

June 24, 2021

Hospital Camp 21
Mordovia, Russia

(6)

Dear Jennifer,

Greetings from the Boneyard! I hope this letter finds you all doing well and enjoying the summer! Thank you very much for your nice story from earlier this month, as well as your follow up from Geneva!

I was sent to the hospital camp after people humiliated by the lack of medical care being reported globally attempted to cover themselves, by passing the buck. I have been here for 14 days without any medical care being provided. There has been no exam, no vital signs recorded, no diagnosis, no medication, and no treatment. Nothing happening!

The prison officials turned off my phone access, so I cannot speak to my family, nor the consulates. Russia blocks consular access whenever they can, regardless of conventions and treaties signed.

Doctors at Camp 21 in the woods (IK-17) had diagnosed high blood pressure and prescribed twice daily medication, but that is ignored here. A classic example of the dysfunction in health care here, eh?!

The bursitis on my elbow and kennel cough are due to poor conditions at the workhouse. Ergonomic injuries are common, as we repeat very similar motions hundreds of times a day. The air quality is poor due to the production process and a lack of air filtration. Issues that safety programs in our manufacturing communities have engineered out of similar production processes are simply not understood or ignored here.

These sorts of sweat shops would make OSHA inspectors cringe, as they shut down the operations. There are no health and safety programs, and health care here is not capable of addressing ergonomic issues, which occur daily, throughout the prison system, throughout the country.

The hospital camp is like the other ramshackle facilities. What is not crumbling is broken or simply doesn't work. Everything is left over from the soviet period. You would never guess this was a hospital, we would never consider it such in the First World, unfortunately!

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Guards are more interested in enforcing prison rules than recovery of patients, so insist no one sleeps during the day, wear out threats of solitary confinement for remaining in uniform (80° weather), as well as whining about people recovering from illness, reclining on their beds!

(no pictures on walls, nor any plants here) →

I am in an old one storey cement structure with wooden roof, which could use some work. The walls are pastel green in my shared room, as well as pastel blue in the corridor, and pastel orange in other rooms.

(my dog's LL Bean bed has much more stuffing)

The room I am in is 18' x 18' and holds eight patients. We have old metal prison beds and thin mattresses, with one sheet and one blanket, not to forget one pillow and pillow case. There are old broken cabinets next to our beds for personal effects. There are no chairs anywhere here at all.

Showers can be had twice a week at a building on the other side of the camp. Those too ill or injured are on their own, no candy stripes or sponge baths here. In the building where we live, there are only cold water, toilets without seats, no soap nor towels provided. People aren't encouraged nor inclined to wash their hands. Medical waste is thrown in the communal garbage bin in the restroom, so bloody bandages and needles go in with our refuse. There is no biohazard containment here.

Smoking is the main concern of most patients. A small exercise yard of 12' x 8' doubles as a place for smoking. Smokers often stand at the windows or smoke in the restroom, to avoid going outside in uniform.

(The horse likes my sugar cubes) → An old train car without wheels doubles as a library. A horse brings our meals on a cart from the kitchen to each building. Cats hang about, as they get our fish from dinner (they don't like the milk we get weekly).

There are insects everywhere! Bandage gauze covers windows, as there are no proper screens. Doors without screens are left open, thus defeating the gauze over the windows (Russian logic). No measures are taken for mitigation of the flies, which seek blood crusted bandages on patients!

(↑ Swaziland was less pest infested years ago!)