

FORMS OF MOTOR RECREATION, THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, BASED ON CHILDREN BEHAVIOUR FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITY IN LEŻAJSK

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Abstract:

The study is designed to provide an answer to questions concerning the role and significance of recreational options for individuals with intellectual disability. Forms of recreation are central to rehabilitation of children and teenagers with lower intellectual capacities. Exercise affects individual's biological balance, and facilitates socialization; it is a precondition for progress in his or her psychomotor development. Particularly in the case of mentally challenged children involvement in forms of recreation provides them with opportunities for basic social experiences. Mental disability results in limited opportunities for intellectual development and performance, which further hinder capabilities for social adjustment [2]. In the case of children and teenagers with varied level and type of anomaly, the purpose of rehabilitation process is to improve their fitness, as well as mental and social skills and to create optimum conditions to enable their active involvement in life. Individuals with mental disability quite willingly participate in various forms of recreation [6]. This has been confirmed by the present study which examined the link between exercise done by children and teenagers with mental disabilities and their health and fitness. The research was conducted by means of a survey questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

Issues discussed in the present paper are related to individuals whose intellectual disabilities range from mild and moderate to substantial and severe. All the subjects attend Special Educational Facility in Leżajsk.

In contemporary world broadly understood recreational exercise has gained top priority and has become an indispensable activity for people. Forms of recreational exercise taken by disabled individuals are of equal significance as in the case of healthy individuals because exercise is designed to sustain their well-being, or more precisely their fitness, endurance and capacity so that they can function in social life as effectively as possible. Mental disability is not a psychiatric disorder, yet it results in limited opportunities for intellectual development and performance, which further hinder capabilities for social adjustment [1]. Mental

disabilities are most frequently caused by factors disturbing fetal development and by some communicable childhood diseases.

Forms of recreational exercise are central to rehabilitation of children and teenagers with lower intellectual capacities [8]. Suitably designed, exercise may relieve the effects of pathology and enable the individual to achieve a state effectively resembling the physiological conditions for the organism's normal functions, to develop compensatory movements which allow the individual to live as independently as possible in the surrounding world, and without the mental baggage of a disability. Additionally, exercise makes it possible for an individual to learn basic motor behaviours, to achieve necessary level of psychomotor competence, and gain at least a minimum capacity enabling the organism to adapt to physical effort[9]

PURPOSE AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study aims at identifying the essence of disability, and barriers within human consciousness as well as attitudes manifested towards individuals with intellectual disabilities. It also emphasizes the fact that in the case of children and teenagers with lower intellectual capacities recreational exercise is one of the elementary conditions for their rehabilitation, and consequently their overall health care.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The research was performed by means of survey questionnaire based on diagnostic poll method. The anonymous survey was carried out in a randomly selected facility attended by children with intellectual disabilities. Material was collected by filling in individual questionnaires; sometimes in order to complete the task it was necessary to patiently carry out an interview with a respondent, which is absolutely understandable in the case of persons with mental disabilities. The subjects were children and teenagers with mental disabilities, from the Special Educational Facility (Specjalny Ośrodek Szkolno-Wychowawczy) in Leżajsk.

The study was carried out in 2012. The study group consisted of 20 students of Elementary School, grade III-IV, including 8 girls and 12 boys, and well as 38 Middle School students (12 girls, 26 boys).

RESULTS

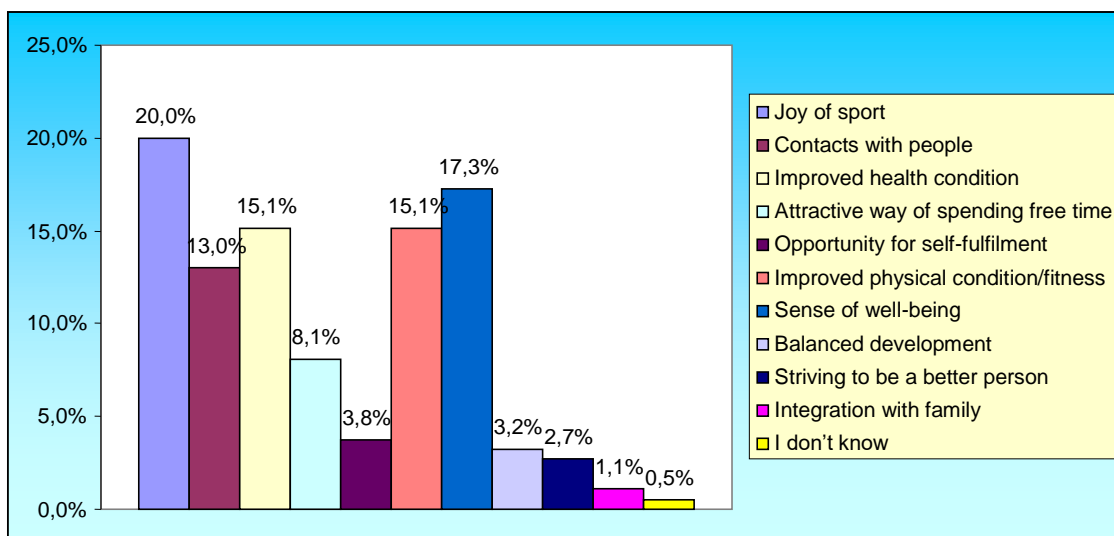


Figure 1. Graph illustrates the Subjects' motivations for taking up various forms of recreation

The above data, graphically presented in the figure and table, show it is possible to conclude that for children and teenagers from the Special Educational Facility the most important motivations for taking exercise include the joy of playing sports – which is confirmed by 20% of the subjects and the sense of well-being (17.3%). Equally important motivation for taking up exercise by these children is improved health condition and improved physical condition/fitness – this opinion was expressed by 15.1% of the respondents. The opportunity for contact with other people was acknowledged by 13% of the subjects.

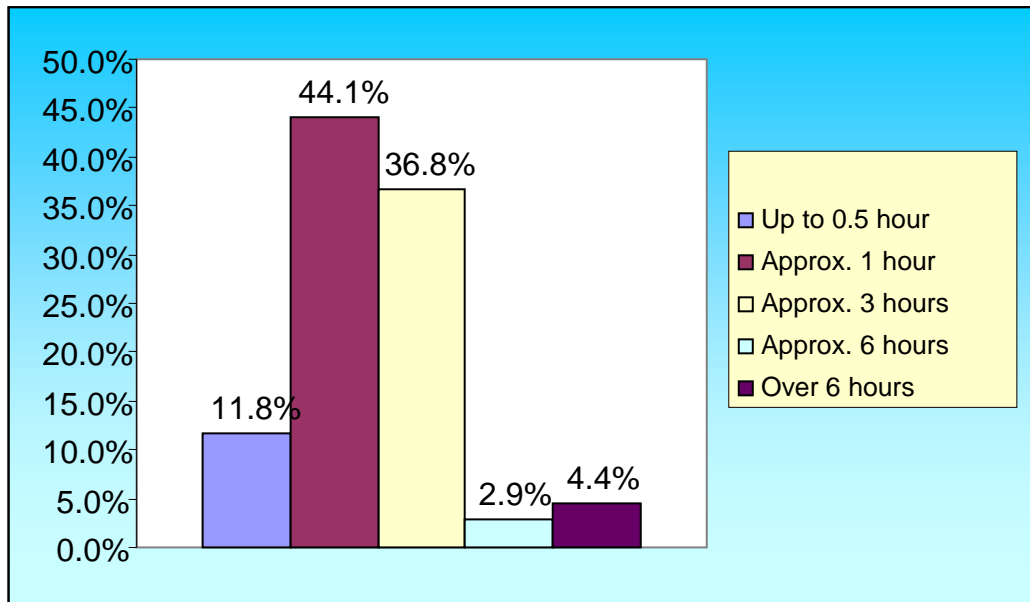


Figure 2. Graphic data related to the time designated in the daily budget for forms of recreation

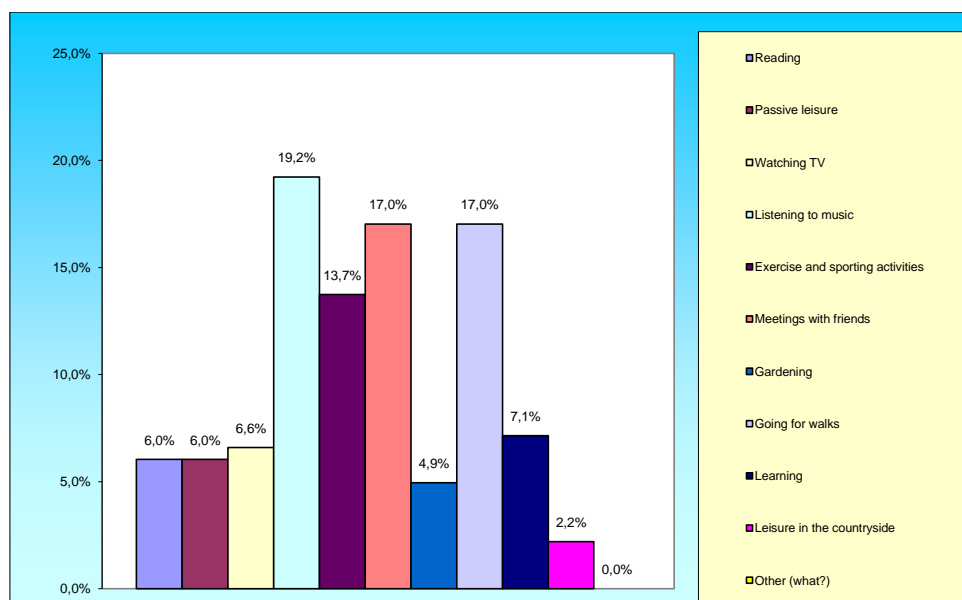


Figure 3. Graphic data related to the respondents' leisure time

One of the elements representing healthy life-styles is the daily time budget comprising forms of recreation. Therefore, it may be interesting to examine subjects' opinions and responses related to how much time should be designated for sporting activities, and how much time they actually spend exercising.

The Figure shows that 44.1% of the subjects designate approximately 1 hour per day for forms of recreation. Slightly fewer individuals (36.8%) spend 3 hours per day. This may result from their high awareness of the fact that exercise favourably impacts one's health condition.

When analyzing the time designated by the subjects for forms of recreation, it is a good idea to look at the ways they spend leisure time, as well. Opinions concerning this topic are shown in Table 3.

Figure 3 above shows that children with intellectual disability most frequently use their free time to listen to music, this response was given by 19.2% of the subjects. The remaining leisure time is designated for meetings with friends and for gardening. A significant number of respondents take up forms of recreation and sporting activities during their free time. Therefore we can presume that subjects who take up exercise are aware of its stimulating and corrective effects and impact for development.

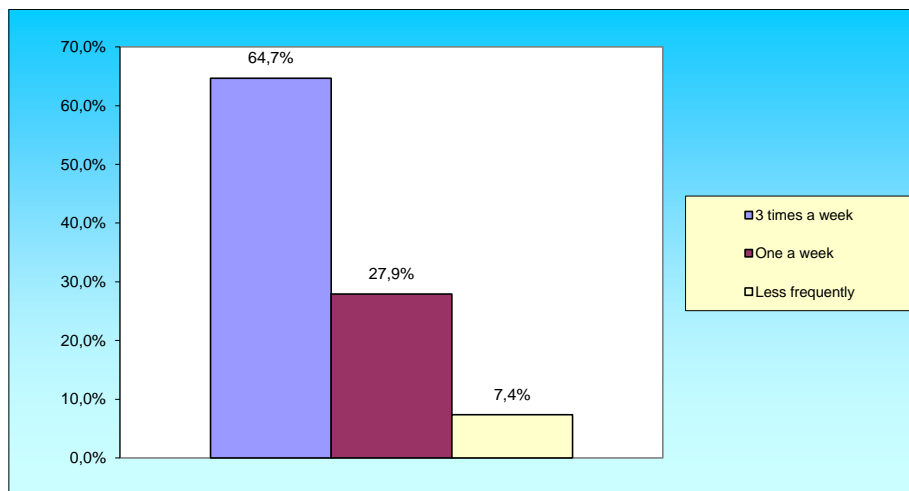


Figure 4. Graphic values presenting the frequency of recreational activities performed by respondents

The above figure presents the subjects' responses related to the frequency of their practice of recreational activities. Physical exercise is taken at least three times per week by a significant majority of the respondents (64.7%) and once a week by 27.9%. Finally 7.4% of the subjects rarely participate in various forms of active recreation.

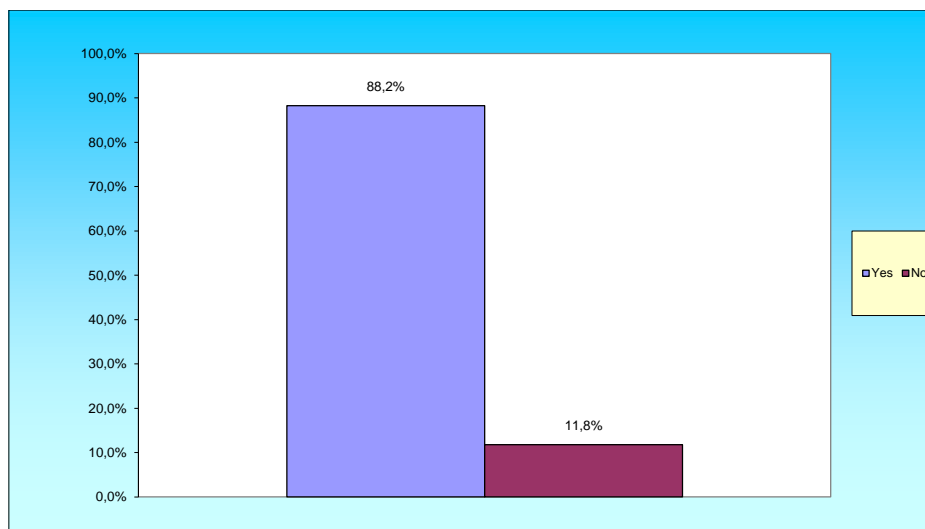


Figure 5. Graphic values reflecting opinions about the significance of recreational exercise and its positive impact on one's health.

Referring to the results shown in the figure above, we conclude that until 88,2% of respondents realize that physical exercise significantly impacts their health, other respondents (11.8%) are not aware of the health benefits resulting from the taking of the various forms of recreation. Comforting is the fact that children and teenagers are deeply convinced and aware of the beneficial effects of recreational exercise for their health and development.

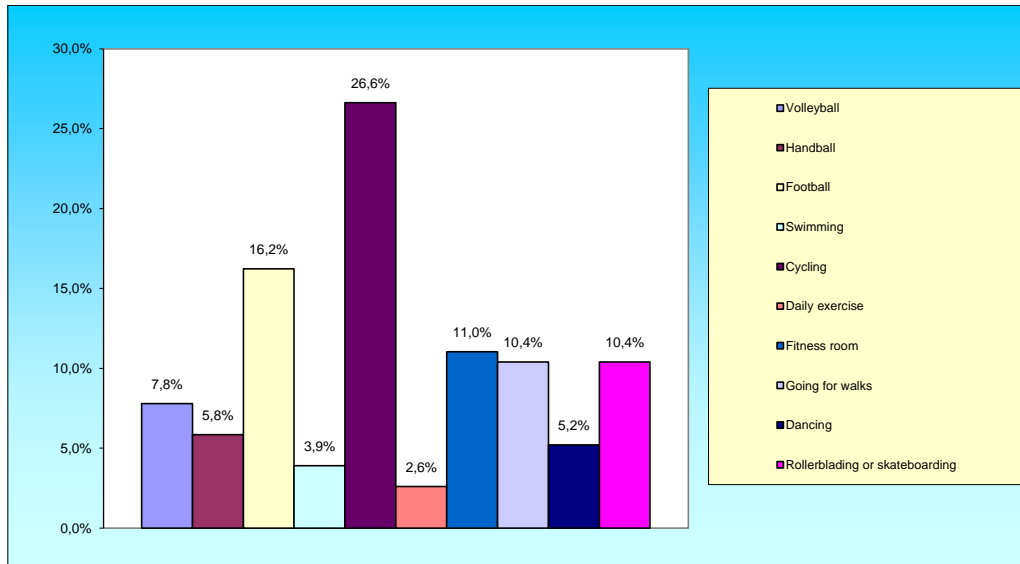


Figure 6. Graphic data showing the forms of recreational exercises taken up in free time

The above chart shows the respondents' opinions concerning the proportional use of their free time for various forms of recreational activities. The students during their leisure time tend to perform such activities as: bike rides (26.6%), playing handball (16.2%), exercising in a fitness room, taking walks, rollerblading or skateboarding (10.4%).

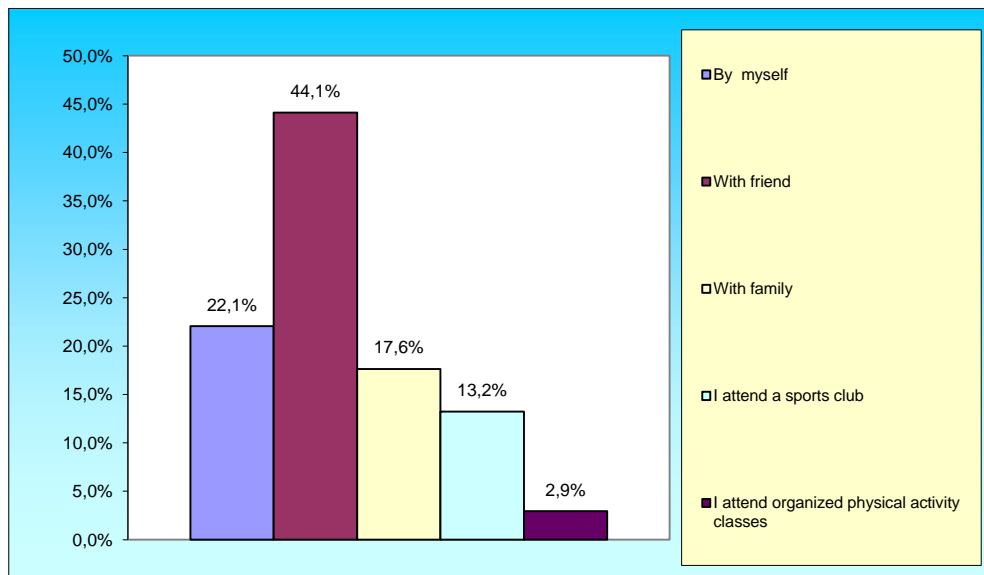


Figure 7. Graphic shows with whom the respondents undertake various forms of recreation.

Figure 7 shows that 2.9% of the respondents participate in organized physical activity classes and 13.2% attend a sports club; slightly more individuals are accompanied by parents during recreational activities. Yet, majority of the students are more eager to do various forms of recreational exercise when accompanied by a friend – this opinion was expressed by 44.1% of the respondents. Additionally, 22.1% of the subjects reported they took up sports individually.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present study suggest that children and teenagers with intellectual disabilities consciously chose behaviours and values which allow them to improve their health and fitness. Therefore it seems that, in course of their educational process, the respondents have been provided with relevant knowledge relating to this aspect. Children and teenagers with mental disability show great interest in physical education and sport and they recognize these kinds of activities as an excellent source of wonderful experiences, joy and happiness. Vast majority of the subjects have reported that they eagerly and systematically participate in various forms of recreational exercise. Such pursuits for them are a source of pleasure, and provide them with an opportunity to improve the sense of well-being and their physical fitness.

Findings of the study prove that students of the Special Educational Facility would be most willing to designate their free time for their hobbies, for exercising and sporting activities. It is necessary to acknowledge the fact that emotional and physical effort facilitates integration of disabled individuals with their community; the society in turn learns to accept individuals who, after all, have become disabled through no fault of their own.

Therefore, the process of education designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities should to a large extent focus on improving their motor skills, which will contribute to their most effective multidimensional development, and their capacity for as much independence in life as possible, and for performance of suitable roles in accordance with their needs, capabilities, and interests as well as community's expectations.

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