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Russians Drinking 600 Million Liters of 'Harmless' Medicinal Alcohol Every Year

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Vedomosti

Russians are drinking some 600 million liters of medicinal alcohol every year, the Life TV channel reported Wednesday.

Many Russians believe that medical tinctures — many of which have an alcohol content of at least 70 percent — pose no health risks, Vadim Drobiz, the Head of Russia's Research Center for Federal and Regional Alcohol Markets, told the outlet.

"Everything [bad] they say about them [tinctures] is a myth" Drobiz said. "If it was true, then we would have millions of corpses lying about."

Aside from their purported medical properties, tinctures are consumed for their low cost and high alcohol content.

During his interview with Life, Drobiz divided the Russian alcohol market into three categories. The legal sector, consisting of vodka priced at over 200 rubles ($3.20) per liter was

for “successful people,” he said.

"Not very successful people” typically enjoyed counterfeit vodka priced at 100 rubles ($1.60), while "the least successful” drank medical alcohol and moonshine, he said.

Drobiz also claimed that legally-sold alcohol was “about ten times” more expensive for Russians than it for Europeans or Americans.

“A resident of Europe or the United States can afford to legally buy 200 bottles of vodka with their unemployment benefit," he said. "A Russian can only buy 20, 30 if they are a wage earner.”

The Russian media reported on Tuesday that a vending machine in the Russian region of Kaluga had begun to sell "medicinal" tinctures containing 70 percent ethyl alcohol for just 20 rubles ($0.32).

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