

REHABILITATION IN SUBTERRANEAN CONDITIONS IN PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASES

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At present, health care remains one of the main functions of the "Wieliczka" Salt Mine. Indications for rehabilitation and treatment in subterranean conditions include a range of chronic diseases of the upper and lower respiratory tract. Patients are admitted for a series of 6-hour stays in salt chambers of the mine. Rehabilitation activities include respiratory and general exercises as well as breath control training and bronchial cleansing procedures; the patients are also educated and have an opportunity to consult specialist physicians. This, combined with inhalation of salt-containing aerosol and stability of climatic circumstances, is expected to result in improvement of the patients' general condition, decrease of the number and severity of exacerbations, and reduced utilisation of emergency medicines, if applicable. Rehabilitation in subterranean conditions may be a valuable supplementary treatment method in patients with chronic respiratory diseases.