

## Cooperation in Health Care Uzbekistan-South Korea

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the issues of cooperation in the field of healthcare between Uzbekistan and South Korea, analyzes aspects of projects, grants and trainings implemented by the Republic of South Korea with our country. Diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea have existed for more than 30 years, and during this period many agreements, joint programs and grant projects in the social and medical spheres have been implemented.

**Keywords:** Uzbekistan, South Korea, EDSF Foundation, kofin, KOICA, Farma Park pharmaceutical Cluster, KHIDI, Korean Traditional Medicine Center.

### INTRODUCTION

Since 1992, when diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and South Korea were established, there has been mutual cooperation in all fields. The healthcare system is one of the priority areas of cultural and humanitarian relations between the two countries. During the past period, agreements and memoranda on the health care system were signed and joint ventures were established. Branches of South Korea's leading clinics and pharmaceutical enterprises have been established in the territory of Uzbekistan. In particular, the "New World Med" company, which started its operations in Uzbekistan in 2014, is an exclusive distributor of drugs and medical equipment from South Korea to our country [1]. Since 2015, it has opened a representative office in Tashkent and a factory for the production of medicines. With this, he started to provide the Uzbek people not only with high-quality medicinal products, but also strengthened the cultural and humanitarian relations between

the two countries.

Relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea in the field of medicine have also been reflected in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population in need of social assistance. For example, between 2011 and 2014, under the auspices of the "Save the Children" organization of the Republic of Korea, 245 children born with heart defects were operated on at the hospital of the Tashkent Pediatric Institute, and during 2014-2017, 3,467 citizens of our country underwent free medical examinations by the "KOICA" organization and "Ewha Womans University" [2].

Over the past period, medical tourism between Uzbekistan and South Korea has been developing. For example, in 2011, the number of Uzbeks who visited South Korea for the purpose of medical tourism was 450, and now this figure has increased by 26% [3].

As a result of the official visit of the head of our country to South Korea in 2017 and the official visit of the former President of the Republic of Korea

Moon Jae-in to Uzbekistan, cooperation in the field of medicine has been strengthened. Also, within the framework of inter-governmental cooperation, our country has been implementing qualification exchange programs. More than 400 medical workers have been trained in the leading institutions of the Republic of Korea [4].

After the official visit of the head of our country to South Korea in 2017, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea in the healthcare system reached a new level. The opening of the medical institution of Inkha University in Uzbekistan was a prelude to the development of further socio-cultural cooperation. Thousands of young children in Tashkent city, Tashkent and Navoi regions were medically examined and treated under free sponsorship by the organization.

The role of international organizations in strengthening the cultural and humanitarian relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea is incomparable. Organizations such as KOICA, KOFIH, KHIDI, EDCF operate in Uzbekistan. As an example, KOFIH [5] is a fund under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Korea, and today this organization is implementing advanced projects for the development of the medical system in many countries of the world, including Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, the work carried out by this foundation on health care and training of medical personnel is gaining importance in the country's emergency medical care, protection of mothers and children's health, strengthening of reproductive health of the population. The establishment of simulation centers with this organization in the Republican emergency medical center and its Samarkand regional branch within the framework of the grant project "Increasing the capacity of emergency medical care before the hospital" created the basis for further improving the quality of services provided to the population in this direction. Also, in cooperation with the Republican Research Institute of Virology and KOFIH, a pilot project was launched to identify the human papilloma virus and improve the diagnosis of cervical cancer among women living in Tashkent, Samarkand and Andijan regions [6].

In addition, cooperation prospects were discussed within the framework of the project of establishing a multidisciplinary clinic in the Moynaq district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan [7].

On November 27, 2018, the Korean folk medicine

center was opened as part of the cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea. In Tashkent, a center of Korean folk medicine was opened in cooperation with the Tashkent Medical Academy (TMA) and the Korean Health Development Institute (KHIDI). This was done thanks to the joint efforts of the two countries - Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea, and a decision was made to further develop traditional medicine at a high level. On August 10, 2018, the president signed the decision "On measures to develop folk medicine". During the visit of the President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in to Uzbekistan on April 18-21, 2019, agreements on cooperation between the two countries, including the health system, were signed. During the visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed on the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Korea health cooperation center and its activities, and the "Action plan for the development of the electronic health system in Uzbekistan" was adopted. In this way, he expanded cooperation with Uzbekistan in the field of healthcare and medicine. As a practical result of contacts in these areas, the Uzbekistan-Korea Health Care Cooperation Center was established in April 2019.

Cooperation in the field of health and medicine between South Korea and Uzbekistan has strengthened during the coronavirus era. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities for promoting innovations in the field of health care based on ICT in Uzbekistan are increasing with South Korea. Based on the covid-19 situation of the government of the Republic of Korea, cooperation between South Korea and Uzbekistan in the field of health care and electronic medicine has been established.

On April 26, 2020, the Republic of Korea delivered humanitarian aid, including high-tech medical equipment weighing 6.2 tons, modern automatic medical beds and diagnostic test systems, worth about \$900,000. The total amount of humanitarian aid is about 34 tons, and the second batch worth \$192,000 arrived in Tashkent on May 10, 2020. In addition, on May 23, humanitarian aid was sent from the Republic of Korea in October 2020 [8]. At the same time, on the basis of the pharmaceutical cluster, which is being established together with Korean companies, the development of effective vaccines and sera, as well as the rapid and accurate distribution of diseases, has been launched.

The health sector was another important area discussed during the negotiations between Sh.M.

Mirziyoyev and Yun Sok Yol. South Korea is gaining importance in establishing medical centers, improving the qualifications of medical personnel, equipping national medical institutions with modern equipment, protecting the health of mothers and children, sharing experience in the treatment of hereditary diseases, and other areas. In 2020, the construction of a multidisciplinary children's hospital in Tashkent was completed with the support of the Korean EDSF Foundation. The implementation of the joint medical cluster, which includes the university, hospital, oncoclinic and pharmaceutical cluster, continues at a rapid pace. At the end of the negotiations, the parties agreed to implement the second stage of the "Farma Park" farm cluster project and to launch a long-term program for improving the skills of medical workers in South Korea.

Based on the President's decision of January 28, 2020, "Tashkent Pharma Park" on the establishment of an innovative scientific-production pharmaceutical cluster, 750 million dollars have been allocated for construction work. Initially, 12 projects will be launched within the cluster. In addition, 14 other projects related to the sector are being worked on. In November 2023, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Uzbekistan-Korea International Medical Forum was held in Tashkent [9].

Today, in cooperation with Korea, projects on the construction of the "Adult multidisciplinary medical center" worth 150 million US dollars and the "Oncological clinic" worth 150 million US dollars are being developed.

## CONCLUSION

The health sector occupies an incomparable place in the relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea, therefore, further strengthening and rapid development of these relations is an urgent issue. The following conclusions of the study will help us understand the state and prospects of cooperation between the two countries in this field. First of all, cooperation in the field of health care between Uzbekistan and South Korea has been developing consistently historically. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, various agreements, joint projects and grant programs have been implemented between the two countries on the health care system. In particular, through Korean organizations such as KOICA, KHIDI, KOFIH, the medical infrastructure in Uzbekistan was improved, the quality of medical services increased, and modern technologies were introduced. This cooperation is expanding to

include medical tourism, training programs and scientific and technical projects.

Secondly, in the process of cooperation with the Republic of Korea, healthcare infrastructure has been developed in Uzbekistan, new medical institutions have been established, and qualified specialists are being trained based on international experience. In particular, projects such as the opening of the medical institution of Inkha University, the establishment of the pharmaceutical cluster "Tashkent Pharma Park" and the modernization of the emergency medical care system have led to the widespread use of innovative approaches in various areas of medicine.

In addition, humanitarian aid provided by South Korea during the COVID-19 pandemic, initiatives to develop the electronic health system and introduce advanced technologies further increased the effectiveness of cooperation.

Thirdly, cooperation in the field of health between Uzbekistan and South Korea is of strategic importance and is expected to deepen in the future. In this direction, new promising projects such as improving the quality of medical services, developing digital technologies in healthcare, and applying genetic research are being implemented. In particular, joint programs aimed at creating centers for the treatment of oncological diseases, expanding research on the identification of genetic diseases, and strengthening the health of mothers and children have been identified as one of the priorities.

Based on the above analysis and conclusions, the following can be suggested:

First, the introduction of innovative technologies in health care - it is necessary to widely use South Korean technologies such as advanced telemedicine, artificial intelligence-based diagnostics and genetic analysis in the health care system of Uzbekistan. For this, it is necessary to develop additional programs aimed at improving the qualifications of specialists and assimilating international experience.

Second, deepen cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology - Uzbekistan should expand joint projects with South Korea on the development of the pharmaceutical industry and the production of medicines. By attracting local and international investments, it will be appropriate to create modern pharmaceutical clusters and conduct joint scientific research on the production of innovative drugs.

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