

Resource and Information Maintenance of Foreign Citizens in Russia: Statement of a Problem

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of studied problem is determined by the fact that in a multiethnic country the problem of the ethno-cultural specificity of different groups of people is extremely severe, and the activity of the processes of intercultural communications in the modern world requires knowledge and understanding of other cultures. The aim of the article lies in justification of the necessity of information support of the process of adaptation of foreign citizens coming to Russia with business, educational or tourism purposes. A leading approach to the study of this problem is practice-oriented approach to creating conditions for social and cultural adaptation of foreign citizens in Russia. The following results were obtained in the results of the study: the necessity of developing theoretical and practical foundations of resource and information support for foreigners from abroad who plan to visit Russia was proved; authors' vision of scientific bases of formation of the target resource and information content was outlined; the project of creating such content was presented. The article materials can be useful for researches in the field of pedagogy and teaching Russian as a foreign language, teachers, postgraduate students, undergraduates and students of a direction "pedagogical education".

KEYWORDS

Competences, human capital, teacher's labour, university graduate

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Introduction

In a modern world visitation of different countries with the purpose of business, education or tourism creates wide possibilities for enriching knowledge about the country of residence, expanding communicative relations with people of other nationalities, getting idea about culture, traditions, customs of people of other nationalities. Knowledge and understanding of socio-cultural specifics of a

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society speaking other language in which a foreigner finds himself, helps to avoid cultural shock and work out tolerant attitude towards alien culture and, therefore, avoid aggression that frequently takes place because of cultural lacunae, explained by ignorance, and often by unwillingness to understand peculiarities of a foreign language culture. A problem of aggressive attitude towards representatives of other cultures is especially urgent in the XXI-st century in spite of declared equality of all nations and mutual intercultural respect.

A problem of socio-cultural adaptation of foreigners may manifest especially acute in multinational and, accordingly, multicultural countries. Russian Federation is one of multinational countries in which over the period of many centuries live nations, confessing various religions (Russian Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.), relating to different ethno-cultural societies that often have different cultural values and traditions. Besides, people from many countries visit Russia on different purposes. According to the information of Federal Agency on Tourism, 32 421 490 people from 251 countries moved into Russia in 2014, 26 486 839 people – in 9 months 2015 (Data on entry of foreign citizens into Russian Federation.). Due to the increase of business and tourist activity of foreigners, and also activation of labor and educational migration of foreigners from CIS countries (their goals and fulfillment of the program of stay in the country are significantly different), the problem of providing optimal conditions for intercultural communication and integration (temporary or constant) into social stratum newcomers from nearest-neighbour and other countries is most urgent in modern Russia.

Big number of foreigners coming into Russia on different purposes call forth the necessity of creating resource and information stratum (Yoshida et al., 2015) for providing needs of foreign speaking people with, first, receiving socio-cultural information that is needed for adaptation in Russia, second – for teaching Russian as a foreign language people from nearest-neighbour and other countries. Without considering in details matters of teaching Russian to the mentioned categories of foreign students we will specify that with the community of teaching principles, methods may differ depending on students' contingent. Migrants, that come to Russia in order to get job or education, need to get socialized in Russian society. Foreigners from other countries, who mainly come to the country on business or as tourists for a short period of time, do not face this problem. Even study in a Russian higher education facility does not presuppose as a rule deeper socializing in Russian society for foreigners from faraway countries, as their task is not to stay in Russia for a longer period of time. Difference in practical goals stipulate peculiarities of the content of language training courses for foreign students from nearest-neighbour and other countries.

Literature Review

Irrespective of the goal of stay in an alien country, including Russia, any foreign citizen needs preliminary training for long time or short time enter into society with another language and culture. Internet being the main source of information in our days, in order to receive information about the country of residence or a visit, and to fill in socio-cultural lacunae with information, necessary for adaptation, it is wise and convenient to address to information contents.

Big amount of Russian and foreign research works is devoted to the use of computer information technologies in teaching process, including teaching foreign languages (Anderson & Corbett, 2013; Atabekova, 2008; Azimov, 2008; Bogomolov, 2008; Corbett & Phipps, 2006; Dunaeva, 2006; Dyomina, 2010; Evtyugina, Simonova&Fedorenko, 2016;Gartsov, 2009; Khromov, 2012; Mayer, 2009; Semenova&Slepukhin, 2013; Staritchenko, 2013). Yet problems of resource and information provision of educational process, especially in linguo-didactics, far from being solved.

As is shown by the study, there are many information resources, containing data about Russia, including those for a foreign user; but there is a lack of contents, containing authentic materials from different spheres of life of Russian society and state as well as free access training online courses that form and develop socio-cultural competence. This study is not aimed to criticizing websites' content, but will throw light on some problems of information contents, addressed to the foreigners, and define ways of solving problems of information filling of Internet sources.

Let us designate main problems of information search for a foreigner, planning to visit Russia. First, main data array of websites contain only translations into English, which narrows the users' range significantly (<http://www.russianlessons.net>, <http://www.sut.ru/>, <http://www.russianforfree.com>, http://www.training-classes.com/programs/00/60/6062_russian_lessons_via_skype.php, <http://speakrussian.blogspot.com/>, <http://langintro.com/rintro/index.htm>, <http://www.tasteofrussian.com/>, <http://www.russianmentor.net>, <http://www.russianmentor.net/ePortfol/russian.htm#BookMark4b>, etc.).

As the study shows, some websites contain translations into Russian and some other oriental (or Asian) languages, as, for instance, website "It is time to speak Russian" (http://www.speak-russian.cie.ru/time_new/); majority of sources as, for instance, data portal "Education in Russian", created on the base of Institute of Russian Language named after A.S. Pushkin (<https://pushkininstitute.ru/about>), declare their goal as remote teaching Russian, advanced training of teachers of Russian, creating of a network of mass online-courses in Russian for people of any age, studying Russian, and a social network for subject communication of users. At the same time, volume of information, presented on nowadays websites, addressed to the foreigners, is limited either by a study purpose, or by topical frames. In general, analyzed resources may be divided into several categories: data-informative, teaching and of generally cultural character (Russian world <http://russian-world.info/rki-portaly/>, Russian language for children abroad <http://abvgd.russian-russisch.info/>, http://www.twirpx.com/files/languages/russian_foreign/ and others). Majority of the resources is oriented on learning Russian as a foreign language.

Information and reference resources are a convenient tool in teaching process: the teacher (trainer) selects didactic materials, forms and methods of teaching. Resources of generally cultural character facilitate in forming and expansion of cultural environment. Yet, in the conditions of self-training of a foreigner, willing to visit Russia, it is quite difficult to orientate in a great number of resources with very diverse information. Besides, there is an evident lack of sources, containing authentic materials about Russia of both teaching



and information and reference character from various fields of life. Therewith, as it was mentioned above, in a multinational country it is important that one should be ready to peculiarities of communication with representatives of various ethno-cultural, religious, social and other groups to avoid extrapolation of behavior stereotypes of so called titular ethnic group over the behavior of all the population of the country. Such approach to selection and systematization of materials, their arrangement in virtual space that is convenient to foreign users does not exist at present. There is an absence of virtual resources that would accumulate information about socio-cultural space of different regions of Russia. There is no systematic study of the modern state of resource and information space for foreign citizens coming to Russia with business, educational or tourist purposes from nearest-neighbour and faraway countries. There is no doubt that scientific research in this area is being conducted, but it needs to be continued. At present the need in both working out scientific base of forming such targeted content addressed to the foreigners and creating such content itself became burning.

Materials and Methods

Research methods

The following methods were used during the research: methodological principle of historiography tradition; content analysis method, and theoretical analysis and synthesis; context analysis, semasiological analysis, definition analysis, conceptual analysis, motivational analysis of vocabulary, stylistic analysis of texts (fiction, official an business), discursive analysis in the context of genre approach; methods of monitoring.

Experimental base of the research

The experimental base of the research was the Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University.

Stages of the research

Development of resource and information maintenance of a foreigner's adaptation to the specific of life in a poly-cultural society of Russia presupposes complex study of modern resource and information provision in theoretical and practical aspects: working out website with generally cultural, linguistic and ethnographic (regional) content for fulfilling linguistic and cultural needs of foreign students in making familiar with Russian language and culture or in getting prepared to such learning.

The study presupposes in its base a principle of objective reality, that is a thorough consideration of factors and conditions in which a foreign citizen will have to proceed a remote independent preparation to a visit to Russia depending on the goal of a visit (it is evident, that goals of tourists from European countries or America and labor migrants from CIS countries will differ substantially). The task of authors' body is to single out and evaluate possible variants of solving the problem of adaptation of different categories of foreign citizens and to create a model of remote maintenance of the process of preparation and adaptation to the conditions of stay in Russia (Davydova et al., 2016).

Such study presupposes the use of methodological principle of historiography tradition, that is considering results of former scientific study of

the mentioned problem, and also the principle of unity of theory and practice. It is necessary to prepare analytical reports about the study status of the problem with the use of content analysis method, and theoretical analysis and synthesis. Their use makes it possible to get an idea about problems in providing sufficient conditions for preparation and adaptation of foreign citizens to life, work and getting education in different regions of Russia, that are not solved yet.

Elaboration of materials for filling in a web-source presupposes the use of methods that are typical for linguistic, ethno-linguistic, linguistic-cultural and literature studies: context analysis, semasiological analysis, definition analysis, conceptual analysis, motivational analysis of vocabulary, stylistic analysis of texts (fiction, official and business), discursive analysis in the context of genre approach and others.

In order to evaluate effectiveness of selected approaches, methods, developed resources and their correction it is necessary to use methods of qualitative and quantitative evaluation, method of public opinion poll, method of testing, observation of peculiarities of teaching foreign students, collection of statistic information about attendance of content (traffic), i.e. various methods of monitoring.

Results

Regional principle of organizing targeted virtual content

Practice shows, that majority of foreign citizens, visiting Russia for the first time, including students and labor youth from CIS countries, before coming into the country as a rule have insufficient idea about the region of Russia, where they are planning to live. Of course, it is primarily deals with foreigners who speak poor Russian or do not speak at all, but even those who studied Russian and may have general idea about Russia, have only superficial knowledge of peculiarities of definite regions if any. To a large extent such situation is explained by the fact that in learner's guides for students of Russian as a foreign language information about different regions of Russia is poorly presented. Yet, the importance of access to such knowledge is obvious as it gives vast knowledge in history and culture, geography and social environment that may help a foreigner to get prepared and adopted to stay in a definite region of the country.

Main resources of systematized information about life of a city and a region that are attended by foreigners are virtual contents and teaching aids, including remote courses of Russian as a foreign language. Teaching aids in Russia, that were issued predominantly in capital city editions, present information about Moscow, St. Petersburg or about the country in general, practically including no interesting information about other regions of Russia. Having analyzed big amount of popular teaching aids for elementary and base levels of Russian as a foreign language, we have not found a single one that would contain diverse information about regions of Russia. Virtual sources provide with more information, yet without system and on different websites, that often handicaps search especially if a user needs general information from various spheres (culture, sociology, geography, history, ethnography etc.), or he does not know what definite data he needs.

In connection with this, actual is the task of creating published and virtual sources with information about cultural originality of Russia in general and of



some of its regions, as first impressions about the place of residence may influence further decision making about place of work or study and form positive attitude towards region or country in general. Regional peculiarities manifest in all spheres of social life, which is explained by both by geographical and, accordingly, climatic peculiarities, and national structure of the population.

At present Russian Federation includes 85 constituent territories. For all that, living conditions in, say, in North-Caucasian federal district including republics Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachai-Cherkessia and others, and in Ural federal district, including Sverdlovsk, Tyumen, Chelyabinsk, Kurgan districts, and also Khanty-Mansi and Yamal-Nenets autonomous areas, differ significantly from geographical location and climate to traditions, including peculiarities of spoken communication, as people of those regions may use not only vocabulary in general use, but also key ideas of their national culture. Hence, for a socio-cultural adaptation of a foreign citizen for living conditions in Russia, it is not sufficient to know peculiarities of culture, social conditions of life and rules of behavior of titular ethnic group only. It is important to have an idea of regional peculiarities and ethno-cultural specific (including ethno-linguistic) of the place, where a foreign citizen intends to live, work, study or travel. Only in that case a full-fledged adaptation of a foreigner to new conditions of a long term or a short term stay in the country is possible.

Authors of this article live in Urals region which is known with its cultural and historical, geographical and social originality. Besides, it is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional area. It is known, that on the territory of Ural federal district live representatives of over 120 ethnic groups; act representatives of over 40 religious confessions, which forms originality of the region as each of ethnic and confessional groups has own history and cultural traditions; to know those is important and interesting from the point of view of inter-cultural communication. It is also important that historically the Urals is a multi-ethnic area, which is reflected in documents, fiction, architecture, and, accordingly, may be used during elaboration of resource and information content and also didactic materials, including learning aids and dictionaries.

As it was mentioned above, foreigners from faraway countries come to Russia predominantly as tourists for a short time; this is why they are interested mostly in socio-cultural information, connected with history, architecture, plastic arts, food and nutrition culture, etc. In this respect it is supposed to fill in resource content with information about historical landmarks, architecture, traditions, meals, modern rules of life in social stratum, etc. As it was mentioned above, there is insufficient amount of printed and virtual sources of information with regional component in wide access; for all that the need for such information exists in among those who learn Russian language and culture to get to know life of the country in order to broaden the outlook, and those who come to Russia with narrow utilitarian goals. This is why practice teachers and also representatives of receiving party usually prepare their own materials, reflecting peculiarities of the area, which the foreigner visits. For example, practical work on short term courses with Finns displayed their interest in social and cultural aspects of life of Ural people, especially: "Urals Cuisine", "Sauna traditions in the Urals", "Mayonnaise" (manufacture of mayonnaise in Yekaterinburg Fat Products Facility); accordingly, the program was worked out with consideration of communication and activity aspect, presupposing

accompaniment of Russian language classes with visiting restaurant with Urals Cuisine, sauna and the facility, producing mayonnaise.

For students from nearest-neighbour countries, particularly from countries of Central Asian and Caucasian regions, such information is not urgent. More important is information about geographical and climatic peculiarities, modern social conditions, toponymy of the Urals, as they have to travel around the region or hear from their colleagues or student mates and local people names of places (toponyms) in which it is desirable to get orientated. Besides, important is information about possible places of work (the Urals is known as an industrial area), receiving education, state institutions and their location, features of transport, and so on. Practice teachers who deal with training foreign students from nearest-neighbour countries work in this very direction. For example, for foreign students from Physical Training Faculty of the University teaching of various kinds of speech habits on the base of information about well known in the Urals Chusovaya river is possible. Reading training may be performed on extracts from a story of well known Urals' classical writer D.N. Mamin-Sibiryak "River Chusovaya", adopted for training foreign students. Learning vocabulary and grammar on the base of the said material should be accompanied by a multimedia presentation, into which may be included fragments from feature films, that were shot on Chusovaya ("Ugryum – reka", "Volga-Volga", "The Demidovs" and others), pictures of the river itself, celebrations and festivals, that are made on its shores (hikers' festival "Urals Mountain Ridge", rafting festival "Big Water", and also rafting festivals "Powersaw Bench", "Energy of life" and others). Study of various vocabulary and grammar topics and teaching reading on the base of material about Chusovaya river may anticipate a country-study excursion that will be of interest to foreign students who go in for sports as information, directly connected with received impressions, is the most meaningful.

For the purpose of optimum training it is necessary to aggregate information about socio-cultural specifics of the place of residence of a foreigner on an accessible web-source. Foreign citizen should be given an opportunity to find in Internet an accessible web-source that would contain all information, necessary to a foreigner: about culture and history of Russia, about geographic and climatic peculiarities of the region, its infrastructure, educational facilities, procedures to pass complex examination in Russian language, history of Russia, essentials of laws of Russian Federation for migrants, wishing to get job permit, residence permit or citizenship; about centers where an examination may be passed; about sequence of language test for foreigners from faraway countries, learning Russian (it should be noted, that testing of foreigners from nearest-neighbour and faraway countries differs significantly in Russian educational system) and others. Absence of such contents for citizens from nearest-neighbour countries, including CIS countries, is a main problem. Though, as the practice shows, it is also difficult to orientate in Russian social, including educational infrastructure for foreigners from faraway countries, this is why they often seek help of native speakers, who orientate themselves in cobwebs of Russian system of life quite well.

In connection with the aforesaid it is important to underline that all-round information facilitates optimum adaptation of foreign citizens, as it removes linguistic and psychological barriers, and helps to avoid cultural shock, which



often prevents representatives of other linguistic cultures from getting integrated into Russian society.

Scientific fundamentals of elaborating targeted virtual content

Integrity of the study consists in:

(1) its interdisciplinary approach, that manifests in scientific grounding of filling targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens by employing materials from various fields of scientific knowledge: spoken communication, linguistics, literature study, history, region's study, sociology, language and culture study, ethnology, ethnography, IT technologies;

(2) in the variety of methods used, that belong to different sciences: general science (method of scientific modeling, method of theoretical analysis and synthesis, etc.), linguistic (context analysis, semasiological analysis, definition analysis, conceptual analysis, motivation analysis of the vocabulary, stylistic analysis of texts, discursive analysis, etc.), methods of social sciences and humanities (method of public opinion poll, statistics method, etc.);

(3) in synthesis of theory and practice: theoretical significance of the study is in the elaboration of scientific principles and approaches towards presentation of the material in targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens; application meaning of the study is in accumulating materials from various fields of scientific and applied knowledge in order to form targeted resource and information content in Russian for foreign citizens; it will result in elaborating website for foreign citizens, compiling information on the base of regional principle and also on principle of addressed organization of data presented for foreigners from nearest-neighbour and faraway countries.

Practical importance of the work is in that results of the study may be extrapolated on existing and newly created information contents.

Expected scientific results of the study touch on three main vectors of the study: analytical and diagnostics part, fundamental and methodological part, and applied part. Thus, the study of modern Internet-sources is planned from the viewpoint of their generally cultural, linguistic and ethnographic (regionally based) filling, oriented on the satisfaction of linguistic and cultural needs of foreigners in the sphere of Russian language and culture; analysis of culture study materials that are presented in educational literature for foreigners from nearest-neighbour and faraway countries; analysis of materials about culture of all regions of Russia that are contained in teaching aids and scientific literature in view of their refilling to form targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens; elaboration of scientific approaches towards forming targeted content for foreign citizens.

The study contributes into the development of socio-linguistics, which traditionally pays attention to the questions of intercultural communication. Scientific meaning of the study is in elaboration of scientific principles and approaches towards presentation of the material in a targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens, as problem of language policy takes special place in among problems of sociolinguistics. Besides, the study contributes into the development of methods of sociolinguistics, which are a synthesis of linguistic and sociological procedures. Expected results of the study extend idea of scientific and methodological concepts of teaching Russian as a foreign and alien language in historiographical scope.

Solving the problem of elaborating targeted resource and information content has an evident practical value and is within the sphere of interests of modern state policy of Russia. Setting the applied tasks of the present study is explained by real demand that arose in the process of today intercultural communication. A foreign citizen, who has poor command of other language, if any at all, is unable to choose necessary materials in Russian to study within huge Internet content. A foreign citizen should be given an opportunity to find in Internet an accessible source that would aggregate all the information that is necessary to a foreigner. Besides, results of the study may be applied in practice teaching of such subjects, as sociolinguistics, methods of teaching Russian as a foreign and alien language, sociology, ethno-linguistics, language and culture studies, intercultural communication and others.

Discussions

Main resources of systematized information about life of a city and a region that are attended by foreigners are virtual contents and teaching aids, including remote courses of Russian as a foreign language. Teaching aids in Russia, that were issued predominantly in capital city editions, present information about Moscow, St. Petersburg or about the country in general, practically including no interesting information about other regions of Russia. Having analyzed big amount of popular teaching aids for elementary and base levels of Russian as a foreign language, we have not found a single one that would contain diverse information about regions of Russia. Virtual sources provide with more information, yet without system and on different websites, that often handicaps search especially if a user needs general information from various spheres (culture, sociology, geography, history, ethnography etc.), or he does not know what definite data he needs.

In connection with this, actual is the task of creating published and virtual sources with information about cultural originality of Russia in general and of some of its regions, as first impressions about the place of residence may influence further decision making about place of work or study and form positive attitude towards region or country in general. Regional peculiarities manifest in all spheres of social life, which is explained by both by geographical and, accordingly, climatic peculiarities, and national structure of the population.

Necessity of theoretical and practical elaboration of targeted resource and information content in Russian is explained by a number of problems, connected with functioning of Russian language, in particular with the menace of destroying integrated informational, educational, socio-cultural and economical stratum of Russian Federation; reduction of activity of integration processes in CIS countries, and also by vagueness of Russia's image in minds of people of these countries; and by unsteady prestige of the government in world community. In this respect a targeted Federal program "Russian language" is developed and now acts in Russia; it has a task of improving mechanisms for the support, protection and development of Russian as an official language of Russian Federation, and also language of interethnic communication of nations in Russia, development of personnel in the sphere of Russian language, improvement of quality of teaching Russian language and literature, elaboration of academic dictionaries of Russian language and electronic linguistic packages, expansion of foreign Russian-speaking stratum, creating new conditions for studying Russian language and being educated in Russian; strengthening of



positions of Russian language in national systems of education in foreign countries, testing foreigners' Russian knowledge; conducting instructive and educational events in both Russian Federation and abroad.

Authors' body is involved in defining information components of the content, necessary for those who wish to visit Russia, cope with Russian language and get to know Russian culture. Emergency of coping with these tasks is defined, as it was mentioned above, by insufficiency of printed and web- materials for foreign citizens about special features of organizing interactions in Russian society, about Russian history, specific of communication, region's study specific, modern status of industrial development, educational facilities of the region, which a foreigner is wishing to visit.

Conclusion

Analysis of virtual information space, in which foreign citizens from nearest-neighbour and faraway countries, coming to Russia with cultural and cognitive, business or educational purposes, should have a possibility to find information, necessary to get prepared to visit the country, allowed to indicate some of the problems, described in this article which may be commonly described as insufficient information and resource provision of adaptation of foreigners in Russia. A necessity to work out theoretical and practical grounding of developing targeted resource and information maintenance of foreigners, both planning to visit Russia and already residing in the country.

Thus the work of authors' body on the elaboration of resource and information maintenance of foreigners is devoted to facilitate providing optimal conditions for their adaptation in such complicated from viewpoint of geographic, social and ethno-cultural structure state, as Russia.

Recommendations

Following steps are to be taken:

1. Study up-to-date Internet resources for foreign citizens, who are interested in Russian language and culture, from the viewpoint of their generally cultural, linguistic and ethnographic (regional) content, actuality and completeness of information given about possibilities to beforehand get acquainted with Russian culture, history, features of communication, present day state of industries' development, education facilities of the region, where a foreign citizen is planning to go, about the possibility to learn Russian as a foreign language.
2. To analyse materials, presented in learning aids and scientific literature for foreigners, learning Russian language, in order to expose didactic lacunae and work out methods and scientific approach to forming an open access content for foreign citizens.
3. To work out scientific grounds of forming targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens.
4. To accumulate materials from fields of linguistics, ethno-linguistics, language and culture study, literature study, region study, history, sociology and law in order to form targeted resource and information content for foreign citizens.
5. To work out a number of questions of linguistic didactics, such as:

- accumulation of materials about the development, transforming of traditional and appearance of new principles, forms and genres of spoken communication in Russian culture, that will be claimed during working out printed and web-content for foreign citizens;
- accumulation of materials about socio-cultural, ethnographic, language and cultural and other peculiarities of life of people in various regions of Russia;
- collection of data about key words of Russian culture (custom or tradition, friendship, will, love, conciliarism and others) that are actual for allocation in printed and web-content to be developed;
- exposure and accumulation of materials about features of communication in different social strata of Russian culture in different historical periods (collective mutual aid, reception of guests, etc.);
- analysis of antroponyms in order to make addressed materials for foreigners, coming to a definite region of Russia;
- selection of fiction texts, designed for teaching foreigners Russian language and also to acquaint them with Russian culture;
- making up reference materials on works of modern Russian literature to be possibly included into information and resource provision for the sake of informing both foreigners and Russians, living abroad, about novelties of literature.

6. To work out and make website for foreign citizens from nearest-neighbour countries with established range of information blocks.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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