

Russian Doctors Paid Less Than Fast Food Workers

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Andrei Makhonin / *Vedomosti*

Russian doctors are earning less per hour than the country's fast food workers, a new report into the Russian healthcare system has revealed.

Experts from the Center for Economic and Political Reforms (CEPR) found that doctors earned 140 (\$2.46) rubles per hour, compared to the hourly wage of 146 rubles (\$2.57) for a supervisor at global fast food chain McDonald's.

Paramedics were found to earn an average of 82 (\$1.44) rubles an hour, while mid-level health staff received just 72 rubles (\$1.27), [the RBC news site reported](#).

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The report also found that the number of Russian hospitals will soon fall to levels not seen since 1913.

The number of hospitals in Russia almost halved between the years 2000 and 2015, plummeting from 10,700 across the country to just 5,400.

Under current healthcare reforms, that number will fall to roughly 3,000 by 2021-2022, the same number as seen in the dying days of the Russian Empire.

The report warned that rural areas would be hit hardest, with the number of hospital beds available away from the country's major cities falling as much as 40 percent in fifteen years.

Given Russia's large and sparsely populated territory, you can't fix spending to the number of patients [in a region]," the report said. "This leads to under-funding and "the inevitable degradation of medicine in small towns and villages."

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David Meelik-Huseynov, director of the Health Institute at Moscow's Department of Healthcare, defended the reforms as a necessary measure to boost efficiency.

He argued that the while the number of hospitals and beds was decreasing, patient care was continuing to improve.

"Although there are fewer places, they are used more efficiently," Meelik-Huseynov told the RBC news outlet. "Each hospital bed should be in use 85 to 90 percent of the time. If not, it should be disposed of."

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