

"As early as the 1940's, when nuclear tests were not a consideration, Danishevskii, the founder of Soviet polar medicine, noted an elevated incidence of cancer of the esophagus among native residents of the North," says A. Volfson. "At that time, the possible causes he cited for this were the alternation of hot and cold food and the eating of raw food."

One can also point to the findings of pre-revolutionary researchers. Descriptions have been left of terrible epidemics which devastated entire nomad encampments. It was at that time, too, that the first fears were manifested over the fate of northern peoples. Their extinction was predicted. Whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, it was Soviet power which saved the aboriginal peoples of the North from a tragic fate.

Even today the situation with the health of northerners and their life span is rather dramatic. But the figures used by the Magadan scientists and Physicians are much lower than those cited by E. Gaer and V. Lupandin. The incidence of tuberculosis among the native population is five times higher than the level for the Oblast as a whole, but this represents only a few percentage points - not the 100 percent claimed.

Scientists and medical workers should find the causes of increased disease among northern peoples on the basis of comprehensive and careful studies not only of social conditions but also of the particularities of the aboriginal people's organism and its genetic immune system. For this, the first requirement is an all encompassing, reliable data bank.