

Social and legal prerequisites for hoarding by condo residents in Russia

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Abstract. Consumerism is an inherent feature of a modern consumer-minded society which enhances in some people both a hunger for collecting and a more serious desire developing into oniomania (shopping mania, shopaholism), kleptomania or pathological hoarding (sylllogomania, Diogenes syndrome, Plyushkin's syndrome). The paper proposes an interdisciplinary approach to the problem of pathological hoarding of unnecessary things and domestic animals by tenants of condominiums in Russian cities. Socio-legal prerequisites for this psychosocial disease still insufficiently studied in the country are also analyzed in the paper. The data of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation and various legal acts were examined. In the course of the study, methods of quality content analysis and visual sociology were used to analyze cases of pathological hoarding highlighted in Russian digital media in recent years. The Clutter-Hoarding Scale and Clutter Image Rating Scale were used to interpret photos of cluttered Russian flats in condos. In conclusion, recommendations are given on improving state policy and the legislation of the Russian Federation.

1. Introduction

A hoarding disorder or as it is called by researchers, including Russian scholars, sylllogomania, the Diogenes syndrome or Plyushkin's syndrome (Plyushkin is a fictitious character invented by the Russian writer N.V. Gogol in his novel "Dead Souls" embodying the spirit of a stingy person passionately fond of hoarding) is first of all a mental disorder which is characterized by property hoarding as a result of excessive purchasing of things or a difficulty of throwing them out despite their actual cost. At the same time, Yap K. and Grisham J. emphasize that people who do not suffer from pathological hoarding can also be attached to various objects [1]. At the same time pathological hoarding is also associated with material scrupulosity [2] and self-control deficit [3]. The Diogenes syndrome and a hoarding disorder can be two measures of the same object, with one of them being a measure of filth and poverty while the other is genuine hoarding of rubbish and garbage [4].

Pathological hoarding is characterized by repeated impulses or by a behavior relating to accumulation or purchasing things. The difficulty of refusal from property is characterized by a conscious need of "saving" articles or sufferings related to their throw-out. The accumulation of property results in residential spaces becoming encumbered to such an extent that it endangers their use and safety. These symptoms lead to considerable sufferings or great disturbances in personal, family, social, educational, professional and other important spheres of human life.



E. Y. Naumova (“Pathological Accumulation as a Mental Disorder in Adulthood” in a collection of materials of the XVIII International Research Competition “Best Student Article 2018”, held on December 20, 2018 in Penza) differentiates the following kinds of pathological hoarding in Russia:

- a) “vintagerism” – a pathological collecting of articles of various epochs which turns an apartment into a “museum”;
- b) pseudo-collecting – a drive to collect various trifles which continues for a long time;
- c) “suitabilism” – collecting any things which will surely prove useful some day;
- d) animal hoarding– collecting a lot of animals in an apartment (often domestic cats, dogs, rabbits, etc.);
- e) “conservism” – an excessive passion for preserving and canning as a result of which an entire apartment is filled with various jars and cans despite the actual needs of the family;
- f) “sentimentalism”–collecting things which remind of the loss or the deceased person.

In this classification E.Y Naumov certainly loses sight of the most modern kind of pathological hoarding, namely digital hoarding. Although digital hoarding is not related to collecting material objects, it has a lot in common with it, in particular difficulties in deleting accumulated digital data and a feeling of anxiety caused by this accumulation [5]. Letters, photos and other digital computer materials and objects in computer games themselves may be objects of accumulation. Physical acquiring is related to distress about deleting digital items. Digital attachment mediates the relation between physical hoarding and discarding distress [6].

The American Psychiatric Association included pathological hoarding as an obsessive-compulsive disorder in the 5th Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) in as early as 2013. In 2018, the World Health Organization included it in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).

A difficult financial situation of a family, unjustified life expectations and the fear of loss which a mature person can experience after loss of property, relatives, domestic animals, etc. are the causes of pathological hoarding. Another important factor is loneliness. Object attachment might be an attempt at compensating for loneliness [7].

It is necessary to note that pathological hoarding differs from ordinary collecting (e.g. Soviet stamps, coins or badges, which is greatly popular in Russia) which is a rather organized process and implies an opportunity to demonstrate the collection to family members, friends and often to all who want to see it. The collection items do not encumber the apartment and do not hinder the use of living space for its direct purpose. Thus collecting as a collecting behavior reflects one of the most basic peculiarities of pathological hoarding that is acquiring and emotional attachment to a potentially large number of objects, which in this case is no more than similarity [8].

We should not confuse pathological hoarding with oniomania or shopaholism which is mentioned but not included in DSM-5. It embodies an irresistible wish to buy things and take delight in the process of buying itself and not in accumulating the purchased goods in the course of chaotic consumption [9].

Kleptomania which is characterized by disorders in social and professional spheres and which has legal consequences in contrast to pathological hoarding is a periodically repeated inability to resist impulses to steal unnecessary things despite their value [10].

2. Methods

In the course of theoretical research, general scientific methods were used to analyze and synthesize (generalize) the results of Russian and foreign studies on the problem of pathological hoarding.

During the official documents analysis, the relevant sections of the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) and the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) were studied, data of the Federal State Statistics Service of the

Russian Federation, decrees of the Government of the Russian Federation and Federal laws regulating the treatment of solid municipal waste were examined.

For the case study of pathological hoarding in Russia methods of qualitative content analysis and visual sociology were used to analyze digital media materials based on the results of “kvartirazavalenamusorom” [flat littered with trash] (in Russ.) and “kvartirapolnayazhivotnykh” [flat full of animals] (in Russ.) in theGooglesearch engine.

The analysis of the level of contamination and clutter of Russian flats mentioned in the mass media was carried out according to the Clutter-Hoarding Scale (C-HS) developed by the Institute for Challenging Disorganization (figure 1).

	Structure and Zoning	Animals and Pests	Household Functions	Health and Safety	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
LEVEL I	All doors, stairs and windows accessible; plumbing, electric and HVAC operational; fire and CO detectors installed and functional	Normal animal control (behavior/sanitation); approved number of animals; no evidence of rodents or insects	No excessive clutter; all rooms properly used; appliances functional; good housekeeping and maintenance	Safe, sanitary; no odors; medication control OK	OPTIONAL
LEVEL II	1 major exit blocked; 1 major appliance or HVAC device not working for longer than one season; some plumbing or electrical systems not fully functional; fire or CO detectors non-existent or non-functional	Evidence of inappropriate animal control; visible or odorous pet waste; visible pet fur/hair/feathers; light to medium evidence of common household pests/insects	Clutter beginning to obstruct living areas; slight congestion of exits, entrances, hallways and stairs; some household appliances not functional; inconsistent housekeeping and maintenance	Diminished appropriate sanitation; odors from dirty dishes, food prep, laundry, toilets; mildew present; medication control questionable	LIGHT PPE Medical or work gloves; caps (baseball or poly bouffant); first aid kit; insect repellent; hand sanitizer
LEVEL III	Outside clutter of items normally stored indoors; HVAC devices not working for longer than one season; fire or CO detectors non-existent or non-functional; one part of home has light structural damage (occurring within past six mos.)	Animal population exceeds local regulations; inappropriate animal control; inadequate sanitation; audible evidence of pests; medium level of spiders; light insect infestation such as bed bugs, lice, fleas, roaches, ants, silverfish, spiders, etc.	Clutter obstructing functions of key living areas; building up around exits, entrances, hallways and stairs; at least one room not being used for intended purpose; several appliances not functional; inappropriate usage of electric appliances and extension cords; substandard housekeeping and maintenance; hazardous substances in small quantities	Limited evidence of maintaining sanitation (heavily soiled food prep areas, dirty dishes, mildew); odors obvious and irritating; garbage cans not in use or overflowing; dirt, dust and debris; dirty laundry throughout house; Rx and OTC medications hazardous control (re children, pets, mentally impaired)	MEDIUM PPE Face masks or N95 respirator masks; eye protection; gloves; disposable coveralls; poly caps; work shoes/boots; first aid kit; hand sanitizer, insect repellent
LEVEL IV	Excessive outdoor clutter of items normally stored indoors; HVAC devices not working for longer than one year; CO detectors non-existent or non-functional; structural damage to home lasting longer than six months; water damaged floors, damaged walls and foundations, broken windows, doors or plumbing; odor or evidence of sewer backup	Animal population exceeds local ordinances; poor animal sanitation; destructive behavior; excessive spiders and webs; bats, squirrels, rodents in attic or basement (audible and visible); medium insect infestation	Diminished use and accessibility to key living areas; several rooms cluttered to extent they cannot be used for intended purposes; clutter inhibits access to doorways, hallways and stairs; inappropriate storage of hazardous/combustible materials; appliances used inappropriately; improper use of electric space heaters, fans or extension cords	Rotting food, organic contamination; expired, leaking cans or bottles, buckled sides and tops; dishes and utensils unusable; no linens on beds; sleeping on mattress; chair or floor; infestation of bedding and/or furniture; medications Rx and OTC medications easily accessible to anybody	FULL PPE Face masks or N95 respirator masks; safety goggles, medical or industrial grade latex or nitrile gloves; heavy duty work gloves; disposable coveralls; caps; work shoes/boots; first aid kit; hand sanitizer; insect repellent; headlamp or flashlight
LEVEL V	Extreme indoor/outdoor clutter; foliage overgrowth; abandoned machinery; ventilation inadequate or nonexistent; HVAC systems not working; water damaged floors, walls and foundation; broken windows, doors or plumbing; unreliable electrical, water and/or septic systems; odor or sewer backup; irreparable damage to exterior and interior structure	Animals at risk and dangerous to people due to behavior, health and numbers; pervasive spiders, cockroaches, mice, rats, squirrels, raccoons, bats, snakes, etc.; heavy infestation of insects such as bed bugs, lice, fleas, cockroaches, ants, silverfish, etc.	Key living spaces not usable; all rooms not used for intended purposes; entrances, hallways and stairs blocked; toilets, sinks and tubs not functioning; hazardous conditions obscured by clutter; appliances unusable; hazardous and primitive use of kerosene, lanterns, candles, fireplace/woodstove as primary source of heat and/or light	Human urine and excrement present; rotting food; organic contamination; cans or jars expired, leaking or buckled; dishes and utensils buried or nonexistent; beds inaccessible or unusable due to clutter or infestation; pervasive mold and/or mildew; moisture or standing water; Rx and OTC medications easily accessible to anybody; presence of expired Rx	FULL PPE REQUIRED N95 respirator mask or mask with organic filter(s); safety goggles; medical or industrial grade latex, or nitrile gloves; heavy duty work gloves; disposable coveralls; poly caps; work shoes/boots; first aid kit hand sanitizer; insect repellent; headlamp or flashlight

Figure 1. Clutter-Hoarding Scale(C-HS), Source: Institute for Challenging Disorganization (<https://www.challengingdisorganization.org/clutter-hoarding-scale->, 20.05.2020).

To analyze photos of Russian flats in condos filled with garbage and trash, Clutter Image Rating developed and validated by Frost R.O., Steketee G., Tolin D.F. and Renaud S. [11]was also used (figures2, 3, 4).The first three images of Kitchen, Bedroom or Living Room reflect the normal (green) level. Images numbered 4-6 shows an increased (yellow) level of clutter in the premises, requiring attention. Images numbered 7-9 indicate a high (red) level of risk to health and life, which requires immediate action.

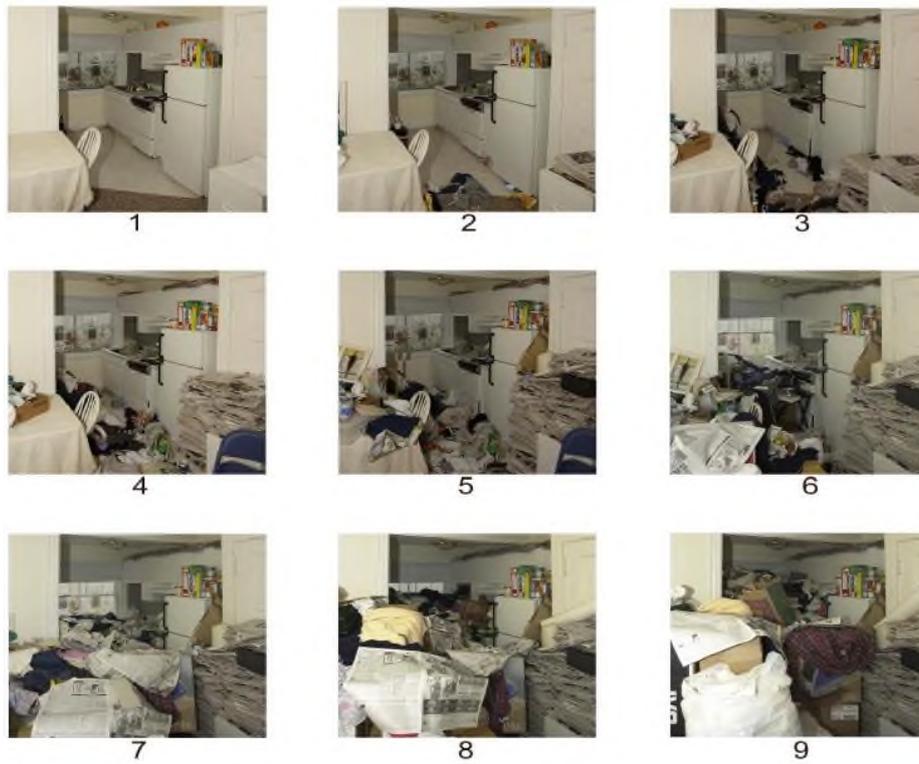


Figure 2. Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen, Source: Hoarding Disorders UK (<https://hoardingdisordersuk.org/research-and-resources/clutter-image-ratings/>, 20.05.2020).



Figure 3. Clutter Image Rating Scale: Bedroom, Source: Hoarding Disorders UK (<https://hoardingdisordersuk.org/research-and-resources/clutter-image-ratings/>, 20.05.2020)



Figure 4. Clutter Image Rating Scale: Living Room, Source: Hoarding Disorders UK (<https://hoardingdisordersuk.org/research-and-resources/clutter-image-ratings/>, 20.05.2020).

3. Results

The Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation does not provide data on the number of such psychiatric diseases as pathological hoarding (statistical collection “Healthcare in Russia. 2019”). However, slight positive dynamics of reducing the number of people suffering from psychiatric diseases can be seen in Russia (table 1).

Table 1. The incidence rate of psychiatric diseases and disorders of behavior in Russia (thousands people).

Observation of patients with the diagnosis established for the first time	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018
Psychoses and dementia	39.6	35.1	30.8	29.8	29.8	30.0
Psychiatric disorders of a non-psychiatric character	32.7	23.0	18.1	16.8	17.0	17.0
Mental retardation	23.6	16.2	13.8	13.4	12.6	12.1

Russian researcher V. D. Mendelevich (“Fake-Diagnoses in Psychiatric Classifications” in *Neurological Bulletin*, 2018, Vol. L, Iss. 4, pp. 15–18) reckons pathological hoarding among fake diagnoses in psychiatric classifications: similar to cases of addictive disorders an emphasis in diagnostics is placed on a potential and non-measurable harm that this behavior can cause and not on verifiable clinical psychopathological phenomena.

Nevertheless, cases regularly covered by Russian digital media allow us to conclude that the problem of pathological hoarding in Russian cities among residents of apartment buildings continues to grow every year. In 2013, a regular program “We Speak and Show” on the NTV channel was devoted to people who turned their apartments into “stinking dumps of trash and garbage”. Even glossy magazines are paying more and more attention to the problem of pathological hoarding. In 2019, *Cosmopolitan* magazine in Russia highlighted the problem of people subjugation to trash. Here are some other examples:

- in 2017, the Novosibirsk city website published a paper devoted to a resident from Leninsky district in Novosibirsk who was piling rubbish up in her apartment during 2 years and cluttered it with trash to the ceiling;

- in 2018, the RIA Novosti newswire highlighted the problem in Novokuibyshevsk city where tenants of a nine-storeyed building come out against their neighbor who has turned her apartment in a sort of dump;
- in 2019, the Perm Online website attracted attention to the apartment where the son does not allow his retired mother to clean up their cluttered with trash apartment;
- RossiyskayaGazeta published an article on a similar situation in Yaroslavl in 2019 where a woman-tenant just escaped a trash grave in her own apartment;
- the TV-21 channel in the Murmansk region showed a news story about an 80-old frump from Severomorsk who cluttered her apartment with trash from dumps;
- in 2019, a resident of the house turned her apartment into a real landfill, as the Novosibirsk city website told already in 2020. In 2019, a resident of the house turned her apartment into a real dump, the consequences of which the Novosibirsk city site told in May 2020. A woman has been collecting rubbish for years and driving them into two rooms to the ceiling; the concentration of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide in air samples in her apartment exceeded the maximum permissible values. By a court decision, the district administration cleaned the apartment of rubbish on its own - four trucks of garbage were removed.

The most illustrative example of pathological hoarding that was highlighted by largest Russian mass media occurred in Moscow in 2019. Tenants of house No.134 in LeningradProspekttogether with law enforcement bodies and rescue service staffers (MES) of Russia rescued a Girl-Mowgli from an apartment clutteredwith trash where even the water-supply system had not worked for some years.

The casesabovereflect a complete neglect of duties aimed at maintaining a proper state of the living space and using it for its intended purpose. This responsibility is stipulated in the Rules of Maintenance of Residential Buildings in the Russian Federation approved by the RF Government Regulation No. 25 of 21 January, 2006. Any violation of these rules entails administrative liability.

As CramerR.andVolsM. note in their comparative research into the legislations of South Africa and the Netherlands, people subject to pathological hoarding thanks to their behavior can in the long run get in trouble with various fields of the law, including the law of neighboring tenements, the housing law, as well as the administrative law because pathological hoarding poses a threat to public health and infringes the legitimate rights of neighbors [12]. Speaking of public health, it is necessary to mention that people subject to pathological hoarding often have serious health problems and not infrequently suffer from chronic diseases [13].

When using the classification proposed by E.Y.Naumovawe can say that in Russian cities “suitabilism” prevails as the most widespread kind of pathological hoarding. The above examples from mass media reflect its advanced stage, the so-called “point of no-return”, when apartments look as dumps with fully unsanitary conditions for living. According to the ICD Clutter-Hoarding Scale® it is already the IV (high, orange) and V (severe, red) levels of cluttering apartments. This corresponds to images of the kitchen, bedroom and living room numbered 7-9 in the Clutter Image Rating Scale.

Another widespread kind of pathological hoarding of condominium tenants is collecting domestic animals whose excessive numbers result in fully antisanitary conditions and do not make it possible to keep the animals properly, not to mention the animal keepers themselves. Lockwood R. emphasizes that animal hoarding has been considered a significant problem by animal welfare and law enforcement professionals for over a century [14].

Studying cases on the problem of animal hoarding in Russian flats, covered by digital media, numerous examples of this problem were found:

- in 2008, mass media told about a woman in Novosibirsk who kept 130 cats in her apartment;
- in 2014, the newspaper “PetrozavodskGovorit” published an article about animal rights activists who drew out 20 cats from an apartment cluttered with rubbish;
- in 2017, the newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda” wrote about a woman from Tyumen who settled 200 cats in her apartment;

- in 2019, animal rights activists found an apartment in the south of Moscow with more than 60 cats according to “GovoritMoskva”.

In October 2019, the Novosibirsk city website highlighted one of the recent examples of domestic animal hoarding. The paper describes the situation when for more than 7 years tenants of a six-storeyed house have been suffering from a neighbor living on the ground floor in whose apartment more than 30 dogs, a monkey, a crow and several cats live. Despite an overpowering stench from the apartment spreading over the entrance hall no violations have been revealed during the police screening.

4. Discussion

It is quite clear that trash enclosures which according to the “Rules of Improvement of Novosibirsk areas” approved by the decision of the Novosibirsk Council of Workers’ Deputies are to be equipped with an open unit or a dumpster for bulk trash are the main source of unnecessary things. The maintenance of trash enclosures is placed on managing companies and property owners associations. However, since 2019 regional operators for municipal solid waste management have been removing garbage.

Meanwhile there are no special government or municipal services in Russia that are concerned with organized cleaning of apartments cluttered by a person subject to pathological hoarding. This function could be performed by private cleaning companies or employees of managing organizations and property owners associations at extra charge. There are some cases when tenants pooled their financial resources to pay for such services to rescue themselves from unbearable neighborhood with an apartment cluttered with trash.

No doubt the amount of garbage and first of all bulk trash, which is in a relatively free access, is different in different condominiums. However despite this a regional operator is to timely remove solid municipal waste from trash enclosures. “The Rules of Providing Municipal Services to Property Owners and Users of Living Spaces in Condominiums and Apartment Houses” approved by the RF government regulation of 06.05.2011 No. 354 state:

- garbage is to be removed in cold seasons (at an average daily temperature $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and lower) at least once every three days;
- garbage is to be removed in warm seasons (at an average daily temperature $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and above) at least once every day (daily removal).

The admissible nonobservance of time limits in compliance with the above rules cannot be more than 72 hours (in total) during 1 month and not more than 48 hours at a time at an average daily temperature $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and lower, and not more than 24 hours at an average daily temperature $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and above.

The existing norms of garbage removal in cold seasons as well as regular violations of the terms of removal first of all bulk waste in warm seasons by a regional operator contributes to accumulation of a large number of things and items (apart from traditional construction waste and big boxes for bulky household appliances) in the units and dumpsters on the trash enclosures especially close to big multi-storeyed buildings such as broken furniture and devices, often old paintings, clocks, etc.

Also it should be noted that ring collection of garbage has not yet been canceled in Russia due to the fact that not all apartment buildings are equipped with container sites. Residents are forced to put garbage bags directly onto the road or lawn near their home. The current practice of managing solid municipal waste has a negative effect on a person subject to pathological hoarding at its initial or medium stage thus stimulating easy accumulating of unnecessary things close to the place of residence.

The second important factor is not infrequent violations of sanitary and epidemiological rules and norms by tenants of condos who set their garbage out to the staircase landing, remove unnecessary

things and furniture that cannot be accommodated in the apartment to residential and elevator halls, vestibules, etc. It should be noted that a low level of social responsibility and helping behavior is most typical for residents of high-rise apartment buildings [15].

Managing companies and homeowner associations are not always able to timely monitor and correct these violations despite the fact that in the context of the spread of coronavirus infection, their role is extremely important in ensuring safe and favorable living conditions in condos [16]. The neighborhood of such tenants has a very negative effect on people subject to pathological hoarding. However, there are not infrequent cases when several neighbors living on the same staircase landing are subject to pathological hoarding. They have installed an additional lobby door (an isolator door) and use the entire occupied space and technical rooms on the staircase (e.g. metering units) and even fire hose cabinets for storing rubbish and unnecessary things that they are not willing to throw away.

In contrast to pathological hoarding of things in animal hoarding there may be a strong attachment to them as animate objects. On the one hand, it limits the living space, but on the other hand it does not worsen living conditions. Ferreira E. A., Paloski L. H., Costa D. B., Fiametti V. S., De Oliveira C. R., de Lima Argimon I. I., Gonzatti V., Irigaray T. Q. revealed a similar regularity in their research conducted in Brazil [17]. However, there are often situations when animals living under such conditions need veterinary aid [18].

On the one hand, pathological animal hoarding is surely promoted by the problem of homeless animals in Russian cities because of some legal loopholes in the Russian legislation, both Federal and local. On the other hand, it is caused by irresponsible animal owners who throw their pets out on the street or put them stealthily in the lobby hall for other people to pick the animals up. Nonetheless it is worth mentioning that the Law on Animal Welfare was adopted in the Russian Federation only in December 2018.

5. Conclusion

Hence the socio-cultural environment of the condominium itself, with neighborly relations often lost, stimulates pathological hoarding of unnecessary things and animals. The imperfection of the Russian legislation also contributes to this process, which dictates the need to apply an interdisciplinary approach to investigating this complex and comprehensive problem. However, further study of pathological hoarding is complicated by the lack of official statistics in Russia on this issue – today it is quite difficult to estimate the number of people suffering from hoarding disorder.

Despite this it is urgent to start struggling against pathological hoarding at the government and municipal levels in Russia right now. As an example, closed dumpsters used in some European countries from which an ordinary person cannot take anything in contrast to widespread Russian garbage bins of 1.1m³ with hinged covers.

It is necessary to improve Russian legislation in the field of solid municipal waste management and tighten the deadlines of their removal from the territory of apartment buildings. At the same time, an attempt to introduce separate garbage collection, which will greatly facilitate the “task” for people suffering from pathological hoarding, causes concern.

In addition, it would be advisable to organize a special service and develop psychological assistance programs for people suffering from pathological hoarding, as well as, to introduce regulations for cleaning and disinfecting the flats of these people, taking into account existing international experience. Better control of stray animals and stricter liability of pet owners for their inappropriate keeping are required. The right step would be the development and implementation of social programs to control the population of dogs and cats.

Such measures can be effective only if the problem of pathological hoarding (including animal hoarding) is recognized in Russian society, both at the state level and among the scientific medical community. Further ignoring such a problem in Russia can lead to serious consequences.

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