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Russian Journalist Reveals HIV Diagnosis On World AIDS Day

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Journalist Pavel Lobkov

A well-known Russian journalist has come out publicly as being HIV positive on World Aids Day.

During a broadcast of the "Hard Day's Night" program on Tuesday night, Pavel Lobkov, 48, a presenter at the liberal Dozhd TV television channel revealed he was diagnosed with HIV in 2003.

Lobkov said he had found out he had been infected with the disease after undergoing a compulsory health check in order to get medical insurance.

"I walked into the infectious diseases department. There was a thick file, on which was written, with a red marker 'HIV+'," he said during the broadcast. "With the expression of a Soviet Buddha the doctor said: 'You've been scrapped from the medical insurance program, because you have been diagnosed with HIV. Your case has been passed on to the Moscow health committee, where you will be put on a list. All the best, goodbye!'"

Lobkov described the incident on the evening of World AIDS Day which is held on Dec. 1.

The infectious disease is still a societal taboo in Russia but the number of registered HIV-positive patients in Russia has reached almost 1 million, according to figures presented last month by the head of Russia's Federal Center for Fighting AIDS, Vadim Pokrovsky.

Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova said earlier that Russia's HIV epidemic could spiral out of control by the end of the decade if treatment for the life-threatening virus is not expanded, the TASS news agency reported in October.

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