

# Kremlin Experts Blame Condoms for Russian HIV Epidemic

May 31, 2016



Kremlin-backed experts have described condoms as the main cause of Russia HIV epidemic, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

The report from the Russian Institute for Strategic Research (RISR) described the country's HIV problem as part of information war against Russia.

RISR's findings were presented at a special meeting of the Moscow City Duma, dedicated to the HIV epidemic in Russia.

The talks comes just over a year after Vadim Pokrovsky, head of the Moscow-based Federal Center for Fighting AIDS, announced a HIV epidemic in Russia and called the situation a “catastrophe.”

Moscow deputies questioned the reliability of Pokrovsky data and asked the Russian Institute for Strategic Research to verify his work. The organization's website says that RISR is “involved in the issues of national security” and “prevention of falsification of history.”

The institute's deputy director Tatyana Guzenkova said that HIV and AIDS were used as part of the information war against Russia.

Guzenkova said that there are two models for fighting HIV: Western and Russian.

She defined the Western method of fighting HIV as made of “neoliberal ideological content, insensitivity towards national sensitivities and over-focus of certain at-risk groups such as drug addicts and LGBT people,” Kommersant reported.

The Russian model “takes into account the cultural, historical, and psychological characteristics of the Russian population, and is based on a conservative ideology and traditional values,” Guzenkova said.

Study co-author Igor Beloborodov claimed that condoms were one of the factors causing the spread of the disease.

“The contraceptive industry is interested in selling their products and encouraging under-aged people to engage in sex,” he said.

Beloborodov said that the best form of protection against HIV was to “be in a heterosexual family where both partners are loyal to each other.”

Russia's Health Ministry warned last year that the HIV epidemic could be out of control by 2020 if treatment is not expanded.

In 2015, the number of HIV positive patients registered in Russia reached one million people, with record number of 93,000 new cases.

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