

DOI 10.11603/1681-2786.2023.3.14217
УДК 613.86-055.2:355.01(477)

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IS THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF WOMEN WHO WENT ABROAD DURING THE FULL-SCALE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR REALLY HIGHER COMPARED TO WOMEN WHO STAYED IN UKRAINE?

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Purpose: to research the quality of life of different women: those who, despite the risks, remained in Ukraine, and those who were forced to move.

Materials and Methods. 376 young (25–44 years old) women were interviewed using WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. The questionnaire was distributed in the form of a Google form.

Results. Russia's military invasion of the sovereign European state Ukraine at the time of the democratic values dominance on the territory of Europe became a real challenge for the entire civilized world. Naturally, the war affects the emotional state, everyday life, public opinion, interpersonal relations, socio-economic situation, employment, public activity, all the factors that determine the quality of life. Despite the fact that most women do not take part in hostilities, they felt the consequences of the invasion no less acutely than men, who were forced to defend their homes from the first days of the war. A huge number of women were forced to leave their homes and rebuild their lives. For a woman, especially with minor children, this is a real challenge, because despite humanitarian aid from supporting countries, they are deprived of their families and friends, the part of life that inspires and supports them to the fullest extent.

The study showed that, in general, the quality of life of women who were forced to leave Ukraine and are in physical safety during the war is not higher than that of women who stayed at home and risk their lives every day. We tried to analyze which areas of women's lives were most affected by the war. Women who left Ukraine, despite feeling safe, suffer from a lack of microsocial support and are generally not satisfied with their physical and psychological well-being, which has an impact on the overall quality of a woman's life.

Conclusion. Women who stayed to live in Ukraine during the war experience anxiety much more often than women who left the country, but remain socially active, able to work and feel healthier.

KEY WORDS: **quality of life; women; war in Ukraine.**

Article was written within a Mobility Grant for Ukrainian Researches at the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine became a major social upheaval. The war has forever changed the quality of life of Ukrainians, its echoes will remain with us for a long time. The scale of these changes is unprecedented both for Ukraine and for the world in the perspective of decades.

As of February 1, 2022, the State Statistics Service estimated the population of Ukraine at approximately 41.1 million people. This number does not include the Crimean population, but other Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine are included. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, as of November 15, 2022, 15.3 million citizens left Ukraine. More than half of them – 7.7 million – returned, but 7.6 million Ukrainians are still abroad. These data were released by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Also, slightly more than 3 out of 7.6 million Ukrainians who are currently forced to live abroad are in the Russian Federation and Belarus. In particular, those who were forcibly deported there by the Russian occupiers already during the full-scale war [4, 7, 9].

The full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, which began on February 24, 2022 with Russia's treacherous attack on Ukraine, led to a phenomenon unprecedented since the Second World War – the mass migration of the population of the Ukrainian state and the emergence of a previously unknown phenomenon in Ukrainian society of many millions of forced migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers and emigrants. The history of Europe and the world over the last half century has undergone many powerful migration crises: the Afghan crisis (1979–1989), which provoked the emergence of more than 6 million refugees and emigrants; Venezuelan (2013–2019) – 3 million; Syrian (2019–2020) – almost 3 million people. Approximately 4.5 million of our compatriots are forced to live in European countries [1, 4].

According to the assessment of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), another 7.7 million citizens of Ukraine are considered internally displaced persons (IDPs), that is, they remained within the country, but had to leave their homes [4]. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

(MESU) reported that, according to statistics, about a quarter of all immigrants are schoolchildren or students [9]. However, the given data do not take into account those persons who are citizens of other countries and were on the territory of our state at the time of the start of the full-scale war. According to the UN map, there are more than 2.9 million IDPs in the west of Ukraine, 1.4 million in the central regions on the right bank of the Dnipro River, 1.3 million to the northeast of Kyiv, to the south near Kyiv and to the north from Odesa and Mykolaiv – 357,000 each, and on the Left Bank of the Dnipro River in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions – 857,000 [4, 9].

According to a UNHCR survey, 87 % of migrants are women with children, 65 % of women are of working age, from 18 to 59 years old. About 70 % of the interviewed migrants have higher education [4, 8]. In addition, 44 % of Ukrainian families are separated by forced evacuation during the war.

Against the background of such migration, discussions have arisen in Ukrainian society about who lives better: those who have fled abroad and are safe or those who have remained on the territory of Ukraine. On the one hand, the former have security, all the guarantees and support provided by the European Union, on the other hand, they miss their native homes and loved ones. On the one hand, there is a new culture, a foreign language, difficulty with finding work; on the other hand, there are explosions and air alarms in their hometowns. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, every Ukrainian woman has asked herself the question whether she should leave the country for the safety of herself and her children, or should she stay in her home next to her relatives and friends [2, 3, 5, 6]. We decided to investigate this issue by assessing the quality of life of young Ukrainian women, since it was women with children who migrated the most, saving them from the terrible consequences of the war, mostly they went abroad without husbands (due to the prohibition on men leaving Ukraine during the war), or due to the fact that their partners joined the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Purpose: to investigate the quality of life of young women who had to leave the country after February 24, 2022, and those who did not leave Ukraine.

Materials and Methods. To assess the quality of life, we chose the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire, which consists of 26 items and 4 areas (physical and psychological well-being, self-perception, microsocial support, social well-being). It is a reliable tool for assessing people's quality of life regardless of the social, cultural, demographic and political context.

376 young women (aged 25–44) were interviewed using WHOQOL-BREF. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. The questionnaire was distributed in the form of a Google form among women with higher education, a moderate level of professional activity, and an average level of income. Exclusion criteria for all participants were as follows: candidates who had difficulty understanding the content of the questionnaire, found it impossible to complete the questionnaire, or candidates who have a disease that

negatively affects the quality of life. The research sample is not representative of the population of Ukraine. The proportion of socio-demographic characteristics among the respondents does not reflect the proportion of these characteristics among the entire population of Ukraine. Taken this into account, the results of the survey cannot be considered in relation to the entire population of the country. Due to security risks, lack of free time, and possible lack of access to the Internet and technical means, the study sample may underrepresent people who are in occupied territories, in or near areas of hostilities and intense shelling, as well as female combatants. The respondents were divided into 2 groups: group 1 (n=176) – women who left the territory of Ukraine during the war (temporarily living in the territory of the European Union); group 2 (n=200) – women who did not leave their homes. We chose the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire, having obtained official permission for its use. All responses are evaluated on a 5-point scale: the higher the score – the better the quality of life. The points are calculated on a scale from 0 to 100. The survey was answered by the respondents assessing their feelings during the preceding four weeks. The collection of respondents lasted from 02/12/2022 to 30/12/2022.

Statistical processing of the research results was carried out using the Statistica 10 software package. As a measure of internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach α was calculated for the general totality, each domain and facet. For the entire sample, Cronbach α values were acceptable (> 0.7). Quantitative features are presented as arithmetic mean \pm standard error. Statistical probability was calculated using Student's t-test. Odds ratios with 95 % confidence interval for percentage relative values of the results. The difference in values was considered probable at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results. We often hear in social discussions about citizens of Ukraine who left after February 24, 2022, that they are better off (they are safe, they fled the war), such phrases reinforce the “survivor guilt” syndrome in citizens who left. Our results showed that women who left Ukraine have a lower quality of life ($62.9 \% \pm 9.3$) compared to women who did not go abroad ($66.7 \% \pm 9.1$). We were interested in why women who did not leave their homes have a higher quality of life compared to those who left the country, living without a sense of security and certainty in the future under constant bombardment and air raids. This questionnaire allowed us not only to evaluate, but also to understand why those who left Ukraine (gr. 1), regardless of expectations, have a lower quality of life than women who did not leave the country (gr. 2). Women who are outside of Ukraine really have a greater sense of security (gr. 1 – 3.4; gr. 2 – 2.9; $p = 0.000$), experience such negative feelings as bad mood, despair, anxiety, depression much less frequently (2.7; $p = 0.000$). On the other hand, those who did not leave their homeland are more satisfied with their health (gr. 1 – 2.9; gr. 2 – 3.2; $p = 0.02$), work capacity (gr. 1 – 2.8; gr. 2 – 3.3; $p = 0.03$), have better concentration of attention

(gr. 1 – 3.1; gr. 2 – 3.5; $p = 0.001$), are more satisfied with themselves (gr. 1 – 3.1; gr. 2 – 3.4; $p = 0.03$) and enjoy life more (gr. 1 – 3.0; gr. 2 – 3.6; $p = 0.0005$), they also feel more support from friends (gr. 1 – 3.4; gr. 2 – 3.9; $p = 0.000$), are more satisfied with personal relationships (gr. 1 – 3.2; gr. 2 – 3.6; $p = 0.009$) and sexual life (gr. 1 – 3.0; gr. 2 – 3.9; $p = 0.000$). We can talk about the tendency towards **unification and solidarity** in Ukrainian society. The full-scale war was a unifying experience for many people. It increased the need for **communication**, made it possible to establish and reassess relationships with relatives and friends, and even restore long-lost contacts. Togetherness increased, so the feeling of **unity** manifested itself in relations not only with relatives or friends, but also with people who are little known or even strangers. In these conditions, any conversation has become more valuable and important, microsocial support has become decisive in influencing the quality of life, in conditions of lack of social well-being and “the constancy of change” (“stable

instability”). Such powerful microsocial support allows you to get more pleasure from life, helps women to better perceive and accept themselves, this in turn improves psychological and, in turn, physical well-being, which in turn improves work capacity and again increases the quality of life.

Conclusions

Despite the higher level of social well-being and a sense of security, women who left Ukraine after February 24, 2022 have lower quality of life than those who remained in their homes. The latter are more satisfied with their physical and psychological well-being, self-perception, and microsocial support. To conclude, the old saying “East or west, home is best” works even in wartime.

Prospects for further research. This type of research allows not only to study women's health, but also to understand more deeply which factors have the greatest influence on it, and, accordingly, to build strategies for improving women's health in wartime.

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ЧИ ДІЙСНО ЯКІСТЬ ЖИТТЯ В ЖІНОК, ЩО ВІЇХАЛИ ЗА КОРДОН НА ЧАС ПОВНОМАСШТАБНОЇ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ, ВИЩА ПОРІВНЯНО З ЖІНКАМИ, ЩО ЗАЛИШИЛИСЯ НА ТЕРИТОРІЇ УКРАЇНИ?

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Мета: дослідження якості життя різних жінок: тих, які, попри ризики, залишилися в Україні, та тих, що вимушено переїхали.

Матеріали і методи. Було опитано 376 молодих (25–44 роки) жінок за допомогою опитувальника WHOQOL-BREF. Опитування було анонімним та добровільним. Анкета була розповсюджена у вигляді гугл-форми.

Результати. Військове вторгнення росії у суверенну європейську державу Україну в часи панування демократичних цінностей на теренах Європи стало справжнім викликом для всього цивілізованого світу. Закономірно, що війна впливає на емоційний стан, побут і повсякдення, громадську думку, міжлюдські стосунки, соціально-економічне становище, зайнятість, громадську активність, а ці всі фактори визначають якість життя. Незважаючи на те, що жінки в більшості не беруть участь у бойових діях, вони відчули наслідки вторгнення не менш гостро, ніж чоловіки, які були змушені захищати свої домівки із перших днів війни. Величезна кількість жінок була змушена покинути свої домівки та заново будувати своє життя. Для жінки, та ще й із неповнолітніми дітьми, це є справжнім випробуванням, адже, попри гуманітарну допомогу небайдужих країн, вони є позбавленими своїх родин та друзів, тобто частини життя, яка надихає та підтримує повною мірою.

Дослідження показало, що загалом якість життя жінок, що були змушені покинути Україну, та перебувають у фізичній безпеці в часі війни, не є вищою, ніж у жінок, що залишилися вдома і щоденно ризикують життям. Ми спробували проаналізувати, які саме сфери життя жінки максимально постраждали від війни. Жінки, що покинули Україну, попри відчуття безпеки, страждають від відсутності мікросоціальної підтримки та, загалом, не задоволені своїм фізичним та психологічним благополуччям, що і має вплив на загальну якість життя жінки.

Висновки. Жінки, що залишилися жити в Україні в час війни, значно частіше, ніж жінки, що покинули країну, переживають тривогу, проте залишаються працездатними, соціально активними та почуваються більш здоровими.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: якість життя; жінки; війна в Україні.

Рукопис надійшов до редакції 08.09.2023.

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