

Health Minister Concerned About Rise in Death Rate Among Younger Russians

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Russia's Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova

Increasing numbers of Russians aged 30 to 45 are dying, mostly as a result of excessive drinking, the health minister was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying Monday.

"Mortality rates are on the rise in Russia. But not because the population is aging," Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova said during a visit to the Altai region, news agency Interfax reported.

"The mortality rate is rising among young people — aged from 30 to 45," she was quoted as saying. "The horror of the situation is that in 70 percent of the cases, autopsies have found alcohol in the dead patients' blood."

The numbers of deaths from suicide or from alcohol poisoning, which had been declining until recently, are on the rise again, as are the fatalities attributed to untreated pneumonia

among "asocial groups of the population," Skvortsova said, Interfax reported.

"This is a big problem," she was quoted as saying.

Drinking by parents is also the cause of a huge share of infant deaths in the country, Skvortsova said, Interfax reported.

"Forty percent of the deaths of children before the age of 1 year is the fault of drunken moms, who crush them with their bodies," she was quoted as saying.

She argued that doctors in local clinics need to monitor the health of local inhabitants more closely, and to intervene together with social services when necessary, Interfax reported.

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