

of syringes with water. Even those who know little about medicine are aware of why this document was signed. For many years, syringes and medical instruments were disinfected by boiling them in water for several hours. However, this has proved ineffective against certain dangerous viruses. For example, the hepatitis "B" virus retains its deadly properties even after prolonged boiling in water.

The high infant mortality and the uncontrollable outbreak of Staphylococcus aureus and other infections in maternity homes and gynecological clinics were proof of the helplessness of the medical personnel. Several years ago, the world was gripped by a deadly new terror: AIDS. Although scientists have joined together in the fight against this insidious virus, they have not yet been able to conquer it or give people some hope of protection against it.

Since 1 January 1986, syringes, forceps, clamps and other medical instruments have no longer been sterilized by boiling on electric stoves in clinics and hospitals (pursuant to an order issued by the USSR Minister of Health). Dry-heat and steam sterilizers have replaced the antiquated boiling method. This long overdue, but unquestionably beneficial innovation poses a problem for doctors, a problem which requires additional (and substantial) material outlays.

The instruments are now packed in cotton fabric or kraft paper when being subjected to heat treatment. However, cotton fabric scorches quickly in dry-heat sterilizers, and cannot be used over and over again. The bags made of kraft paper by in-patients of psychiatric clinics also have many disadvantages. First of all, they do not ensure