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## News release

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### **An earlier appeal to the specialist and timely diagnosis can save the lives of many patients**

- **The Second European Week for early diagnosis of head and neck cancer was held in Russia with information support of Merck Serono.**
- **Within 5 days more than 6,000 Russians were examined by a team of specialists which included an ENT, a dentist, and an oncologist.**

November 11, 2014, Moscow, Russia - Merck Serono, the biopharmaceutical division of Merck, in cooperation with the Federation of specialists in the treatment of head and neck diseases and the Russian society for head and neck tumors announced the results of the II European Week for early diagnosis of the head and neck cancer which took place in Russia in the period from September 22 to September 26, 2014.

Rogier Janssens, Director of the division of Merck Serono in Russia and CIS, said, "For several years Merck has supported the initiative of the European Head and Neck Society (EHNS) researchers to raise awareness about the symptoms of the disease among the population and specialists in order to reduce the senseless loss of lives due to late diagnosis. Nowadays, the majority of patients with head and neck cancer seek medical help at a later stage of the disease, which leads to worsening of prognosis of treatment outcomes".

Squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck (SCCHN) is one of the most complex medical and social problems of modern oncology. More than 500,000 new cases of malignant head and neck tumors occur worldwide every year and more than 300,000 patients die from this disease. In the structure of total cancer incidence the head and neck tumors account for approximately 20% and the absolute number of these patients increases every year.<sup>1,2</sup>

"More than 30 thousand of new cases of head and neck cancer are registered annually in Russia. About 15 thousand patients die from this disease each year. The main cause of the sad statistics is late diagnosis of cancer. Despite the available visual localization and the earlier onset of symptoms 70% of patients seek specialized help with the most advanced forms of the disease. Squamous cell carcinoma accounts for 90% of all malignant tumors of

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the head and neck. It is no secret that squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck organs is a long-developing process that becomes aggressive in most cases only in the later stages of disease. Thus, early diagnosis of cancer and precancerous diseases of the head and neck is a key factor that can affect the improved outcomes and increased survival rates. In this regard, such activities are an extremely important event in the life prognosis of patients with head and neck tumors." - said A.M.Mudunov MD, a surgical oncologist, Head of tumors of the upper respiratory tract, digestive FGBI "RCRC. NN Blokhin "RAMS, President of the All-Russian public organization "Russian Head and Neck Society".

The Second European Week for early diagnosis of head and neck cancer was performed in 17 areas of the Russian Federation: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Arkhangelsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, Krasnodar, Sochi, Anapa, Armavir, Novorossiysk, Rostov-on-Don, Volgograd, Kursk, Kemerovo, Chelyabinsk, Krasnoyarsk, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

"Getting together with the colleagues of the other specialities and organizing "The Days of Early Diagnosis" in our workplace, we have helped to raise the level of knowledge about head and neck cancer among the population and specialists, to examine more than six thousand people who applied with suspected tumors of the head and neck, and identify patients who need further examination and timely treatment," I.V.Reshetov President of the Russian Federation Head and Neck specialists community , Director of Clinical Research and Education Center of Plastic Surgery of the First Medical State University I.M. Sechenov, scientific consultant FGBI "MNIOI P.A. Herzen" MOH Russia, Head of the Department of Oncology and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery FGOBU" PKI FMBA of Russia ", Vice President for Innovation, Training Institute of FMBA of Russia, Corresponding Member of RAS, Doctor of Medicine, Professor; said. - Cancer and precancerous diseases were diagnosed in 10% of 6,500 applicants. These patients were taken under observation and sent for further examination".

Participants of this project believe that practice of weeks for early diagnosis of head and neck cancer will help to raise cancer awareness among the population as well as among professionals that will reduce the senseless loss of lives.

### Literature:

1. Hunter KD, et al. Nat Rev Cancer 2005;5:127-35
2. Ferlay J, et al. Int J Cancer 2010;127:2893-917

### About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical division of Merck. With headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, Merck Serono offers leading brands in 150 countries to help patients with cancer, multiple sclerosis, infertility, endocrine and metabolic disorders as well as cardiovascular diseases. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates as a separately incorporated subsidiary of Merck Serono.

Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines of both chemical and biological origin in specialist indications. We have an enduring commitment to deliver novel therapies in our core focus areas of neurology, oncology, immuno-oncology and immunology.

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For more information, please visit [www.merckserono.com](http://www.merckserono.com).

Merck is a leading company for innovative and top-quality high-tech products in the pharmaceutical and chemical sectors. With its four divisions Merck Serono, Consumer Health, Performance Materials and Merck Millipore, Merck generated total revenues of € 11.1 billion in 2013. Around 39,000 Merck employees work in 66 countries to improve the quality of life for patients, to further the success of customers and to help meet global challenges. Merck is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company – since 1668, the company has stood for innovation, business success and responsible entrepreneurship. Holding an approximately 70 percent interest, the founding family remains the majority owner of the company to this day. Merck, Darmstadt, Germany is holding the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are Canada and the United States, where the company is known as EMD.