

Ukrainian prosthetics specialists are able to rehabilitate patients more effectively thanks to Metinvest's Saving Lives initiative

With the support of the Saving Lives humanitarian initiative of Metinvest Group, the Ukrainian prosthetics and related rehabilitation specialists have completed an intensive training programme organised by Protez Hub in Lviv in early June this year. Physical therapists were trained in the use of early verticalization equipment, which is unique for Ukraine and was purchased for rehabilitation specialists by Metinvest with donor support. In total, the Group will provide ten health care institutions in Ukraine with such equipment.



Leading American and British experts in prosthetics and rehabilitation for lower limb amputation shared their experience with 20 physical therapists and 10 prosthetics technicians from different regions of Ukraine. Prosthetics technicians gained practical experience in manufacturing lower limb prostheses for complex amputations at the hip level using the latest effective technology that has not been used in Ukraine before.

"Today in Ukraine, prosthetics specialists, unfortunately, face complex cases of amputations, which are compounded by concomitant injuries due to mine-blast trauma, contusions or infections. For the effective rehabilitation of such patients, it is important for the physical therapist and prosthetics technician to work as a team. It is very valuable for us to have the opportunity to study the experience of highly qualified foreign rehabilitation specialists who are ready to come and teach us how to help in difficult cases using the example of our patients. I am grateful to Prosthetika and Protez Hub for organising the experience exchange programme," Oksana Zholnovych, Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine, said.

The therapists improved their knowledge by working with patients in preparation for prosthetics, as well as training with a prosthesis for complex amputations at the hip level.

They were also trained in the use of the PPAM Aid device for early verticalization of patients with lower limb amputations and are now ready to put their new knowledge into practice in their own facilities. The device allows patients to walk and prepare for prosthetics in a short time after surgery and before the first prosthesis is made. This equipment will make the rehabilitation of patients with lower limb amputations much more effective and qualitatively shorten the period of pre-prosthetic rehabilitation.

Metinvest Group will provide this new equipment to 10 healthcare and social assistance institutions in seven regions of Ukraine. The first to receive the device for verticalization of patients was the state non-profit enterprise Halychyna Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centre, which has already started using it.

"As the war continues, the number of people in need of prosthetic limbs in Ukraine is unfortunately growing. The Saving Lives initiative of Metinvest provides prosthetic limbs to the military and civilians with amputations. We supported the creation of the first online educational platform in Ukraine in the field of limb prosthesis. We are interested in ensuring that people who have sacrificed their health for the sake of all of us return to full life as soon as possible and with the least possible discomfort. This is exactly what the early

verticalization equipment, which is now available in Ukraine thanks to the Saving Lives project, provides to the injured. It is currently being used by Lviv specialists, and will be supplied to nine more rehabilitation centres in different parts of the country," Tetiana Petruk, Director of Sustainable Development and People Management of Metinvest Group, said.

The project partners are Prosthetika, World Rehabilitation Fund, Patients of Ukraine Charitable Foundation, the Ukrainian Association of Physical Therapists and the Ukrainian Community of Thailand. The programme is supported by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

"I am immensely grateful to the organisers for the opportunity to attend such a high-level training. I am happy to learn new things and confirm my knowledge. My experience of working with amputees is mostly pre-prosthetic rehabilitation, starting from the acute period. But I had a lot of questions about further actions, and after the training, 90% of the questions were closed. After our training, prosthetics technicians get strong, trained patients without contractures, with good balance and the ability to use assistive devices. With formed stumps and the ability to apply a bandage," Daria Krapiva, rehabilitation specialist at the Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine Department of the City Clinical Hospital No. 4 of the Dnipro City Council, says.

The Saving Lives initiative was created by Metinvest Group in coordination with Rinat Akhmetov Foundation at the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Over the 15 months of the full-scale war, the project has helped nearly 500,000 people in 70 territorial communities. Ukrainians have received about 4,200 tonnes of food and hygiene products, and hospitals have received medicines, supplies and equipment worth €250,000.

The project involved nearly 200 companies from around the world, 400 volunteers and 10 foundations and non-governmental organizations. Over the course of more than a year, the amount of donor assistance has exceeded €2.7 million.

The main areas of the Saving Lives activity include prosthetics and rehabilitation of military and civilians, as well as psychological recovery of women and children.