The study of socio-cultural influence on the perception of factors affecting health: comparative analysis of two regions of Russia

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Background. The perception, interpretation and conceptualization of one’s health are mediated by the system of cultural values and norms. Nowadays, the research of culturally mediated cognitive aspects of health and psychological well-being, the perception of health problems in different cultures, among immigrants and ethnic minorities is developing. This study presents the comparative analysis of perception of factors affecting health by population living in two Russian federal subjects.

Methods. The survey included participants from city of Moscow (48 people) and Kemerovo Region (52 people) between the ages of 18 and 53 (62 females and 38 males). The participants were asked to rank the following categories, from one to six, according to the rate of their influence on human health, in their opinion: (1) genetics, heredity; (2) a healthy lifestyle (good sleep, food, absence of bad habits); (3) good environmental conditions; (4) regular medical examination, timely referral to a doctor; (5) lack of stress or ability to cope with it; (6) financial well-being.

Findings. The perceptions of the most and the least important factors influencing health coincide in both samples, which is confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U-test. Respondents from both groups (Kemerovo region and Moscow) believe that the lifestyle has the greatest impact on human health ($U = 1187.0$; $p = 0.657$), and financial well-being is the least important ($U = 1206.5$; $p = 0.767$). The differences are manifested in the perception of such factors as genetics, heredity ($U = 925.0$; $p = 0.023$) and the environmental conditions ($U = 858.5$ $p = 0.006$). Participants from Moscow estimated the influence of genetics as significantly higher, whereas the influence of a good environmental situation as significantly lower than the participants from Kemerovo Region.

Discussion. The analysis of the hierarchical system of perception of the factors affecting health suggests that there could exist invariant factors that determine health and well-being of Russian people. The most important is the lifestyle. At the same time, differences in the assessment of other factors, for example, the environmental situation, may result from regional differences. The research was supported by Russian Foundation for Basic Research, with the Grant 17-29-02506.

Table
Average values of ranks of the factors influencing on human health

Categories	Moscow	Kemerovo Region
healthy lifestyle (good sleep, food, absence of bad habits)	2,31	2,19
genetics, heredity	2,73	3,52
lack of stress or ability to cope with it	3,29	3,60
good environmental conditions	4,08	3,21
regular medical examination, timely referral to a doctor	4,10	3,87
financial well-being	4,44	4,33