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Moscow uses hyperbaric chambers to treat COVID-19



Photo: Press Service of Moscow Mayor and the Moscow Government. Maxim Mishin

Twenty-five patients have already undergone 100 treatment sessions. Doctors note that the general condition of people improves afterwards.

The Sklifosovsky Research Institute of Emergency Care has been experimenting with treating coronavirus patients using **hyperbaric oxygenation** (HBO). Twenty-five patients have already undergone 108 treatment sessions. Doctors note that the general condition of the patients **improves** after these sessions. The Sklifosovsky pioneered this type of treatment in Russia.

The method is based on the saturation of blood with oxygen due to its delivery through plasma **at elevated** atmospheric pressure. This is more effective than delivering oxygen through a mask or high-flow oxygenation — another type of non-invasive respiratory support. Other clinics also use the normobaric oxygenation therapy. This is the saturation of blood with oxygen through the plasma without changing the pressure. However, the effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygenation is higher due to elevated pressure and the intake of **100-percent oxygen**.

“Now HBO is also used to treat patients with coronavirus who have certain indications. The therapy aims to prevent the patient from having to go on a ventilator. HBO sessions are combined with other therapy,” said Sergei Petrikov, director of the Sklifosovsky Institute and member of the clinical committee for coronavirus response.

Doctors note that patients feel better after the sessions, having less of a shortness of breath and more oxygen in the blood. In addition to this, hyperbaric oxygen enhances the effect of antiviral and antibacterial therapy and also reduces its side effects. All this contributes to **the recovery of patients**.

The Sklifosovsky Institute’s Hyperbaric Oxygenation Unit is based in the **Emergency Neurosurgery Unit**. Typically, such therapy is used for patients with various pathologies, including craniocerebral injuries, as well as during rehabilitation after complex neurosurgical operations.

In Moscow, this therapy is also used to treat inflammation and viral diseases, and for rehabilitation after strokes and vascular diseases. In addition to this, HBO sessions are used to treat patients with diabetes mellitus and diabetic foot in order to improve blood circulation.

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