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Young adults' leisure -time habits in the University of Alicante

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ABSTRACT

Nagyvárad K, Ilics KB, Kiss-Geosits B, Polgár T. Young adults' leisure -time habits in the University of Alicante. *J. Hum. Sport Exerc.* Vol. 8, No. Proc2, pp. S85-S92, 2013. The issues of healthy lifestyle and workout are occurring more and more frequently nowadays. The topic has a great impact on everybody, since health, which we do not achieve by various therapies, medical interventions, but by health promotion, is fundamental to our life. Health behaviour and health value are culture-dependent factors so the systems of norms and values in a society greatly contribute to the formation of them. The health culture of a country is indicated by what kind of protective and predictive health behaviour attitudes the citizens have. These elements are reflected in our lifestyle which influences our health condition in a complex way. The most important aim of health promotion is changing our lifestyle for which we need individual pursuit, acts on social level, and above all, monitoring the health behavioural habits. The sample is made up of 65 students. Data was collected through questionnaires consisting of closed question, administered in person applying random sampling method. The collected data was processed by coding the questionnaires and questions, using mathematical statistical methods. **Key words:** HEALTH CONDITION, LIFESTYLE, LEISURE TIME, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.



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INTRODUCTION

The level of health culture of a country demonstrates what kind of attitudes to health the population has. It can be protective or predictive. These items are also reflecting to our lifestyle, consequently these items influence our state of health in a complex way.

Numerous survey and research highlight the beneficial effects of sports to our health (Burke et al., 1997; Prohaska, 2006). It is also an undeniable fact that sport is preventive against diseases and what more; in case of certain lingering illness it minimizes the frequency of medical treatments (Gauchard, 2001; Jákó, 2003). Analyses have certified that regular training or work out have beneficial effect on blood pressure, diabetes, chronic back ache and on noisome habits. Furthermore they improve flexibility, strength of ossature and of muscle system; cut back the chance for injury of the muscle system, better the way you feel and stimulate our creativity.

Regular work outs are significant activities in regards of the whole society including children, adults, and elderly people. This is because physical activity is known by its preventive, supportive and healing functions (Vuori, 2004). It is also proven that the mortality rate is with 28 percentage less by those who do regular work outs – minimum two times per week (Hebbelinck, 1995). Consequently it can be stated that the most important composites of health is regular physical exercise or in other words workouts and training. In general those young adults who do sports systematically have more favorable lifestyle than those peers who do not choose any sports to do in their free-time (Pate et al., 1996).

The attitude and behavior towards health is unequivocally derived from culture and consequently social values and norm system have contributed to forming and shaping these two before said (Ferron, 1997).

The protective behavior is such an activity which is in favor of health saving and health improvement. This action may have conscious and less conscious forms. We can establish difference between active and passive behavior types. If we try to avoid smoking, staying outside the air filled with smog and dirt we improve our health in a passive way. But when we become aware of our own health for example we keep proper nutrition, do sports or workouts. Then we improve our health in an active manner.

By leading long term unhealthy lifestyle or having unhealthy attitude we give evidence to venturous and risky behavior that can threaten our general state of health. These activities are more frequently the addictions (Pikó, 2006).

Nowadays in Hungary there is neither significant value nor adoption of a health conscious lifestyle and consequently of regular sporting activities (Konczos, 2006). Therefore there is a strong need to do further surveys and investigate even on an international field. These phases of investigations tend to put a light on physical activity or inactivity; more precisely the kind, value content, quality, minimal and optimal quantity in the given age-group and measurement of the activity (Riddoch, 1995).

Among the significant factors of the general state of health – lifestyle, genetics, environment, and medical care – there is a complex relation. The topic covers everything and everybody since health serves as a basis of our life. Health here indicates that shape or state which we achieve with prevention and not with various therapies or operation.

Characteristics of our lifestyles break through our daily activities. Such activity is for example our habits on spending our leisure-time, which is closely connected to our health behavior or attitude. If it is so then it means that how we spend our free-time would affect our state of health. In the consumers' society, as the consequence of modernization – like in every field of life –, there is a gradual change in the way of spending our free-time. Based on the observations of Bettina Pikó (2006), we can distinguish three crucial phenomena which provoked the changes:

1. the percentage rate of free-time against the rate of work time has been growing,
2. the role of youth has become valuable and the so-called youth culture has been emerged,
3. as the consumers' society has been expanding the possibilities and facilities of spending free-time have also been improved significantly.

Therefore it is straight forward that in the process of socialization how we spend our free-time would have a great impact on the attitude towards health of the individuals later (Pikó, 2006).

Health culture is the lifestyle on its own and plays as a mediator between the objective social culture and the state of health of the individual. The individual has the possibility – through his or her lifestyle – to make his or her health optimal, to satisfy or fulfill his or her needs of his or her health. These conditions are inseparable from the general state of health. As it is generally known health - a state - is the cumulative quality of social, psycho and somatic mechanisms. From the perspective of establishing and maintaining a lifestyle it is a salient item that the individual shall be able to adjudge and experience his or her state of health in a subjective manner. It has so gradual importance because the sense of being healthy, consciousness of being ill possesses a great deal of motivational impact on reforming and shaping life (Naidoo, Wills, 1994).

With the subject of leisure-time habits there were numerous researches in Hungary:

More than 40% of the college students – based on a survey about their life styles – do not do any activity in their free-time besides the weekly (one or two occasions) compulsory PE lessons 1-2 (Sebőkné, 1999; Földesiné, 1994). This conclusion from the survey clearly shows how the physical education has been weaken in the higher education. Many universities and colleges had received their autocephalia and consequently they abolished the so far compulsory physical education. The public opinion is that to resolve students from PE is rewarding only when the supply is secured with optimal conditions and from the students' side there is a secure demand.

According to lifestyle researches less than 30% of the Hungarian adults execute some kind of a physical activity. The age group was between 15 and 85. This percentage will be only lower late in life. It is also interesting to note down that the higher educated the individual is, the more higher the percentage rate of physical activity is (Gáldi, 2002).

The international data primarily put an emphasis on those various goals which people tend to achieve with regular physical activities. Motivation can be strong, healthy body, attractive appearance, pleasant fatigue, social connections and slimming (Matsumo & Takenaka, 2004). It is evident that systematic physical culture can lead to a healthy society (Vilhjalmsson, 2003). Lack of free-time and of motivational factors was emphasized as root cause by those who do not do sports regularly in their free-time. On the other hand the environment itself can generate a throw-back on doing sports (Pluhár, 2007; Sallis, 1998).

In our research we examined the level of activity in regards of the leisure-time habits.

1. Let us suppose that the target group who we are examining; they do sports in their free-time in order to achieve an attractive appearance.
2. Let us suppose that those who were involved in the questionnaire, they prefer active methods of free-time activities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sample

The participants were the students of the University of Alicante. The sampling was executed by a random method. Total number of participants was 69, 24 women and 45 men. The questionnaires were in Spanish language.

Method

In our research we applied questionnaires with closed groups of questions. The groups were the followings: demographical data, habits of free-time activities, of sports and questions related to purchasing of sporting goods.

Data processing – or so called questionnaire encoding – was executed with the help of SPSS 18.0 program.

RESULTS

As a conclusion from the data processing it can be stated that more than the half of the pollee does sport activity on a daily basis in his/her free-time. Concerning the free-time activities group, the participants ranked 'watching TV' and "listening to music' as the most preferred daily activities. Generally they are classified as passive modes of free-time occupation. Other general favorites are 'reading' and 'internet'; one third of the participants do them on a daily or on a weekly basis (Figure 1a,b,c).

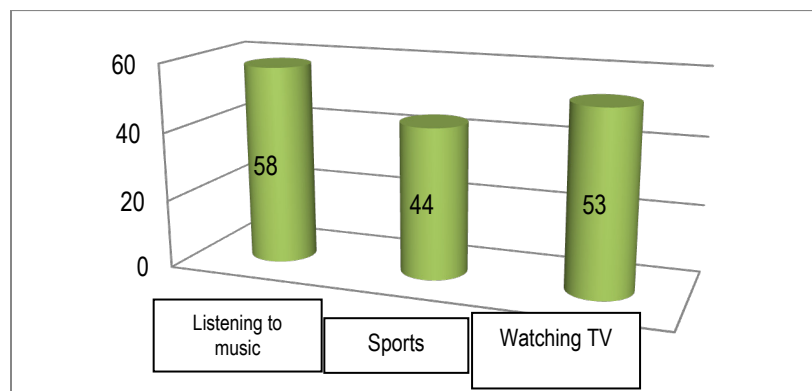


Figure 1a. Most preferred daily free-time activities.

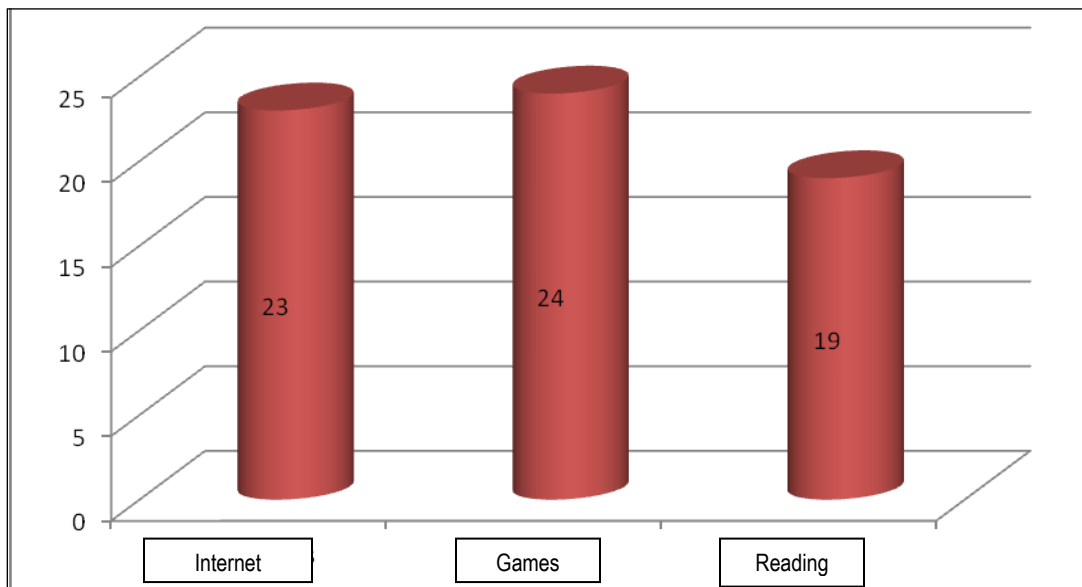


Figure 1b. Most preferred weekly free-time activities.

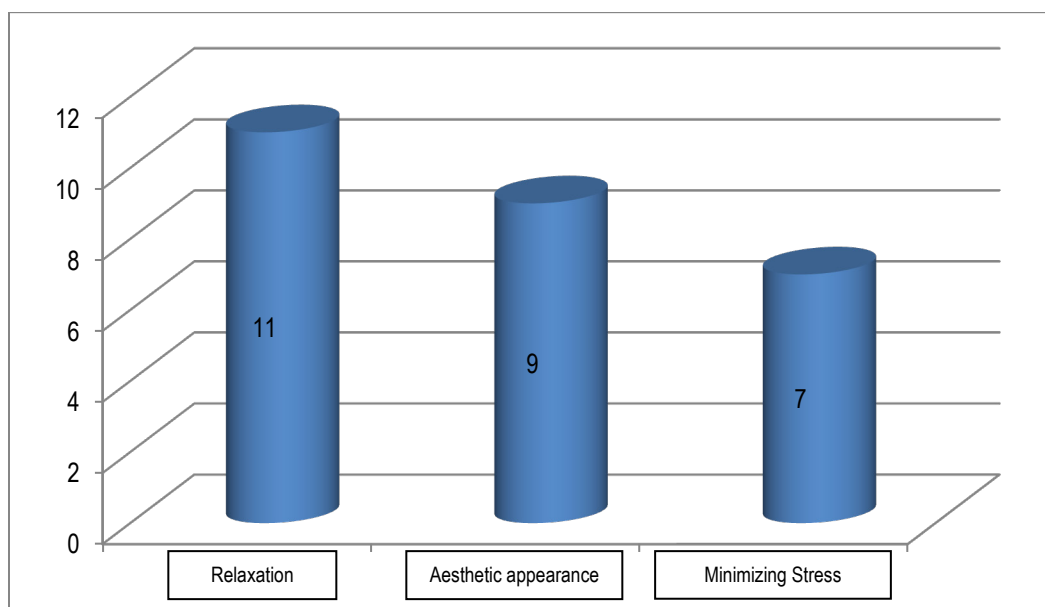


Figure 1c. Motivational factors in case of health and standards of living.

The next diagram shows those factors which provide the basis of motivation from the point of view of the participants. The pollee had to set up a preference list amongst the activities listed in the questionnaire (Figure 2).

Figure 2 represents important items of health and living standards, while diagram provides short summary of answers about toughness, skeleton and muscular system.

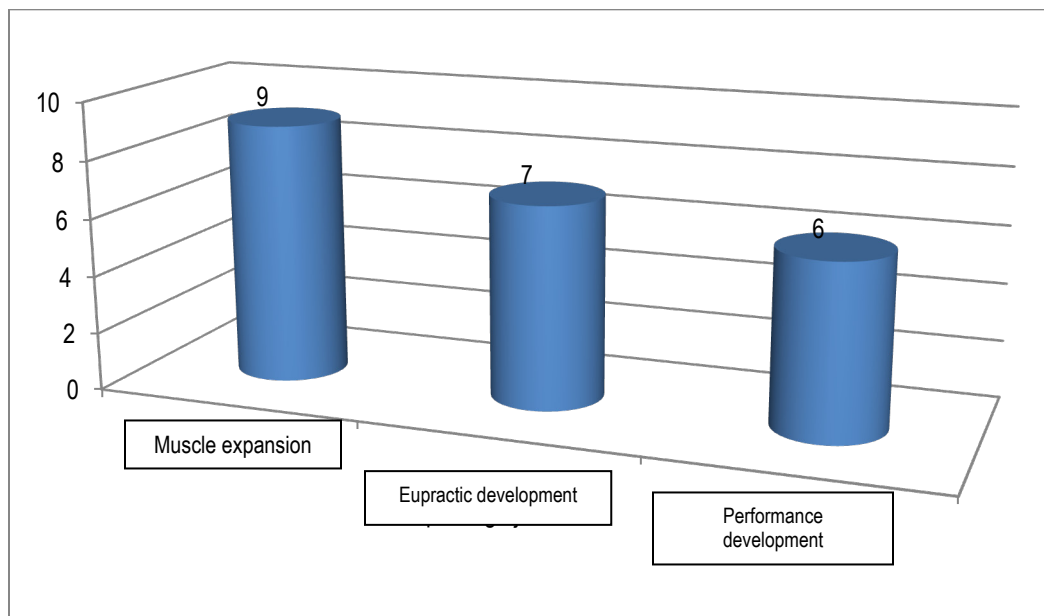


Figure 2. Motivational factors in case of physical performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of our survey was to evaluate and experience the preferred leisure-time activities of a given group, to highlight the motivational factors and to explore any background information related to the everyday life of young adults.

Based on the given results it can be stated that only half of the questionnaire participants spend their free-time in an active way in spite of the fact that besides competitive sport, more sport trends have been given an influential role in the Western countries, such as health sport, recreation, leisure time sport, women's sport, sport for the elderly, disabled sport (Polgár, 2006). In Hungary several researches (Pápai & Lóczy, 2001) have dealt with examining the health attitude of young adults towards the leisure time physical activities, its stability or instability. Some of the psychical features have been also studied by the authors. Based on the results and our research it can be said that the majority of students do not engage in physical activities in their leisure time. Examining the results of international researches, one study about Austrian students says that these students' attitude towards physical activity tend to be much more positive than their Hungarian peers' attitude (Polgár, 2006). The Hungarian students rather pursue some extra-curricular

sports, while Austrian students seem to be more active at school. However, almost half of the Hungarian students do not pursue any sports, while this rate is only one-quarter in the case of Austrian students.

We can rank the motivational factors of choosing sports. Most of the participants wish to improve their general state of health because of relaxation, minimizing stress and of aesthetic appearance. Regarding maximizing the physical strength, muscle expansion stands on the first place. This result is proved by Perényi's survey (2005), which claims that university students do sport activities regularly mainly because of internal motivational factors, while women have highlighted the importance of external motivational factors, as well (they are physically active in order to achieve attractive appearance or lose weight, etc.) Therefore results support our hypothesis.

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