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ASSESSMENT OF PREDISPOSITION TO ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR IN MILITARY PERSONNEL PERFORMING STATE SECURITY TASKS

This article presents the results of a study on the development of a methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among personnel of the National Guard of Ukraine engaged in state security tasks. The study involves identifying the personal characteristics of military personnel and categorizing them into one of seven types of predisposition to alcohol abuse. Additionally, it examines the factors in assigned tasks performance that contribute to the development of this predisposition. The article describes the step-by-step actions of officials in utilizing the methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU personnel. The results of the methodology's testing and its effectiveness evaluation in the military units and subdivisions of the National Guard of Ukraine are presented.

Keywords: *addictive behavior, predisposition, dependence, alcohol abuse, assigned tasks performance, extreme conditions, National Guard of Ukraine, state security.*

Statement of the problem. The issue of alcohol abuse among military personnel remains relevant in many countries worldwide. Despite legislative restrictions, penalties, and prevention programs aimed at addressing alcohol dependence and providing psychological and medical support in military units and subdivisions of the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU), this phenomenon persists. According to the moral support and welfare departments of the NGU Eastern Operational Territorial Command, 877 alcohol-related offenses were recorded in military units since the beginning of 2023. These include 821 cases under Article 172-20 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of Ukraine (drinking alcoholic or low-alcohol beverages or using narcotics on the premises of military units) and 56 cases under Article 130 (driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics). Unfortunately, there were also incidents involving the death of four servicemen caused by the actions of their intoxicated colleagues. Other researchers have also reported a significant number of alcohol-related incidents in military units.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for timely detection, diagnosis, and prevention of any forms of addictive behavior among military personnel, which could lead to alcoholism, drug addiction, or even suicide. The development of modern, valid, and reliable methods and methodologies for diagnosing and preventing addictive behavior among servicemen is a crucial task. Addressing this issue is essential for maintaining a high level of psychological security for individuals and the overall combat readiness of NGU units.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Issues related to diagnosing addictive behavior, specifically alcohol abuse, remain relevant in various countries worldwide. In a study by V. A. de Silva, N. Jayasekera, and R. Hanwella [4], it was found that the risk of alcohol consumption among Sri Lankan Navy personnel was lower in those who had witnessed deaths or injuries. Experiencing hostility from the civilian population was the only combat influence that significantly increased the risk of alcohol consumption. The research of J. L. Thomas, J. E. Wilk, L. A. Riviere, D. McGurk, C. A. Castro, and C. W. Hoge [5] has also gained prominence, recognizing alcohol or psychoactive substance abuse as a concurrent factor in PTSD, significantly complicating its course. Additionally, R. A. Hoopsick, D. L. Homish, B. M. Vest, and G. G. Homish [6] found that servicemen who had never engaged in combat operations experienced negative feelings of unfulfilled potential, which also served as a predictor of addictive behavior. Negative feelings due to a lack of combat experience were more characteristic of male personnel than female personnel. According to R. M. Bray, J. A. Fairbank, and M. E. Marsden [7], stress related to being in the military is a predictor of alcohol consumption

and smoking for female personnel. Comparing U.S. National Guard personnel who participated in combat operations with those who did not, R. A. Hoopsick, D. L. Homish, R. L. Collins, T. H. Nochajski, J. P. Read, and G. G. Homish [8] concluded that low resilience and the resulting psychosocial problems, rather than combat experience itself, lead to addictive behavior of personnel. In another study, R. A. Hoopsick, B. M. Vest, D. L. Homish, and G. G. Homish [9] found that issues related to acceptance or social victimization among U.S. National Guard personnel were associated with higher chances of alcohol consumption and non-medical use of prescription drugs. However, such issues did not lead to an increase in alcohol consumption cases.

Given these findings, researchers emphasize the importance of developing and using objective, valid, and reliable methods for diagnosing addictions, including biochemical and psychophysiological methods. While effective, these methods often lack the time and resources to be implemented comprehensively across military units. Therefore, this study will focus on the psychodiagnostic approach to studying addictive behavior, particularly the predisposition to alcohol abuse.

Historically, one of the earliest attempts to introduce a questionnaire method into addiction practice was the Jellinek Chart, proposed by E. Jellinek, which distinctly characterized the various stages of alcoholism development and the behavioral traits of the patient [10]. A review of scientific sources revealed that the most widely used questionnaire method in the United States today is the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test (MAST). This method has proven its utility as a tool for preliminary express diagnostics of alcoholism and can also be used in expert settings [11, 12]. One advantage of the MAST is its simplicity in administration and data processing. The MAST includes 25 questions that explore the impact of alcohol on interpersonal relationships, work efficiency, health, and more. The test takes about 10-15 minutes to complete, with scores ranging from 1 to 5, where the highest score indicates a severe condition, and the test sensitivity reaches 91.5 % [13]. However, some authors note that this method is not yet considered entirely perfect [12]. Other well-known and widely used tests include the Brief Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (BMAST), the MacAndrew Alcoholism Scale (MAC), and the Iowa Alcoholic Stage Index (IASI). Each of these tests consists of five sections (work, family, finances, interactions with police, health status) that help identify the early, middle, and late stages of alcoholism [10]. According to E. Harbutg, BMAST is a useful tool for distinguishing problem drinkers from non-problem drinkers within the general population and for identifying drinking patterns among these individuals [14]. Researchers G. Richter, P. G. Klemm, and M. Zahn, through multifactorial analysis involving 23 variables, identified 9 indicators, including 5 objective and 4 subjective ones, which allow for diagnosing both alcohol dependence and abuse in just 10 minutes [15]. One of the most widely used methods for psychodiagnosics of individual psychological characteristics is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and similar tests created based on it (MAC). Research conducted by F. Amiel-Lebigre and C. MacAndrew revealed that individuals suffering from alcoholism exhibit elevated MMPI scores on scales such as "depression," "hysteria," "psychasthenia," "paranoia," and "schizophrenia," similar to those observed in individuals with substance abuse disorders [16, 17].

The purpose of the article is to develop a methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among National Guard of Ukraine personnel. This methodology is based on specific situational factors influencing the personal development of personnel, as determined by their responses to the "Assessment of Alcohol Abuse Predisposition" questionnaire. It also aims to identify specific personality types among personnel that are prone to alcohol abuse.

Summary of the main material. The development of the methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among the National Guard of Ukraine personnel (NGU) involved several stages.

At the initial stage, we identified the factors influencing alcohol abuse, which were subsequently incorporated into the "Assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition among NGU personnel" questionnaire [18]. The development of the questionnaire involved analyzing 155 case files from internal investigations related to alcohol abuse incidents among personnel in various NGU units. Additionally, we considered the results of an expert assessment of the importance of these factors, using the a priori ranking method. The expert panel included 23 NGU officers, such as unit commanders, specialists from the NGU Psychological support service, and personnel specialists involved in conducting internal investigations related to alcohol abuse among personnel. The analysis results allowed us to identify the external factors most commonly associated with NGU personnel who were subjected to disciplinary action based on the results of internal investigations for the aforementioned incidents. Each factor was assigned a weighting coefficient.

The next stage in developing the methodology involved determining the personality profiles of military personnel with different types of predisposition to alcohol abuse. This research was retrospective, as it entailed identifying psychological predictors in 155 NGU military personnel who faced disciplinary action for committing offenses under the influence of alcohol. The study included data synthesis from their professional and psychological assessments conducted between 2016 and 2020.

In accordance with the order of the Commander of the National Guard of Ukraine dated March 31, 2017, no. 196, which approved the instruction on the organization and implementation of professional and psychological selection for the NGU, the study utilized the following methodologies: "Self-assessment of temperament structure" (B. M. Smirnov), "Methodology for determining the type of character and temperament accentuation" (K. Leonhard, H. Schmishek), "Progressive Matrices" (J. Raven, L. Penrose), "Closed questionnaire for studying the motives for professional choice among applicants to universities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine," the "16 personality factor questionnaire" (R. Cattell), and the multilevel personality questionnaire "Adaptability" (A. G. Maklakov). These methodologies provide an overall assessment of the personality development characteristics of military personnel, in accordance with the concept of B. G. Ananyev, describing temperament, abilities, character, motivation, willpower, and emotions.

The control group consisted of NGU personnel who joined the military service under a contract during this period (650 individuals).

The cluster analysis procedure enabled the identification of seven personality types among NGU military personnel predisposed to alcohol abuse. These types were compared with the data from the general sample of NGU military personnel and a sample of servicemen characterized by high professional efficiency, according to expert assessments. The "Adaptability" scale, which provides a generalized assessment of an individual's ability to adapt to new conditions and tolerance to change, was used as the segmentation criterion. The results obtained from the two stages of the study facilitated the development of a methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU military personnel. The structural block diagram of this methodology is illustrated in Figure 1. It consists of several blocks:

- determining the belonging of NGU military personnel to a personality type prone to alcohol abuse (*first block – steps 1–20*);
- determining the index of factors contributing to the predisposition to alcohol abuse (*second block – steps 21–28*);
- determining the Competency area of mental health prevention and control specialists for organizing and conducting work with military personnel prone to alcohol abuse (*third block – steps 29–35*).

Step 1. To implement the first block, the following input data are required :

- psychological diagnostics data from the following methodologies: "Self-assessment of temperament structure" (B. M. Smirnov), "Methodology for determining the type of character and temperament accentuation" (K. Leonhard, H. Schmishek), "Progressive matrices" (J. Raven), "Closed questionnaire for studying the motives for professional choice among applicants to universities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine" (A. P. Moskalenko, D. O. Kobzin, A. A. Starodubtsev);
- biographical data.

Step 2. Formation of criteria constituting personality types prone to alcohol abuse.

In this step, the criteria forming the personality types of personnel prone to alcohol abuse are established. The total number of components for each criterion is denoted as K_i^{\max} .

The number of components for each type is as follows:

types 1, 2, 3, and 5 – 10 components each; type 4 – 9 components; types 6 and 7 – 8 components each.

Step 3. Setting requirements for the criterion.

After processing and analyzing the statistical data, it was decided to set the requirements for the criterion according to the expression:

$K_i^{\text{tr}} = K_i^{\max} - 2$, where K_i^{\max} – is the total number of components for the criterion.

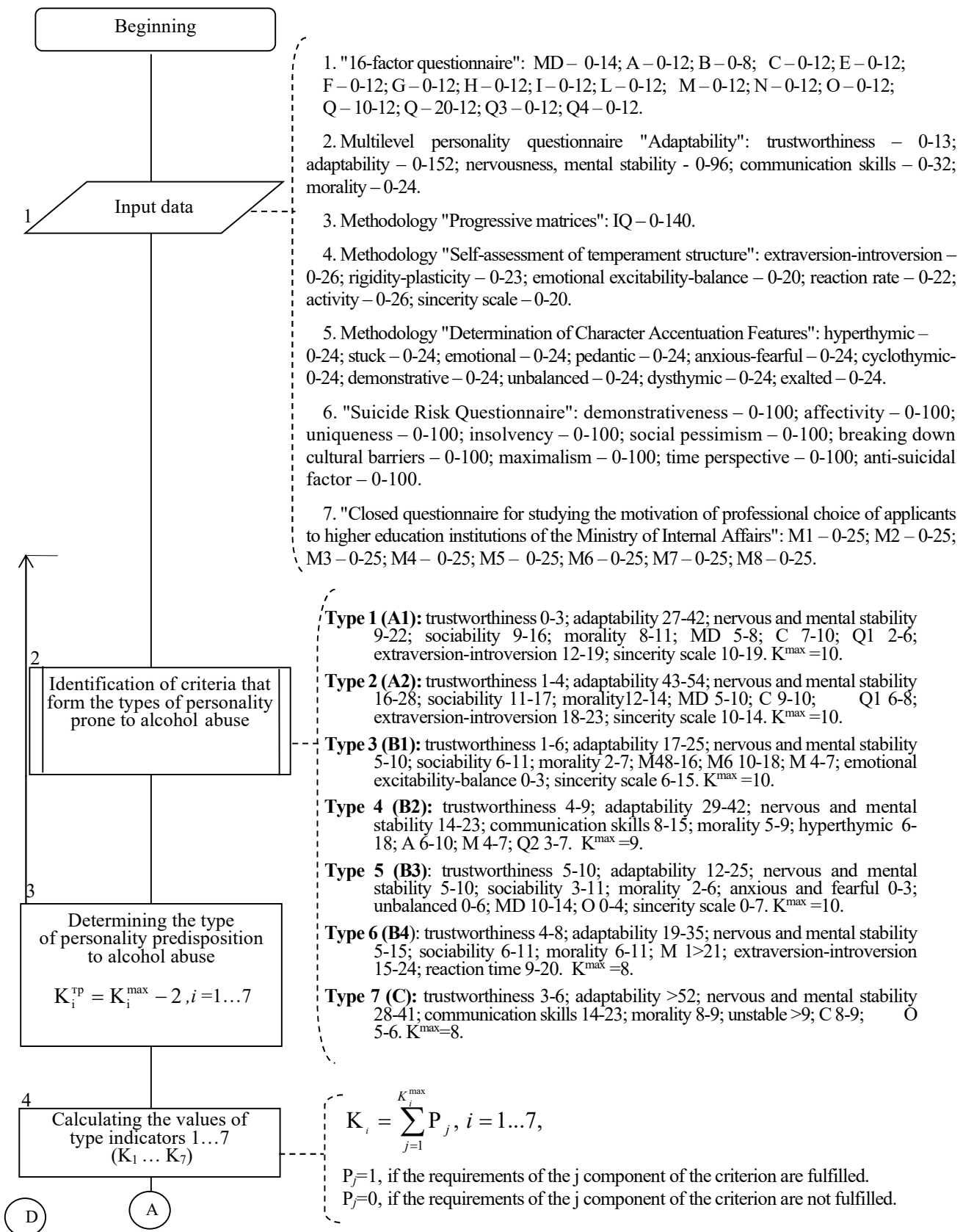


Figure 1 – Block diagram of the methodology for assessing the tendency to abuse alcohol among NGU personnel (sheet 1)

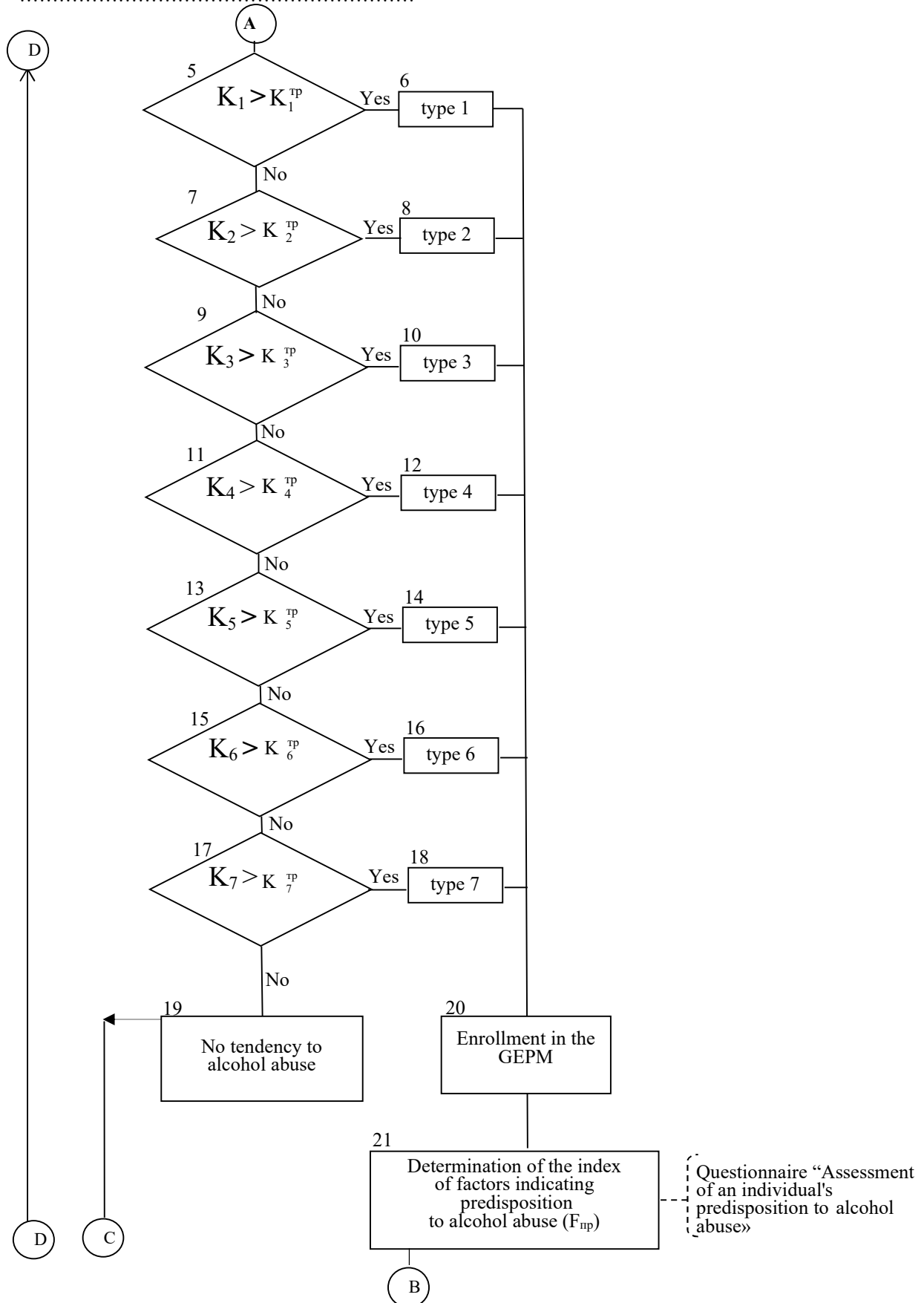


Figure 1 – Block diagram of the methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU military personnel (sheet 2)

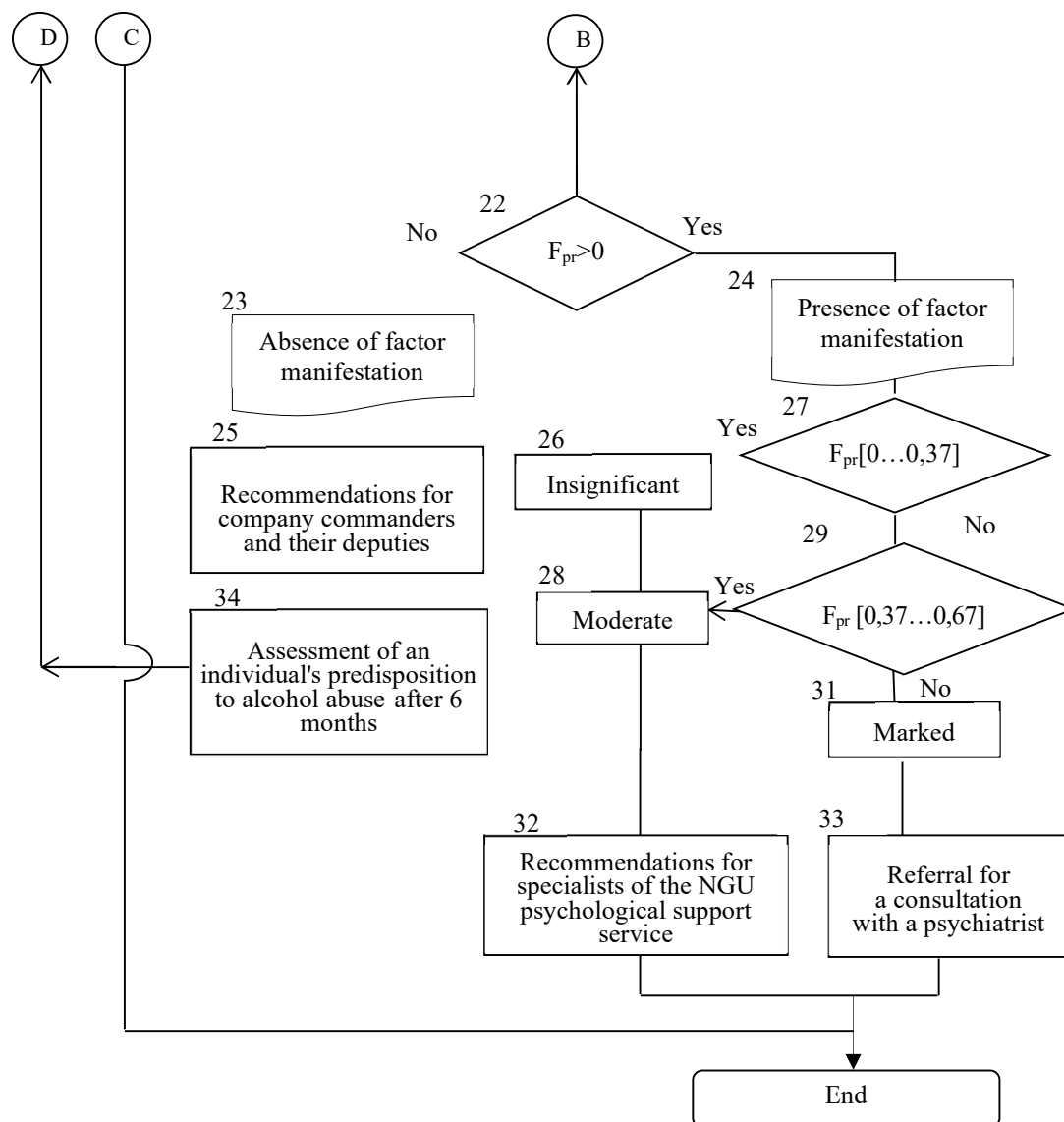


Figure 1 – Block diagram of the methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU military personnel (sheet 3)

Step 4 involves calculating the values of the indicators for each personality type of servicemen predisposed to alcohol abuse, according to the following expression:

$$K_i = \sum_{j=1}^{K_i^{\max}} P_j, i = 1...7,$$

where P_j – indicator of compliance with the criterion requirement.

The indicator of fulfillment of the requirements of the criterion takes the value 1 if the requirement j is fulfilled by the component of the criterion, and 0 if it is not fulfilled. In this case, we obtain the value of the total indicator of one of the personality types of servicemen prone to alcohol abuse, which can take the following values $0 \leq K_i \leq K_i^{\max}$.

In the following steps, 5 through 18, the obtained indicators are compared with the established values in accordance with the required accuracy criteria, and the personality types of servicemen predisposed to alcohol abuse are determined. The comparison is conducted sequentially, starting with type 1 (steps 5–6) and ending with type 7 (steps 17–18).

If the conditions in *steps 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, or 17* are not met, it is predicted that such servicemen do not belong to any of the types and are not predisposed to alcohol abuse (*step 19*). In such cases, specialists from the Psychological support service discontinue further psychological work in this direction for these servicemen and conduct regular psychological support activities instead.

Servicemen identified with one of the types predisposed to alcohol abuse require more in-depth psychological study and enhanced psychological attention (*step 20*). The presence of a type is an important condition indicating a predisposition to alcohol abuse, but it does not confirm that they will necessarily abuse alcohol in the future. For these guardians, it is necessary to identify factors that contribute to the development of this predisposition. To determine the indicator of the influence level of these factors, the "Assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition among NGU military personnel" questionnaire is used (*step 21*). This questionnaire summarizes typical factors for NGU military personnel and assigns them weighting coefficients as potential triggers for negative experiences.

If a guardian exhibits at least one of the identified factors, the subsequent psychological work involves delineating professional competencies among specialists in mental health prevention and control (*steps 27–34*). To obtain and process qualitative information using quantitative methods, we employed the Harrington verbal-numerical scale, which includes descriptive factors for its gradation and corresponding numerical intervals: insignificant [0...0.37]; moderate [0.37...0.67]; pronounced [0.67...1].

Thus, if a guardian scores [0.67...1] on the questionnaire, they should be referred for a consultation with a psychiatrist. If the score is [0...0.67], the psychologist conducts psychoprophylactic activities with the serviceman according to an individual psychoprophylactic work plan. If no factors identified in the questionnaire are related to the guardian, the psychologist undertakes planned psychological support measures and provides recommendations to unit commanders and their deputies for social support, morale and welfare considering the personality's predisposition to alcohol abuse. A critical condition is the reevaluation of the predisposition factors to alcohol abuse after 6 months, as these factors may become relevant to the guardian during their military service.

The developed methodology was tested for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU personnel in units of the Eastern Operational Territorial Command (units 3017, 3005, 3035).

The results of the assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition among NGU personnel were as follows: the study used the results of psychodiagnostic examinations of 31 guardians who were subjected to disciplinary action for alcohol abuse while performing assigned tasks in 2023. The total sample was representatively composed of military units from the Eastern Operational Territorial Command of the National Guard of Ukraine, specifically: 3005 – 10 servicemen; 3017 – 10 servicemen; 3035 – 11 servicemen. The results of their psychodiagnostic examinations were statistically processed to determine the type of predisposition to alcohol abuse.

Out of the total sample, 27 servicemen (87 %) were classified into one of the seven identified types: types 1 and 4 – 4 servicemen each (14.8 % each); types 2, 3, 5 – 3 servicemen each (11.1 % each); type 6 – 9 servicemen (33.3 %); type 7 – one serviceman (3.7 %). The remaining servicemen (13 %) did not meet the criteria for the defined types. The "Assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition" questionnaire was used to determine the level of influence of factors on the servicemen classified into one of the seven personality types predisposed to alcohol abuse. The level of influence of factors on the servicemen was determined as follows: "insignificant" – 20 servicemen (74 %); "moderate" – 6 servicemen (22.2 %); "pronounced" – one serviceman (3.7 %).

Thus, the use of the methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU servicemen, who were subjected to disciplinary action according to the results of internal investigations, confirmed its capability (up to 87 %) to identify the personality traits of NGU servicemen. This allows for categorizing them into one of the seven types of predisposition to alcohol abuse, as well as identifying the assigned tasks performance factors that contribute to the development of this predisposition.

Conclusions

The developed methodology for assessing the predisposition to alcohol abuse among NGU personnel is advisable to be used at the following stages: individual assessment using psychodiagnostic methods that comply with the requirements of the order of the NGU Commander dated March 31, 2017, no. 196 "Instruction on the procedure for organizing and conducting professional and psychological selection in the NGU"; expert assessment using the "Assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition" questionnaire; providing practical recommendations to officials of military management bodies.

The use of psychodiagnostic methods allows for identifying the affiliation of servicemen of the National Guard of Ukraine to one of the seven types of predisposition to alcohol abuse. Expert assessment using the "Assessment of alcohol abuse predisposition among NGU servicemen" questionnaire, conducted by the immediate commander or the deputy company commander for social support, morale and welfare, enables the evaluation of situations that either contribute to or prevent the development of this predisposition. Future research directions include developing practical recommendations for officials on organizing and conducting preventive measures against addictive behavior among personnel of the National Guard of Ukraine.

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ОЦІНЮВАННЯ СХИЛЬНОСТІ ДО АДИКТИВНОЇ ПОВЕДІНКИ ВІЙСЬКОВОСЛУЖБОВЦІВ, ЯКІ ВИКОНУЮТЬ ЗАВДАННЯ ІЗ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ДЕРЖАВНОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ

Розглянуто результати дослідження з розроблення методики оцінювання схильності до зловживання алкоголем військовослужбовцями Національної гвардії України, які виконують завдання із забезпечення державної безпеки. Дослідження полягає у визначенні особистісних особливостей військовослужбовців із подальшим віднесенням їх до одного із семи типів схильності до зловживання алкоголем, а також у виявленні чинників службово-бойової діяльності, що сприяють розвитку цієї схильності. Описано покрокові дії посадових осіб щодо використання методики оцінювання схильності до зловживання алкоголем військовослужбовців Національної гвардії України. Наведено результати апробації цієї методики та оцінювання її ефективності у військових частинах і підрозділах Національної гвардії України.

Розроблення методики схильності до зловживання алкоголем військовослужбовцями НГУ передбачало декілька етапів. На першому етапі дослідження нами визначалися чинники, що впливають на зловживання алкоголем і які в подальшому ввійшли до опитувальника «Оцінювання схильності до зловживання алкоголем військовослужбовцями НГУ».

Під час наступного етапу визначалися профілі особистості військовослужбовців НГУ з різним типом схильності до зловживання алкоголем. Це дослідження мало ретроспективний характер, адже визначення психологічних предикторів 155 військовослужбовців НГУ, притягнутих до дисциплінарної відповідальності за скоєння правопорушення у стані алкогольного сп'яніння, передбачало узагальнення даних їхнього професійного психологічного відбору за 2016–2020 рр.

За процедурою кластерного аналізу було визначено 7 типів особистості військовослужбовців НГУ, схильних до зловживання алкоголем, їхні дані порівнювалися з даними загальної вибірки військовослужбовців НГУ та вибірки військовослужбовців, які за даними експертного оцінювання характеризуються високою професійною ефективністю. Як критерії сегментування використано шкали методики «Адаптивність», що дає узагальнену оцінку особливостей пристосування особистості до нових умов, її толерантності до змін. Отримані за двома етапами проведеного дослідження результати дали змогу розробити методику оцінювання схильності до зловживання алкоголем військовослужбовцями НГУ.

Ключові слова: адиктивна поведінка, схильність, залежність, зловживання алкоголем, службово-бойова діяльність, екстремальні умови, Національна гвардія України, державна безпека.

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