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Peculiarities of the health crisis in Belarus as reflected by long-term mortality trends by causes of death

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Compared to the other countries of the former USSR, mortality trends in Belarus have received very little attention. The situation in this country does, however, deserve scrutiny, as mortality trends in Belarus have exhibited some peculiarities both in the past and at present. This paper provides an assessment of the changes in epidemiological situation in Belarus over the last half century. The analysis is based on the detailed cause-specific mortality data which were harmonized using *the method of reconstruction*. Its results suggest the persisting nature of the health crisis. While in the 1990s the relatively moderate mortality increase in Belarus could be interpreted as demonstrating the merits of the 'quasi-socialist' Belarusian model, now, it is clear that this small 'success' was really temporal, and the root problems were not resolved. High mortality from cardiovascular diseases and excessive violent and alcohol-related mortality have still remained the major public health threats.