

SPORT ACTIVITIES AND SMOKING HABITS AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to establish whether male and female schoolchildren active in sports smoke cigarettes. This research is based on a study of 101 female and 62 male 13-year-old pupils from four primary schools in Ljubljana. For research purposes, a questionnaire containing 42 variables has been used. All the variables have been "crossed" with the criterion variable "How many hours per week do you practice sports, including PE lessons?".

The results indicate that the assumed hypothesis cannot be proved; although some findings can certainly be ascertained. The analysis of results has shown that 12.9% male and 10.9% female pupils smoke. On average, the male pupils started smoking at the age of 11, whereas the female pupils started smoking at the age of 12. Care for their health is the main reason why the majority of pupils do not smoke and the reason why these pupils are active in sports. The male pupils mostly practice sports competitively, whereas the female pupils do sports recreationally and irregularly. The pupils who come from non-smoking families (i.e. parents who do not smoke) are usually more actively involved in sport activities than those pupils who come from families who smoke. There are, however, not many parents who are also active in sport, although most of them do encourage their children's engagement in sports.

In order to decrease the smoking habits among young people, various additional activities will have to be made available to them. The activities should be interesting to them on the one hand, and on the other hand, they should be available to them in their spare time. And sport activities should certainly find a place among them.

Key words: *sport participation, school children, smoking*

SPORTTREIBEN UND RAUCHEN BEI SCHULKINDERN

Zusammensetzung:

Das Ziel dieser Forschung war, festzustellen, ob SchülerInnen, die Sport treiben, rauchen oder nicht. Diese Forschung basiert auf der Analyse von 101 13jährigen Schülerinnen und 62 13jährigen Schülern aus vier Grundschulen aus Ljubljana. Zwecks dieser Forschung wurde eine 42 Variablen umfassende Umfrage angewandt. Alle Variablen wurden mit der Soll-Variablen *Wie viele Stunden pro Woche, inklusiv Sportunterricht in der Schule, treibst du Sport?* 'gekreuzt'.

Die Resultate zeigen, dass die aufgestellte Hypothese nicht bewiesen werden konnte. Andererseits, einige Ergebnisse können sicherlich festgestellt werden. Die Resultate der Analyse zeigen, dass 12,9% Jungen und 10,9% Mädchen rauchen. Im Durchschnitt haben die Jungen zu rauchen angefangen als sie 11 Jahre alt waren, wobei die Mädchen zu rauchen angefangen haben, als sie 12 Jahre alt waren. Die Sorge für die Gesundheit ist der Hauptgrund dafür, dass die Mehrzahl der Schulkinder nicht raucht und dass diese Schulkinder Sport treiben. Jungen treiben Sport aus wettkämpflichen Gründen und die Mädchen treiben Freizeitsport. Die Schulkinder, die aus den Familien stammen, deren Mitglieder nicht rauchen (z.B. die Eltern rauchen nicht) treiben häufiger Sport als die Schulkinder, die aus den Familien stammen, die rauchen. Es gibt, aber, nicht viele Eltern, die auch Sport treiben. Die Meisten von ihnen ermuntern jedoch ihre Kinder dazu, Sport zu treiben.

Um die Anzahl von Schulkindern, die rauchen, zu reduzieren, verschiedene zusätzliche Tätigkeiten sollen ihnen zur Verfügung gestellt werden. Diese Tätigkeiten sollten, einerseits, das Interesse der SchülerInnen erwecken und, andererseits, den Kindern in ihrer Freizeit zur Verfügung stehen. Sport gehört sicherlich zu diesen Tätigkeiten.

Schlüsselwörter: *Sporttreiben, Rauchen, Schulkinder*

Introduction

Nowadays, smoking cigarettes has become the most widely spread drug addiction among people. Not enough attention is being paid to the problem of smoking, especially to smoking among young people. We are hardly aware that smoking has a wide range of consequences in society (Eysenck, 1991). Our society should be more interested in preventing and suppressing smoking since it is health and life threatening (Clayton, 1992).

Each individual has the right to threaten his/her own life; thus we need to accept smokers because they have the right to endanger their own lives. However, a number of studies have recently proved that passive smoking is even more harmful than active smoking. In this respect, even the most passionate smoker has no right whatsoever to endanger a non-smoker's life (Stergar, 2000a).

Smoking causes death in 19.3% cases and it is in the second place among the causes of deaths in Slovenia. In Slovenia, 2,800 to 3,500 people die of the consequences of smoking each year. In the EU countries, this number is half a million. In the year 1993, 3,623 Slovenes (2,541 male and 1,082 female) died of the consequences of smoking, which is more than the number of deaths caused by alcohol, drugs, AIDS, suicides, homicides, and car accidents combined. Over 1,000 people in Slovenia die of lung cancer each year, among them there are 20 times more smokers than non-smokers. Even though the statistical data show that since 1988 the number of smokers has been decreasing (today 25% of the entire population smokes, in 1991 the percentage was 42%), the following two findings cause the most concern. The first is that the number of female smokers is on the increase. The number of female smokers is now almost the same as the number of male smokers; even though in 1975 only 27% of all smokers were female. And the second concern is that smoking among high school students is increasing (Turk, 2000).

Young people socialize with other people in a number of ways. They are continuously influenced by other people's expectations, archetypes, values, orders and prohibitions, which in many cases contradict each other. It is their basic needs and motives of their developing personalities that influence which archetypes to accept, which expectations to meet, and which orders and prohibitions to obey. Young people who smoke are rarely found among groups of people who reject smoking for their social interests and have other goals (Debeljak & Kalan, 1987).

Undoubtedly, sport activities represent an important factor in preventing smoking. Most

people who smoke start smoking at an early age and become addicted easily. Therefore, it is important to offer young people a number of various health improving and well-being activities, among which sport activities undoubtedly belong (Shapiro, 1994).

Specifically, appropriate sport activities can most efficiently restrain youngsters from smoking, whereas, meandering about and strolling around with friends can only accelerate the progress of this bad habit. The problem of smoking among young people should not be treated as an isolated problem, but rather in the scope of caring for young people in general.

This research is based on a questionnaire, which was first developed for research by Debeljak and Kalan (1987). The questionnaire has further been enhanced for the purpose of this research. Using the questionnaire, we wanted to analyze the following: the level of sport activity among young people, smoking habits, and the relations between sport activity and smoking.

Methods

Profile of Subjects

The sample of subjects studied here includes 101 female and 62 male 13-year-old pupils from four primary schools in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The Pattern of Variables

This research is based on a questionnaire developed for research by Debeljak and Kalan (1987), and includes 41 questions on sport and smoking habits.

- Have you ever smoked?
- How long have you been smoking?
- If you already smoke, how old were you when you started?
- Why did you try to smoke?
- If you already smoke, have you tried to quit?
- Why have you tried to give up smoking?
- If you do not smoke now, why not?
- If you smoke, how often do you smoke, and how many cigarettes do you smoke?
- Would you like to quit smoking?
- When do you smoke the most?
- Is smoking allowed at your school?
- Where, in school, do you smoke?
- What is your opinion about smoking at school?
- Are there more boys or girls among the smokers?
- Do your friends that you spend the most of your time with smoke?
- How would your friends react if you started to smoke?

- Would you like your boyfriend or girlfriend to smoke?
- Do your parents smoke?
- Do your parents know about your smoking?
- How did your parents react, when they had realized that you smoke?
- Do any of your brothers or sisters smoke?
- Are your parents divorced?
- Do you feel lonely?
- Do you think smoking is harmful to your health?
- Have you ever read about how damaging smoking can be?
- In what form would you like to receive the information about smoking?
- How many hours per week are you active in sports, including physical education classes at school?
- What kind of sport are you engaged in during your spare time?
- State the form of your sports involvement!
- Why do you take part in sport activities?
- Why are you not involved in sports?
- What are your best sport achievements?
- Do you smoke before training or any sports activity?
- Do you smoke after training or any sports activity?
- Does a coach or a teacher in the sports club or association allow smoking?
- Does the coach smoke?
- Does the PE teacher smoke?
- Have you noticed a decrease of physical efficiency due to smoking?
- Do you think an athlete could achieve top results in sports if he/she also smokes?
- Would you give up smoking if you were sure that your sports results were worse because of smoking?
- Are your parents active in sports?
- Do your parents encourage you to be active in sports?

Data Collection

13-year-old female and male pupils have been included in this research. The data has been collected in four randomly selected primary schools in Ljubljana in the year 2000. The questionnaire has first been introduced to PE teachers from the selected schools. Conducted by their PE teachers, the pupils have answered the questions during their PE lessons.

Data Processing Methods

The data have been processed at the Computer Data Processing Department, of the Faculty of Sports, Ljubljana. For this purpose, the SPSS

software package has been used. The frequency and contingency tables have been generated with the help of FREQUENCY and CROSSTABS sub-programs. The probability relations among the variables have been tested by the chi-square test.

Results

The purpose of this research is to determine whether there is any relation between the level of activity in sports and smoking habits among schoolchildren. We wanted to determine whether schoolchildren that are active in sports smoke.

The research indicates that 21% male and 24.8% female seventh grade pupils have tried smoking cigarettes (Figure 1). The percentage is slightly lower as compared to the Debeljak and Kalan's (1987) research, which included 14-year-old pupils. In the 1987 research, a little over 30% of pupils tried smoking cigarettes.

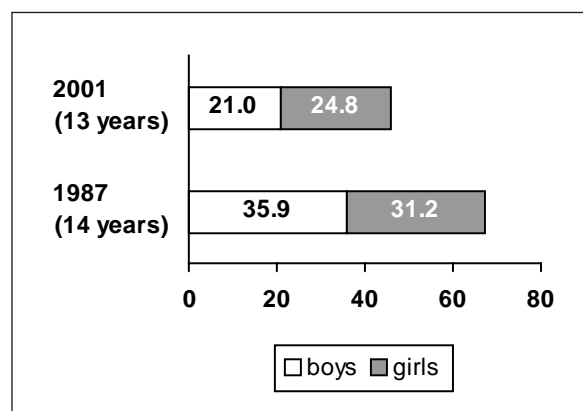


Figure 1: Did you ever try to smoke?

12.9% male and 10.9% female pupils smoke (Figure 2). On average, male pupils started smoking at the age of 11, whereas female pupils started smoking at the age of 12. In 1987, 9% male and 14% female pupils smoked (Figure 2). The first real smoking attempts were noticed at the age of 13 with female and at the age of 10 with male pupils.

Crossing of the variable "How many hours per week do you do sports, including PE lessons?" with the other variables has shown, though, that the relations are not statistically characteristic, yet important and interesting findings can be concluded based on the collected results.

The amount of cigarettes smoked varies among pupils and has no correlation with the amount of sport activity participation. Most pupils smoke on special occasions only. Female pupils who smoke on only special occasions are more active in sport than those who smoke more.

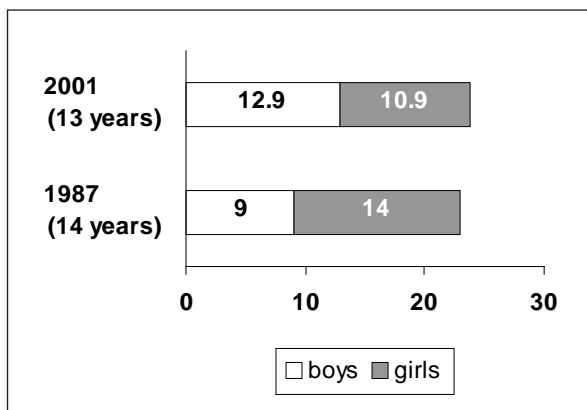


Figure 2: Do you smoke?

More than 50% of the pupils who smoke would like to give up smoking. Less than 30% of the pupils who smoke, have not yet thought about giving up smoking. 71% of the pupils (among whom the females prevail) who have smoked, have already given up smoking.

As stated by the pupils, the reason why they tried to stop or have stopped smoking is because smoking is bad for their physical fitness and health. For the same reason, most of the pupils questioned do not smoke and think that smoking is bad for their health (Table 1). Similar results were obtained almost 15 years ago in the Debeljak and Kalan's (1987) research.

Table 1: If you do not smoke, why not?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ANSWERS	BOYS		GIRLS	
	F	%	F	%
0 – I smoke	4	6.5	1	1.0
1 – because I don't feel well if I smoke	6	9.7	6	5.9
2 – because I don't like to have yellow fingers and teeth	0	0	2	2.0
3 – because I don't like to smell nastily	3	4.8	4	4.0
4 – because smoking is not good for my health and body condition	36	58.1	62	61.4
5 – because it's too expensive	0	0	1	1.0
6 – because it's not cultural	0	0	1	1.0
7 – because my parent's don't want to see me smoking	4	6.5	2	2.0
8 – because teachers and other superiors don't want to see me smoking	0	0	0	0
9 – because I don't have to do everything that others do	4	6.5	16	15.8
10 – other: _____	5	8.1	6	5.9
TOTAL	62	100	101	100

85.5% of male and 77.2% of female pupils are active in sports. Male pupils mostly practice sports competitively, whereas the female pupils are involved in sports recreationally and irregularly.

Male pupils mostly play football, volleyball, and go cycling, whereas female pupils mostly play volleyball, basketball, and dance. The results of the 1987 research also show that more male (90%) than female pupils (78%) were active in sports. Male pupils mostly did football and basketball, whereas female pupils mostly did volleyball, ran, and played tennis.

Discussion

Young people are aware that good health is valuable and has to be respected and nourished. They are also very well aware of the correlation between sport and health. In spite of that, 10% of athletes in primary schools smoke, although this is less than 15 years ago. These pupils, however, do not smoke before or after a practice. Most coaches do not allow smoking, but unfortunately some of them are still bad role models. (The situation of smoking among coaches has however improved since 1987). The same situation can be observed among PE teachers.

Regarding the influence of society, the following can be ascertained. Pupils who come from non-smoking families (i.e. parents do not smoke) are usually more actively involved in sport activities than those pupils who come from families who smoke. We can also ascertain that almost all pupils, whose brothers or sisters smoke, smoke as well.

Even though not many parents are sports-active, most of them encourage their children to practice some sport (90%). Since the research results indicate that encouragement within the family positively influences the sport activity participation, it would be necessary to address and motivate parents in that respect as well. Parents should become positive role models for their children, with regard to sports activity, as well as to smoking and other bad habits. Therefore, it is not enough to educate the children only. We need to educate the parents as well who are obviously not aware of their parental duties nor of

the consequences that inappropriate education and bad examples can have.

And what does the school system undertake in the area of preventing smoking? In addition to what

is stated in the curriculum, not many teachers address the subject of smoking and its harmfulness during their lessons. Do they know too little about it? Unfortunately, this is true. Besides, many of them are themselves the victims of the bad habit and thus cannot be children's good role models. In primary schools, there are over 15% of PE teachers that pupils know for certain they smoke (Figure 3). Around 5% coaches smoke too (Figure 4). We can only guess how many PE teachers and coaches smoke that pupils or we do not even know about. We can only assume that the above percentages are higher. The school system which prohibits smoking in and around the institutions achieves only that. It has no influence whatsoever on what is happening in the faculty's or pupils' spare time.

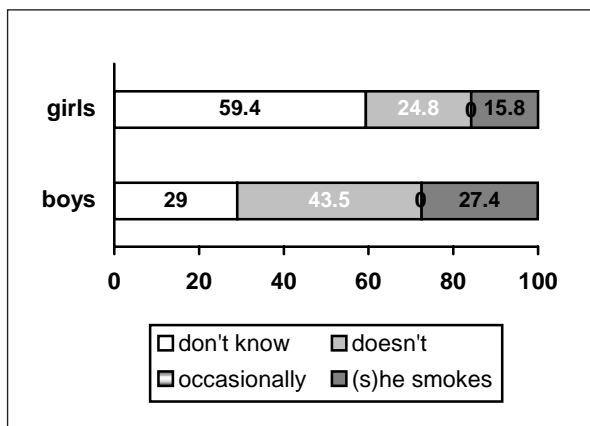


Figure 3: Does the PE teacher smoke?

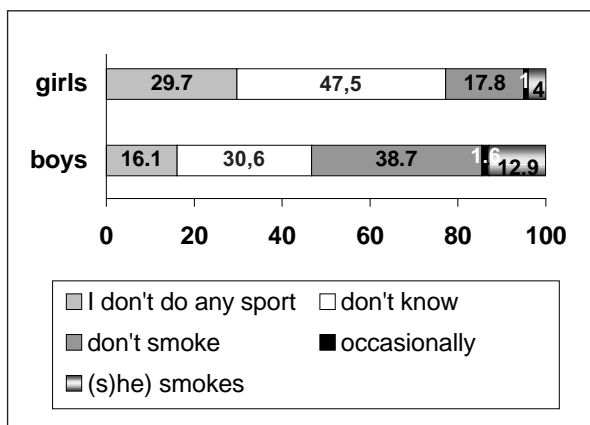


Figure 4: Does the coach smoke?

“Sport without cigarettes” should become a rule and a part of the moral of all who are engaged in sports (Eysenck, 1991). A lot of attention is devoted to achieving a better physical shape, with which the problem of smoking is also related. Most convincing are also the medical reasons for not smoking and the reasons pertaining to one's general appearance. Everybody fighting against smoking should use these facts, because young people can then be motivated and learn what they can gain from sport.

The fight against smoking continues and is seeking new ways that would enable a healthier way of life among young people. Schools are nowadays participating in various projects with which young people are being motivated to promote sport and not to smoke. Joining in this fight are also medical and other institutions pertaining to preventive and curative treatments. PE teachers should get involved more as well. They could well use sports as a way of restraining their students from smoking and use their influence to build such relationship which would encourage young people to participate in sport activities more.

Conclusion

Smoking is harmful and, what is even worse, it quite quickly addicts a “beginner”, and long-time smokers find it hard to give up this bad habit. In the world today, there are a number of established methods for giving up smoking, such as, acupuncture, nicotine patches and chewing gum, hypnosis etc. Depreciation, prevention, and prohibition of smoking among young people are undoubtedly means that can help to reduce smoking habits. Even though the results obtained in this research could not prove the efficiency of any other means in this respect, we adhere to a hypothesis that young people will be turned away from smoking by means of planning a qualitative way of life. People who are adequately occupied most likely fulfill their needs by taking part in appropriate activities and this way they do not feel the need for any kind of substitutes.

We are of the opinion that the most important factor influencing the decrease of smoking habits is providing appropriate and adequate activities for young people in their spare time. It is the spare time that should be properly conducted, planned, and used. Spare time should be filled with activities that would fully engage each young individual. And sport activities certainly find place among them.

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SUDJELOVANJE U SPORTSKIM AKTIVNOSTIMA I PUŠENJE ŠKOLSKE MLADEŽI

Sažetak

Uvod

Pušenje je u današnje vrijeme postalo najrašireniji oblik ovisnosti ljudi. U 1998. godini od posljedica pušenja, prema nekim podacima, umrlo su 3623 stanovnika Republike Slovenije - više nego od posljedica alkoholizma, teških droga, SIDA-e, samoubojstava, ubojstava i prometnih nezgoda zajedno. Iako podaci ukazuju na to da se broj pušača od 1988. godine smanjuje (danas puši oko 25% stanovnika, 1991. godine, pak, pušilo je 42% stanovnika R Slovenije), zabrinjavajuće su prije svega dvije stvari: povećanje broja žena pušača (uskoro će ih biti isto koliko i muškaraca, dok je 1975. godine među pušačima bilo samo 27% žena) te sve više pušača među mladima (Turk, 2000).

Nedvojbeno je sport vrlo važan čimbenik u sprečavanju pušenja. Većina pušača počinje s pušenjem u ranim godinama, što dovodi do ovisnosti. Zbog toga je utoliko važnije mladima ponuditi što više zdravih aktivnosti, među koje se nedvojbeno ubrajaju i sportske aktivnosti.

Uz pomoć upitnika, koji je bio izrađen na osnovi istraživanja Debeljak i Kalan (1987) te djelomično dopunjen, željelo se analizirati sportsku aktivnost mladih i njihove pušačke navike te utvrditi odnos između sudjelovanja u sportu i pušenja školske mladeži.

Metode rada

Uzorak ispitanika činila su 62 učenika i 101 učenica osnovnih škola u Ljubljani, u dobi od 13 godina.

U istraživanju je upotrijebljen upitnik, koji su izradile Debeljak i Kalan (1987), a sadrži 42 pitanja o sportu i pušenju školske mladeži.

Podaci su obrađeni na odjelu za obradu podataka Fakulteta za sport Sveučilišta u Ljubljani, a upotrijebljen je statistički paket SPSS za Windows. Izračunate su frekvencije i kontingencije kretanja rezultata. Nakon toga upotrijebljeni su potprogrami FREQUENCIES i CROSSTABS. Vjerojatnost povezanosti između varijabli provjerena je hkvadrat testom.

Rezultati i rasprava

Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da je 21,0% učenika i 24,8% učenica sedmog razreda osnovne škole već pokušalo pušiti. Puši 12,9% učenika i 10,9% učenica. U prosjeku, učenici su počeli pušiti u 11. godini, a učenice u 12. godini.

Povezanost varijable "Koliko si satova u tjednu sportski aktivan, zajedno sa satima tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture?" s ostalim varijablama u biti se nije pokazala statistički značajnom, ali je iz re-

zultata moguće izlučiti važne i zanimljive konstatacije.

Učenici se međusobno razlikuju po količini pušenja, neovisno o količini bavljenja sportom. Većina puši samo u iznimnim prilikama. Učenice koje puše samo u iznimnim prilikama sportski su aktivnije od učenica koje puše više.

Više od 50% osnovnoškolaca koji puše rado bi prestalo s pušenjem. Od onih koji su već pušili, 71% je onih, a među njima prevladavaju učenice, koji su već prestali pušiti. Neki osnovnoškolci su pokušali, odnosno već i prestali pušiti, jer to šteti njihovoj tjelesnoj kondiciji i zdravlju. Iz istog razloga većina ispitanika ne puši i mišljenja su da pušenje šteti zdravlju.

Sportski aktivnih je 85,5% učenika i 77,2% učenica. Učenici se većinom natjecateljski bave nogometom, košarkom i biciklizmom, dok se učenice, većinom rekreativno ili povremeno, bave odbojkom, košarkom i plesom. Unatoč tome što nema puno roditelja koji su sportski aktivni, većina ih (90%) svojoj djeci preporučuje bavljenje sportom. Učenici i učenice iz obitelji roditelja-nepušača sportski su aktivniji u usporedbi s obiteljima gdje roditelji puše. Podaci ukazuju i na to da puše skoro svi osnovnoškolci u čijim obiteljima puše i brat i sestra.

Većina mladih svjesna je da su sport i zdravlje tijesno povezani. Unatoč tome je među sportašima u osnovnoj školi čak 10% pušača. Većina trenera ne dopušta pušenje, ali, nažalost, neki od njih su još uvijek slab uzor učenicima zato što i sami puše. Isto vrijedi i za nastavnike tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture. U osnovnoj školi više je od 15% nastavnika za koje učenici sigurno znaju da puše. Isto tako puši i 5% trenera.

"Sport bez cigareta" trebalo bi postati pravilo i dio sportskog morala za sve koji se bave sportom. U sportu se velika pažnja posvećuje naporima da se postigne što bolja tjelesna kondicija, a pušenje je čista suprotnost tim nastojanjima. Uvjerljivi su i zdravstveni razlozi i razlozi koji se odnose na vanjski izgled. Upravo te činjenice trebali bi znati iskoristiti svi koji se bore protiv pušenja, jer je za bavljenje sportom mladež moguće zainteresirati.

Zaključak

Činjenica je da je pušenje štetno, a što je još i gore - »početnik« brzo postane ovisnik. Nedvojbeno je da je vjerojatno najjači čimbenik koji može utjecati na smanjenje pušačkih navika odgovarajuća aktivnost mladih, prije svega u njihovu slobodnom vremenu, koje je potrebno odgovarajuće usmjeravati i planirati. Ovdje najvažniju ulogu imaju one aktivnosti koje svakog učenika u punoj mjeri individualno zaokupljaju. A među njih se, bez dvojbe, ubrajaju i sportske aktivnosti.