

## **FITNESS AS A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AMONG INHABITANTS FROM RZESZOW**

Łukasz **GODEK**, Jarosław **HERBERT**, Maciej **ŚLIŹ**

*Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland*

---

### **Key words:**

- fitness,
- health,
- lifestyle.

### **Abstract:**

An important element of a healthy lifestyle is participation in a regular physical activity. Such recreational forms of physical activity as fitness for a long time fill people their free time. This translates into good relationships, success at work and optimistic attitude in our life. One of the main objectives of the study was to determine motivation and socio-demographic profile of women involved in one of the form of physical recreation - fitness.

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

In modern civilization, people are exposed to many risks associated with the development of our civilization. Development of technologies from almost 40 years has sparked a huge lifestyle change. With the development of civilization has also changed mode and way of life of people from all over the World. The accelerated pace of life, saving time and energy, pressure of business has prevented people something very important – move in nowadays. People had change and were mostly comfortable. People in normal life are using many devices which make their life easier, such as cars, phones, computers. These devices deprive the need to perform certain physical activities. People are becoming less physically active. They are not using such parts of their body like: heart, lungs, arms, legs which make their body more weak, limp and greasy. Lack of exercise has got fatal health effects. Changes in human body, due to conditions of the modern world are similar to the state of immobilization. Fortunately, more and more people are aware of consequences about their health [12].

Healthy lifestyle is slowly becoming indispensability. People realize that in order to prevent lesions, they should carried out mostly about own health and active lifestyle. In era of scientific and technical progress we can observe an increase in goods, new contacts, eliminating most diseases, independence from environment, but also we can observe increase of free time which should be used in many ways. But from the other hand, we can observe negative affect of this World, such as: destruction of our environment, social plagues, lower physical activity of man and spread of civilization diseases that in the past did not take place on such huge scale. In the group of mentioned diseases are such as: atherosclerosis, arterial hypertension, diabetes, obesity, allergies, mental disorders and cancer. Those diseases are common among persons with low resistance to infection, with low physical activity and poor eating habits. Minimal active lifestyle can also provide to degenerative changes in joints and contributes significantly to the reduction of psychomotor skills [1].

An important element of a healthy lifestyle is to participate in regular physical activity. Participation in physical activities is appreciated by both: women and men. Perfect, athletic posture is a motivation for many of them, for work on his own body. The variety forms of physical recreation is very large, but the most popular is fitness. Fitness is a state of good physical fitness, achieved through conscious and healthy eating, satisfaction with their

appearance, as well as gaining pleasure and joy of movement. This translates to good relationships, success at work and optimistic attitude towards reality. The benefits of participation in fitness classes are huge. All activities involving fitness makes people become open-minded, courageous, have a lot of energy and can almost do everything. The conclusion is obvious: man is created to make physical activity and from this activity depends his health [10]. Recreational forms of physical activity for a long time fill people their free time. Meanwhile, in the past of many years, we could see an increase of threat in lifestyle diseases, especially in well-developed countries, intensely increased awareness of caring for their own health.

The birth of system, which is called "wave of psychosocial health", took place outside of our country. Consequently, many names of recreational activities are borrowed from foreign languages, mainly English, such as "fitness".

Fitness came up as an idea of promoting physical activity in the 60-ties of XX century. The word "fit" from English language means to be a person health and in good mentally and physically shape, through personal selection of exercises. This definition also consists of healthy eating, as well as overall efficiency of psychophysical activity [27].

Fitness is a combination of well-being from the sociological and psychological perspective, as well as pursuit to excellence and achieve optimal physical activity. It can be done through variety of forms adapted to the individual motor capabilities, features and expectations. Fitness is a global phenomenon oriented principle of movement impacts on physical health. This is an achievement of maximum level of functioning organism on three levels: physical (physical fitness), mental (mental fitness) and emotional (feelings fitness). Fitness also means "having qualities and characteristics" which show that a person is adapted to the world and can fit to contemporary reality [13].

Fitness refers to human body and it has got adaptability, but these changes do not have a continuous nature. These changes require time, dedication, but also their constant support. Fitness as a result of means: competent functioning of modern individual in terms of current reality, which is a source of joy, presence and achieving a high standard of living.

Fitness is the result of implementation of everyday life tasks with no signs of fatigue. This adequate functioning becomes a source of high quality of life. In terms of physical fitness, it relates to size and shape that is connected with relevant body.

In terms of mind, it refers to ownership and development of appropriate skills and qualifications. However, in terms of emotional, fitness effect is well-being, healthy lifestyle, staying in a good mood. In achieving desired goals, attention to health, state of mental and physical health is also closely linked to the definition of recreational activity [3]. Physical recreation by many people is called a sport for everyone. It includes various forms of physical activity such as relaxation and self-study exercises in the field of fitness, gymnastics, etc. According to T. Wolański recreation is "all exercise of the motor-sport or tourism content, where man gives of their own will in spare time, for leisure, entertainment and personality development" [22].

Recreational motor is connected with variety of environments, including Association of Promotion of Physical Culture, Sports Academic Associations as also in group of friends and family or individual. Recreation is also organized in recreation centers and housing estates. The main feature of the recreation is that it can take part in it not only adults, of working and retirement, but also young people and whole families.

The purpose of recreation are needs of move with satisfaction. It is characterized by the voluntary and should assist man throughout his life impacting favorably on the quality and length [7].

Physical recreation overlooks demands on health needs and aesthetic figure. Winiarski defines physical recreation as "a form of behavior time that require public approval with necessity of psychophysical effort" [21].

Among extensive offers of recreation forms, the most popular is fitness. This movement is now becoming very popular due to the character of exercises and also the availability to all equipment connected with fitness. Its mission is to enrich sources of health, as well as acquisition of exercises hedonistic values, such as joy and fun. One of the proposals, distributed among young people and adults was a general idea of fitness. It is used universally throughout the world in the field of physical culture to define programs promote fitness and physical condition, to distinguish principles, forms and methods of training, to determine names of centers and institutions, improvement of psychomotor characteristics, as well as whole phenomena of organizational, methodological and software associated with the development of skills and psychophysical serving health and well-being. A variety of physical forms using type of fitness training develops motor ability and need to protect it from the destructive influence of our civilization [2].

On the physical side of fitness consists several components: cardiovascular endurance and muscular, muscle strength, flexibility, physical body composition and nutrition. Fitness is in general practice training connected with endurance exercise, strength training, flexible and coordination exercise assisted by proper diet and hygienic lifestyle.

Chronic stress has a negative impact on our health, which can leads to many diseases, such as hypertension, heart disease and even mental illness.

Therefore, people should take step to reduce its level, mainly through participation in regular physical activities. It has been shown that during fitness classes increases so called "happiness hormone" and well-being humor is longer than the duration of training. Long-term changes in the construction of our body and improve physical appearance can affect an improved self- assessment, increase self-confidence and self-esteem [7].

## **PURPOSE, METHOD AND RESEARCH MATERIAL**

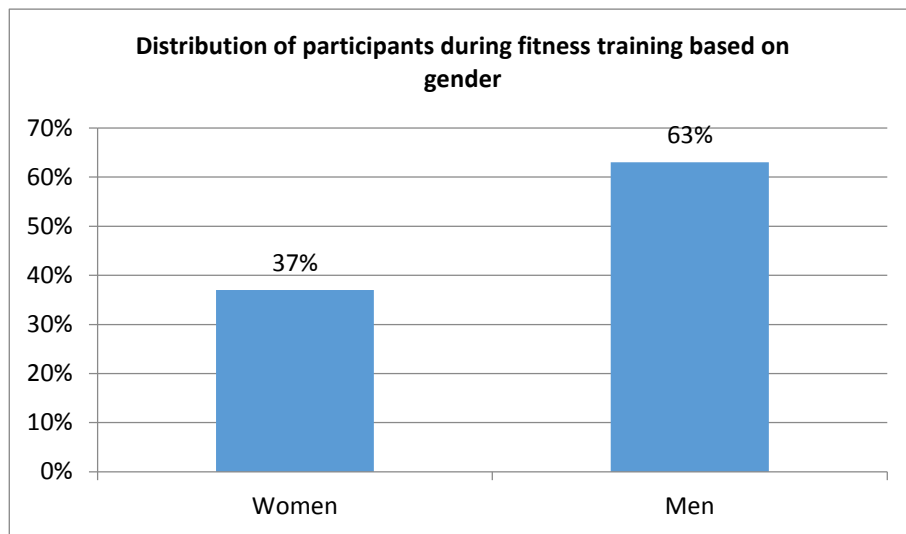
The aim of this study is to determine motivation and socio-demographic profile of women and men involved in one of the form of physical recreation - fitness.

## **METHODS AND RESEARCH MATERIAL**

For the purpose of this study were selected questionnaire technique. Most of the questions were closed, some questions of mentioned questionnaire took form of a semi-open. The study was made among customers from the largest fitness clubs in Rzeszów.

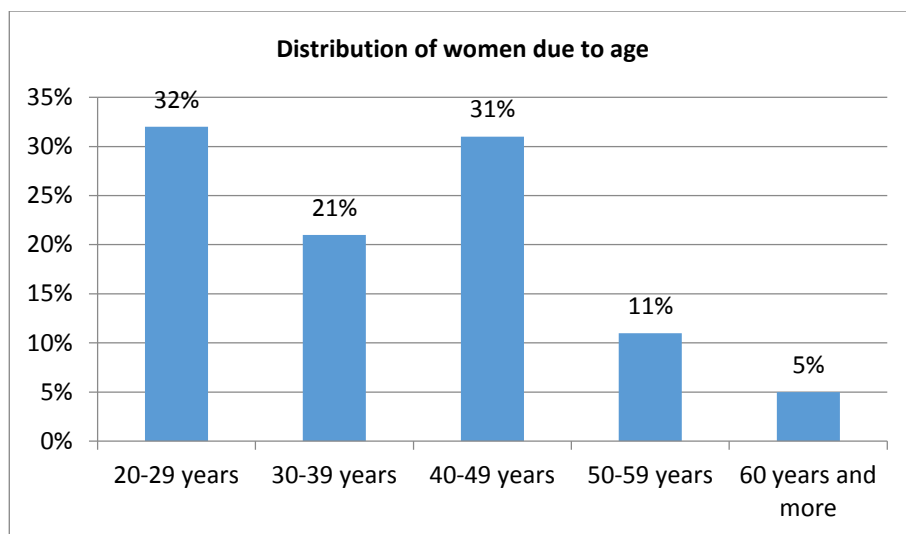
Research were made in May 2013 on the group of 40 people, include 29 women and 11 men who correctly filled questionnaire. All respondents had an opportunity to take part in the study. The questions were formulated to the age of respondents. The survey was conducted anonymously in presence of researchers and brief explanations of them.

## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH



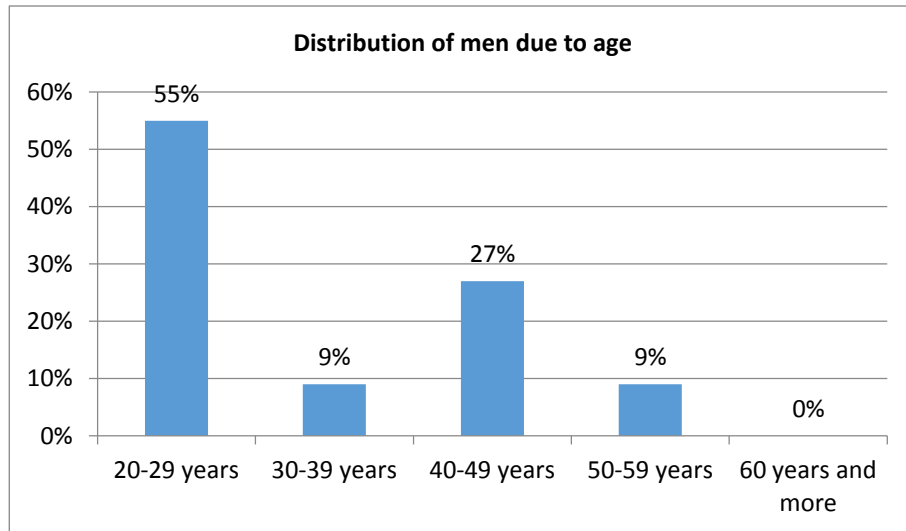
**Figure 1.** Distribution of participants during fitness training based on gender

Graph number 1 shows that our study involved 63% of women and men 37% of men.



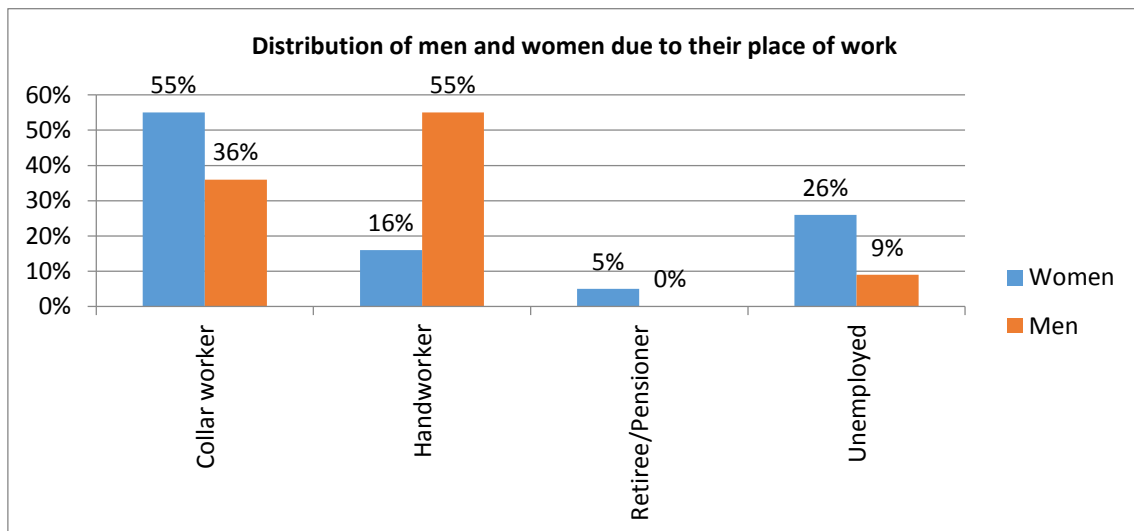
**Figure 2.** Distribution of women due to age

Results shown on the second graph shows that a majority of women surveyed are between 20-29 age (32%) and 40-49 age (31%). Slightly less, because 21% of women 30 to 39 years old. Women between 50-59 years old were 11%. Least, because only 5% of women reported at the age of 60 and more, this type of physical activity in this age is not very popular.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of men due to age

Results shown on the graph number 3 shows that the majority of men in the range 20-29 age was a group of (55 %) and 40-49 (27 %). Slightly less, because 9 % of men between 30 to 39 years old. Men between 50-59 years old was only 9%. In contrast, men and women in aged 60 and over were not, which could indicate that this type of physical activity in this age group is not popular.



**Figure 4.** Distribution of men and women due to their place of work

As you can see in the graph number 4, above 53% of women and 36% of men indicated that they are not physical workers, 16 % of women and 55 % of men are working as a physical workers. We can conclude that the majority of people participating in the training fitness are connected with mental work.

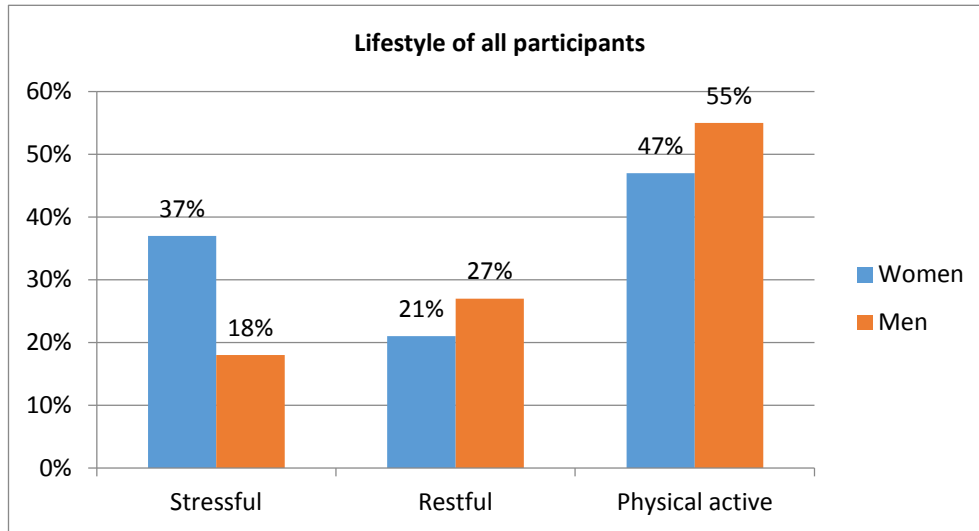


Figure 5. Lifestyle of all participants

Figure 5 shows lifestyle of women and men during normal day. The vast majority of women (47%) and men (55%) are connected with physical active lifestyle. Easy lifestyle, 21% of women and 27% men. In contrast, under the influence of stress, lives 37% of women and 18% men.

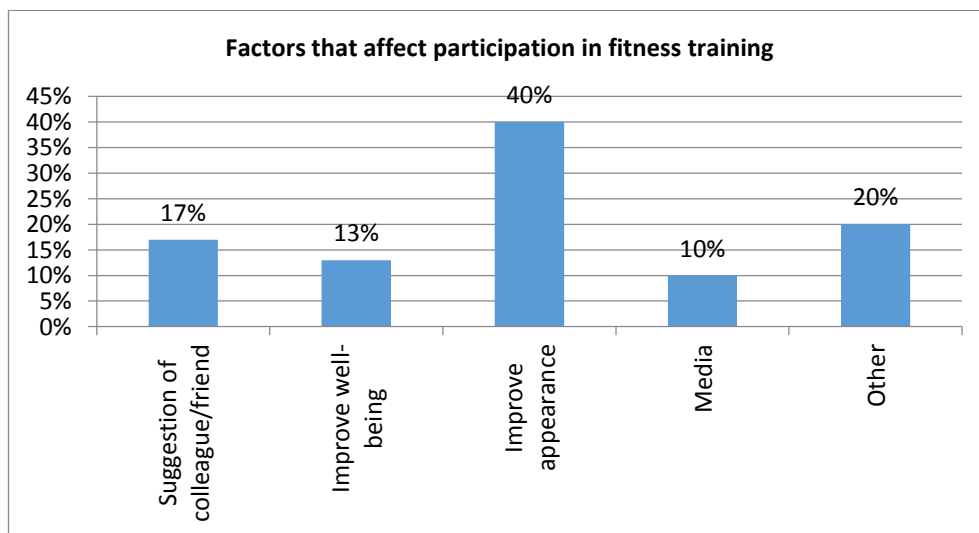


Figure 6. Factors that affect participation in fitness training

Figure 6 shows factors affecting the participation of respondents in the training fitness. The main motive is desire to improve appearance (40%). 20% of respondents chose other factors. On the other hand, factors such as persuasion from colleague/friends (17%), desire to improve own well-being (13%) and media (10%), are very similar.

**Table 1.** Participation of respondents at fitness training session

No.	Answers	Women		Men		All	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	1-6 months	5	26	4	36	9	30
2.	7-12 months	4	21	3	27	7	23
3.	1-2 years	6	32	3	27	9	30
4.	Longer	4	21	1	9	5	17

Note! N - number of answers

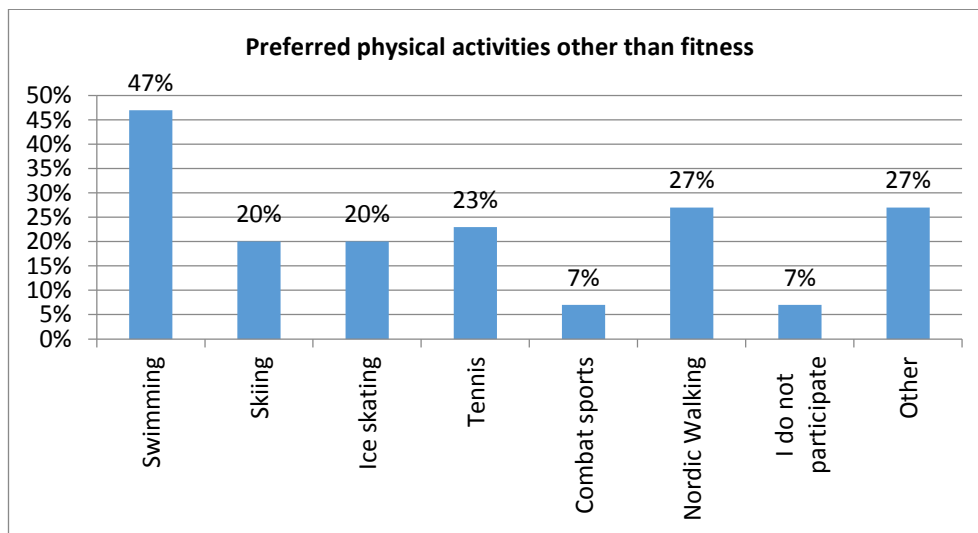
The table number 1 shows that the majority of respondents are attending at the classes of fitness training from 1-6 months (30%) and from 1-2 years (30%). These results are very similar. The rest number of people who are attending for fitness training from 7-12 months (7 people) and more than 2 years (only 5). Next table (table number 2) shows participation in the fitness training per week.

**Table 2.** Frequency of participation people who exercise during fitness training

No.	Answers	Women		Men		All	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Few times a week	11	58	4	36	15	50
2.	Once a week	4	21	2	18	6	20
3.	One time for two week	3	16	1	9	4	13
4.	Occasionally	1	5	4	36	5	17

Note! N - number of answers

From all of respondents only half of them are who participate few times a week (50%). 20% of people participate only once a week. Once during every two weeks 13% of respondents and occasionally practice 17% of respondents, including 1 woman and 4 men.



**Figure 7.** Preferred physical activities other than fitness

From the diagram above most of the respondents (14 people ) chose swimming. Very popular was also Nordic Walking and "other" - 8 people. Participants were chosen also dancing, rollerblading and jogging, tennis 7 people. Skiing and skating only 6 people, while

the least was combat sports (2 people). 2 people said that they do not participate in other activities, beside fitness.

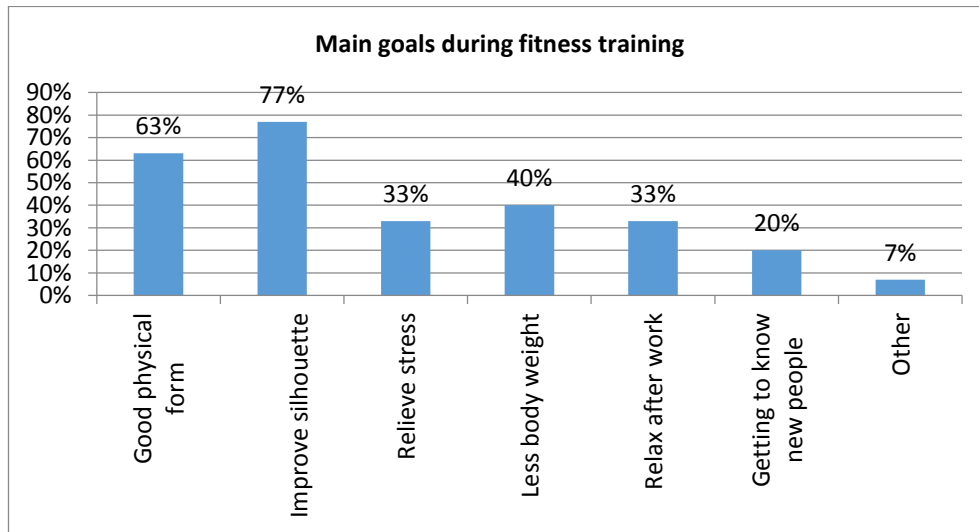


Figure 8. Main goals during fitness training

Regarding to this question, most of respondents (23 people ) answered that the main goal for them is to improve their figure. 19 people said, that they would like improve their physical form. Body weight decrease was important for 12 respondents. The other goals are very similar such as relaxation after work and recover from stress. Objectives such as meeting new people and "other" are no longer so important for respondents. Under the category of "other" participants have signed "better feel" and "good company".

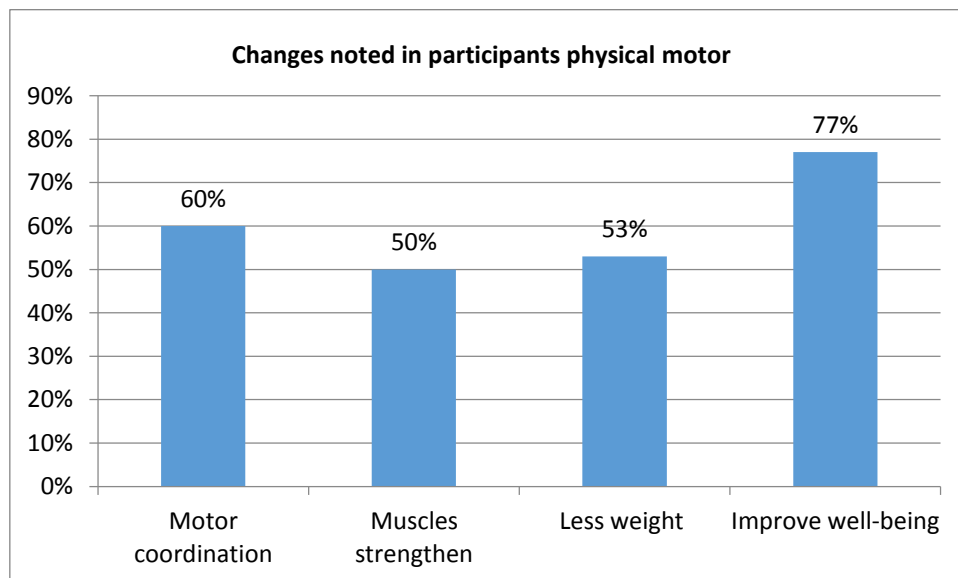


Figure 9. Changes noted in participants physical motor

According to the graph 9, in which respondents could select multiple answers, attend at fitness training is connected with well-being. 23 people have chosen this answer. 18 participants have chosen improvement of coordination. 15 people have noticed better strengthen muscles and less weight through exercise.



## **DISCUSSION**

It was decided to diagnose this problem in Rzeszów, because of various forms of physical activity especially for women. Given benefits of making,. It is well known fact that inhabitants from large cities care more of their health than from villages, as it is a result of their higher awareness in this problem, as well as more extensive infrastructure. The similar report presents CSO 2009 "Polish participation in sport and physical recreation in 2008".

On the basis of research in a context of different stages of life, we can say that the most active were women, whose ages were ranged from 20-29 years old. Looking for clarify of this situation, we can assumed that this age group is characterized by a relatively high level of fitness, not too heavy load everyday duties, who has a significant awareness of one's physical appearance, their needs, life goals and aspirations. However, a large part of this group is financially independent and can freely dispose of their funds. It is a time of looking for a life partner, finding a place in labor market, hence belief moreover created in media that the visual appearance is an important attribute to facilitate personal and professional success. In young women minds are notion about take care of their own appearance. In a smaller group of older women fitness classes, as it seems, according to prevailing social stereotypes, traditional conferences education and belief that physical activity is addressed only to young people. This finding coincides with the result of B. Alejziak: "Fitness as an active way of spending free time of women from Tarnów" [1].

Another factor of participation in fitness classes is education. B. Marciszewska said: "choice of recreation and sports as a form of leisure for people with higher and secondary education, there is probably the result of a more informed selection of activities undertaken during leisure time taking into account the potential benefits for mental and physical health" [14]. After B. Marciszewska, we can say that participation in physical activities increase with the level of education. Similar view of this matter have got Alexander Sikora and Anna Celmer, they said that "women with higher education are aware of the importance and impact of physical activity on their health. Besides, these are often people who work mentally, for them fitness classes are one of a place, where they can use their energy, relieve stress and relax. Respondents of physical work do not have strength nor inclination to participate in physical activities which coincides with results of the study" [19]. Question about the main goals of participation in fitness classes, most respondents (23 people) said that an important goal for them is to improve their figure. 19 people said that they would like to maintain a good physical form. Decrease of body weight is also important for respondents. When it comes to noticeable changes, some respondents said that for them the most important is, to feel better and to improve their physical condition. Improving well-being is inextricably connected with an increased secretion of endorphins. R. Grzywocz and T. Skowronek as well as Z. Nowak and A. Nowak they said about this, "regular exercise produces many positive reactions in human body. Higher exercise capacity, reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, evolution of endorphins [9,16].

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Studies have shown that respondents in their environment are faced with many factors affecting participation in fitness training. The most often is, according to surveyed such factor as desire of improving our appearance. This is undoubtedly an element which can raise our motivation in the sphere of physical activity.

After a thorough analysis of our studies, we can conclude that the majority of respondents are participating at the fitness classes several times a week. In the era of modern technology, facilitation of everyday life, it is very encouraging. Healthy heart, reduced risk of incidence of diabetes and even certain types of cancer - are just a few of benefits from an active lifestyle. Therefore it is important to take part in various exercises of

movement. Only 17% of respondents occasionally takes part in such activities.

According to all respondents there are many forms of physical activity. At the first place there is swimming. With this type of activity there are a lot of good for overall health. Movement therapy in the water for many years is an important element of rehabilitation after injury. It is also important during treatment of joint diseases. Water is very good for effective body movements and pushes them back up as also at the same time forces body to hard work.

Returning to the hypothesis that the main motives of fitness exercises are issues of health and beauty, after studies and analysis of research material as well as answering on the research problems we can conclude that this hypothesis is correct.

In the literature, there are classification of motives in physical activity, but factors related to the individual motivation we can include: maintaining good physical condition and health, maintain a slim figure, sense of beauty, aesthetics, preventing stressors and sometimes fashion. However, for most of people very important is to lose their weight and to get a nice and slim silhouette.

Fitness classes, if are well organize in terms of type, intensity and frequency of exercise, will achieve the intended results. Fitness training can satisfy, can be strong incentive to maintain motivation for well form, can give a sense of satisfaction and contentment with what you are doing, have an impact on the proper fixation habits, active lifestyle. Fitness is an essential element of health-related self-education.

## LITERATURE

1. Alejziak B. 2011 Fitness as an active form of spending free time by women of Tarnów, *Zeszyty Naukowe Małopolskiej Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Tarnowie*; 17(1):11-28.
2. Ambroży T., Ambroży A. 2010 *Fitness w kulturze fizycznej*”, European Association for Security, Kraków.
3. Ambroży T., 2008 *Ćwiczenia siłowe i odżywianie w treningu fitness*”, European Association for Security, Kraków .
4. Anderson B. 1995 *Stretching czyli ćwiczenia rozciągające dla zwykłych śmiertelników oraz sportowców różnych dyscyplin*”, Zakł. Nar. im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław.
5. Cichalewska A., Kolarczyk E., Arlet A. *Aerobik: podstawy teoretyczne i zasób ćwiczeń gimnastycznych*”, AWF, Kraków.
6. Dąbrowska M. 2002 *Trening rowerowy*, Bodylife, 4.
7. Drabik J. 1995 *Aktywność fizyczna w edukacji zdrowotnej społeczeństwa*, cz.1. AWF, Gdańsk.
8. Farhi D. 2011 *Joga- sztuka życia*, Ręczna Robota, Warszawa.
9. Grzywocz R., Skowronek T. 2012 *Tętno wysiłkowe i wydatek energetyczny w ocenie efektywności treningu zdrowotnego kobiet uprawiających Nordic Walking, Jogging i Fitness w: Rozprawy naukowe Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu*, 38,151-157.
10. Karpay E. 2007 *Fitness, zdrowie i uroda*, Helion, Gliwice.
11. Kielbasiewicz-Drozdowska, Siwiński W. *Teoria i Metodyka rekreacji*, AWF, Poznań.
12. Korczak C., Leowski J. 1977 *Problemy higieny i ochrony zdrowia*, WSiP, Warszawa.
13. Kuba L., Paruzel- Dyja M. 2010 *Fitness. Nowoczesne formy gimnastyki*, AWF, Katowice.
14. *Marciszewska B. 1999 Konsumpcja usług rekreacyjno-sportowych*”, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane AWF, Gdańsk.
15. Nowak S. 1978 *Metodologia badań socjalistycznych*, Warszawa.

16. Nowak Z., Nowak A. 2010 Znaczenie aktywności ruchowej w profilaktyce chorób sercowo-naczyniowych. Cz. II, Rehabilitacja w Praktyce, 31–34.
17. Pilch T. 1970 Metodologia pedagogicznych badań środowiskowych, PAN, Warszawa.
18. Rygula I. 2000 Elementy teorii, metodyki, diagnostyki i optymalizacji treningu sportowego, AWF.
19. Sikora A., Celmer A. 2012 Wiedza praktyczna kobiet podejmujących aktywność w klubie fitness, w: Rozprawy naukowe Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, 38, 9-15.
20. Siwiński W., Tauber R. D. 2004 Rekreacja ruchowa. Zagadnienia teoretyczno-metodologiczne, Wyższa Szkoła Hotelarstwa i Gastronomii w Poznaniu.
21. Winiarski R. 1989 Wstęp do teorii rekreacji, AWF, Kraków.
22. Wolańska T. 1997 Leksykon- sport dla wszystkich, AWF, Warszawa.
23. Zieliński P. 2011 Relaksacji w teorii i praktyce pedagogicznej, AJD, Częstochowa.
24. <http://centrumzorza.pl/silownia/pl/rodzaje-zaj/rz-fitness/historia-fitness>
25. <http://fitness.magicsport.pl/1089,fitness,historia.html>
26. [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biegi\\_narciarskie](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biegi_narciarskie)
27. [www.trenerindywidualny.pl/content/obj%C4%99tosc-i-intensywnosc-treningu-problemy-zwiazane-z-jego-skutecznościa-i-przetrenowaniem-or](http://www.trenerindywidualny.pl/content/obj%C4%99tosc-i-intensywnosc-treningu-problemy-zwiazane-z-jego-skutecznościa-i-przetrenowaniem-or)
28. [http://dieta.pl/grupy\\_wsparcia/chce-schudnac/1992-bialka-wegle-tluszcze-i-jesc-aby-schudnac-zdrowo.html](http://dieta.pl/grupy_wsparcia/chce-schudnac/1992-bialka-wegle-tluszcze-i-jesc-aby-schudnac-zdrowo.html)