autistic children have no health problems, they are not sick; they have troubles communicating with those around them. Autistic child's condition can be judged largely by psychologists and special educators.

### **Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Moldova**

1. Medical authorities should monitor the observance of physical and mental integrity of children in medical institutions.
2. To attract to criminal liability the employees that applied torture, inhuman or degrading treatment.
3. To confer the degree of disability to children with autism for life.
4. To remove the periodic medical review procedure every 2 years, to assess the degree of disability for autistic children.
5. Where the hospitalization of children with autism is required, sections for children to be enhanced with: salons for a single patient and his personal assistant with adequate sanitation and hygiene.  
The wards where autistic children will be placed shall be supplemented with qualified personnel: special educator or psychologist.
6. To exclude severe medication treatment for children with Autism.

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