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The forms of physical activity chosen by young adults

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Abstract

The positive impact of regular physical activity is a widely recognized fact. The WHO recommends that people of all ages exercise 30 minutes of exercise every day. In the context of the sedentary lifestyle and changes in social behavior patterns in recent years, there is a need to examine the habits of young adults regarding physical activity. The aim of the study was to investigate which forms of exercises are preferred by young adults and how much time they devote to them.

The study was conducted on a group of 42 people (16 men and 26 women). Respondents were asked about the forms of physical activity they choose most often and the time during the week

they devote to them. A written questionnaire with multiple-choice questions was used to obtain the data.

The most common form of activity chosen by young adults was walking (66.7% of the group). The next forms were dancing (42.9%) and swimming (38.1%). Referring to time issues, respondents spent 209 minutes a week on physical activity (SD 190). Men spent 315 minutes and women 143 minutes per week. At the same time, respondents spent the most time on walking (55 minutes per week on average), 31 minutes and 29 minutes per week for gym training and dancing respectively.

Among young adults, the most-chosen form of physical activity was walking, which may be related to its undemanding character. Young adults devoted enough time to physical activity according to WHO recommendations. They care about their physical condition by participating both moderate and intense physical activities.

Key words: physical activity, exercise, young adults' health

Introduction

The positive impact of the regular physical activity on various aspects of individual and common health has been proven in numerous studies. This is manifested, for example in the reduction of the cardiovascular risk [1, 2] or other chronic diseases [3] or in the improvement of mental condition [4, 5]. For this reason, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends to people of all ages a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate intensity effort every day. National societies recommend physical activity at a different level, i.e. 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of intensive exercises per week [6, 7]. At the same time, changes in social behavior patterns and the sedentary lifestyle have been observed for last years. In this circumstances, the need for a detailed analysis of the habits of young adults in the field of physical activity was recognized.

Purpose of work

Young people are generally considered to be the most physically active age group. Due to the epidemic of obesity and diseases previously reserved mainly for older groups, it seems to be important to examine current preferences regarding physical activity in young people. The aim

of the study was to examine in detail which forms of physical activity are preferred by young adults and how much time they devote to them.

Material and methods

The study was conducted on a group of 42 people (16 men and 26 women) aged 20-25 years (average 21.5 years). A written questionnaire with multiple-choice questions was used for the study. The subjects were asked about the forms of physical activity they choose. They could choose from the following: walking, dancing, running, swimming, gym training, cycling, fitness or another form of exercise not included in the mentioned options. In addition, the respondents were asked to specify in detail how much time they spend on chosen activities during the week. Answers were given with an accuracy of 5 minutes.

Results

The most common form of activity chosen by young adults was a walking (66.7% of the group, 61.5% of women, 75% of men). The next forms were: dancing (chosen by 42.9% of the group), swimming and training at the gym (both 38.1% of the group). Apart from walking, which was the most frequently chosen form of physical activity for both sexes, women more willingly chose dancing (53.9%) and running (38.5%). Men except for walking preferred gym training (62.5%) and swimming (50%). All collected responses are presented in Table 1.

Tab. 1 Preferred forms of physical activity

| The form of activity | Number of people | Percent of the group | Number of women | Percent of women | Number of men | Percent of men |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Walking | 28 | 66,67% | 16 | 61,54% | 12 | 75,00% |
| Dancing | 18 | 42,86% | 14 | 53,85% | 4 | 25,00% |
| Swimming | 16 | 38,10% | 8 | 30,77% | 8 | 50,00% |
| Gym training | 16 | 38,10% | 6 | 23,08% | 10 | 62,50% |
| Running | 14 | 33,33% | 10 | 38,46% | 4 | 25,00% |
| Fitness | 14 | 33,33% | 8 | 30,77% | 6 | 37,50% |
| Cycling | 12 | 28,57% | 6 | 23,08% | 6 | 37,50% |
| Others | 4 | 9,52% | 0 | 0% | 4 | 25,00% |

A separate issue was the time devoted to exercises in general and to its differentiation into individual forms. On average, respondents spent 209 minutes per week on physical activity (standard deviation 190). Men spend 315 minutes per week on physical activity and women 143 minutes per week respectively. At the same time, the respondents devoted the most time to walking (on average 55 minutes per week, women 36 minutes per week, men 71 minutes per week). The next places were: gym training and dancing, that were given respectively 31 minutes and 29 minutes a week.

Gender differences included dancing, which was the next preferred activity after the walking in women (on average 25 minutes per week). Next in the row was running (on average 18 minutes per week). Among men after walking, next places were taken by gym exercises (58 minutes a week on average) and swimming (43 minutes a week). The average time devoted to particular forms of physical activity is shown in Table 2.

Tab. 2 The average time spent on various physical activities

| The form of activity | The average time per week (minutes) - the whole group | The average time per week (minutes) - women | The average time per week (minutes) - men |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Walking | 55 | 36 | 71 |
| Dancing | 29 | 25 | 26 |
| Swimming | 21 | 6 | 43 |
| Gym training | 31 | 12 | 58 |
| Running | 26 | 18 | 34 |
| Fitness | 17 | 12 | 19 |
| Cycling | 19 | 8 | 34 |
| Others | 11 | 0 | 30 |

Discussion

Among young adults, the most-chosen form of physical activity was walking, which may be related to its undemanding character. A similar phenomenon is also observed in other countries [8]. Among the intense physical efforts, the most popular form was dancing. The choice of forms of physical activity is strongly related to their popularization in the media, which in par-

ticular in the case of young people has been proven [9]. The increase in the popularity of dancing as a form of spending free time has found its impact in the study. Other mentioned forms have also become popular in recent years.

The authors of other studies pointed to the differences in the choice of forms of physical activity between separate demographic groups [10]. For this reason, it is worth paying attention to gender differences regarding the preferred forms of physical activity in the study group. Dancing was chosen mainly by women, and gym exercises by men, which coincides with the traditional division of interests in the societies of other countries too [11]. However, not all forms of physical activity fit into this pattern. Running was definitely more often chosen by women than by men. An interesting phenomenon is the significant predominance of men over women when choosing group fitness exercises as a form of exercising.

The amount of time that respondents spent on selected forms of exercise was a separate analyzed issue. Nevertheless, the average amount of time devoted to individual disciplines reflected general choices. Regarding recommendations for regular physical activity formulated by WHO and by national societies, young adults as a group devoted enough time to physical activity [6, 7]. What's more, men devote more time to exercising than women, which also corresponds to the traditional division of interests [11].

Conclusions

In summary, young adults as the group fulfill the recommendations of national societies and WHO referring to physical activity. They care about their physical condition by undertaking both moderate and intense physical activities. The choice of forms of activity is dictated by easy access and undemanding nature (walking). Furthermore, the choice of more demanding forms is probably related to the promotion of specific areas in the media and society.

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