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I am interested in international cooperation in education and research, and that is why I have worked as a participant, researcher, and coordinator in more than 14 educational and scientific international (Finland, Norway, Sweden) and Russian projects concerning international social work, public health and social issues of gerontology and the quality of life of vulnerable groups in the High North. In March 1998 I defended my PhD dissertation in human physiology, which focused on morphological and functional characteristics of women's somatotypes in the European North of Russia. After a series of articles on the quality of life of the elderly population in the Russian North, I was named the Best Junior Researcher in the field of gerontology in the Russian Federation by the Russian Academy of Science in 2006.

The main topic of my postdoctoral research in the field of gerontology is a thesis entitled "The quality of life of the elderly population in the Russian part of the BEAR (taking the Arkhangelsk region as an example): Ways of improving the organization of medical and social services". I defended this thesis at the Institute of Bioregulation and Gerontology (North-West Branch of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences) in St. Petersburg in December 2012. The aim of my study was to establish the characteristics of the process of population aging and make a comprehensive assessment of the factors that influence the quality of life of elderly people living in sparsely populated areas of the Russian part of the BEAR.

The aging of the population is one of the most important global problems facing humanity in the 21st century, exerting a significant influence on social and economic processes. In Russia in the last 60 years the proportion of children in the population has almost been halved, while the proportion of older people, in contrast, has almost tripled. The role of environmental influences, social, hygienic and psychophysiological factors in aging has increased. The concept of successful aging and the development of new types of medical and social services that address the needs of the elderly popula-

“Aging of the population is one of the most important global problems”



tion are the subject of an active dialogue between policy makers and scientists emphasizing improvements in the quality of life.

My thesis developed a comprehensive socio-ecological approach to the determination of the influence of health and social services on the main components of quality of life in old age, as well as interactions between social health care and elderly individuals as consumers of health and social services, and how these factors enhance the quality of life of elderly residents of the Russian part of the BEAR. It is shown that the family and close microenvironment of elderly adults are a significant resource that enhances the quality of life and that there is an accelerated decline in the functional systems of people living in nursing homes. Furthermore, it is evident that there is an increase in the rate of biological aging in men, in comparison with women, in the sparsely populated rural areas in the European North. The identifiable major risk factors that reduce the quality of life in different types of accommodation and services in urban and rural areas, including the microenvironment, are alcohol abuse, loneliness, and aspects of aging related to sex in individuals with alcohol dependence syndrome living in residential care, with the highest rate of decline of functional systems occurring in women. The principles for improving health and social care are based on the application of the model of empowering older people through the system of services for sparsely populated territories of the Russian part of the BEAR.

Last year I was appointed Vice-Director of International Co-operation of Integrated Safety Institute in NARFU, worked as a local coordinator of the BCBU Joint Master program "Comparative Social Work", and participated in the UArctic's Thematic Network on Health and Well-being in the Arctic in the framework of a Joint Master program with the University of Oulu in Finland.