

IMPLEMENTATION OF WELLNESS PROGRAM IN POLISH SPORTS CLUBS

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Abstract:

Introduction. In sports, wellness is especially designed to restore the player's mental and physical abilities and create optimal conditions for recovery processes.

The aim of the work. The aim of the study was to evaluate the implementation of wellness program in Polish sports clubs depending on the level of competition.

The material and the methodology. The study involved 19 clubs: football (n=7), volleyball (n=5), basketball (n=4), handball (n=3). In each of the disciplines there were teams competing in the three top leagues (I-III). The research tool was an original questionnaire.

Results. Wellness was conducted in all I-league teams; II-league - 66.6%; III-league - 50%. In the clubs, mainly physiotherapists are responsible for wellness (I league - 66% of the clubs, II - 100%). In all clubs of I-league renewing treatments are carried out after each training session; II-league - 50%; in III-league renewal is done occasionally. In I-league most often performed procedures were massage, sauna and baths - 18%; in II-league massage and baths (29%); in III-league dominated massage, underwater massage, sauna, cryotherapy and exercises in water (16.7%).

Conclusions. Wellness prevalence in sport is strongly dependent on the level of competition. Only in the top league it is carried out systematically, and in the lower divisions, mainly during the training camps or even less frequently. The most commonly performed renewing procedures include massage, sauna, baths and exercises in the water. The person who is responsible for the implementation of wellness in a club is mostly a physiotherapist or a trainer.

INTRODUCTION

Wellness, in terms of sport, is the effect on human beings, aimed at minimizing and mitigating the negative effects of the work performed, and obtaining a full physical and mental readiness to undertake further work. It is also a process of returning of exercise performance to the earlier level, after high physical and mental loads, and the prevention of overload of work by means and environmental conditions, which actively succor and accelerate the process of human organism regeneration [7]. It should also be mentioned that the wellness means are supportive procedures, accelerating the process of restitution of the body and not a form of a treatment. In sports, wellness is designed to restore the player's

mental and physical abilities through interaction with the training program, to create optimal conditions for recovery processes, as well as prevention and minimization of the effects of diseases caused by overload [4]. Wellness program, involving the selection of appropriate treatments and appropriate timing of their implementation, must take into account a number of variables, including the specificity of sport and the training period, in which the player is currently located [11].

Despite the fact that the use of wellness treatments becomes nowadays more and more popular, not only in sports but also in recreational activity, it definitely lacks scientific reports in this field. So far, there are no scientific studies examining the prevalence and methods of implementation of wellness in Polish sports clubs.

THE AIM OF THE WORK

The aim of the study was to evaluate the implementation of wellness program in Polish sports clubs depending on the level of competition in which they participate.

THE MATERIAL AND THE METHODOLOGY

Characteristics of subjects

The study was conducted in 19 randomly selected sports clubs throughout Poland in 2013. The questionnaire was sent to 30 clubs, but has been filled in by 19 of them: football (n=7), volleyball (n=5), basketball (n=4), handball (n=3). In each of these disciplines there were teams competing in the three top leagues (I-III).

Research methods

The research tool was an original survey questionnaire, which consisted of 5 questions on the implementation of wellness within the clubs.

RESULTS

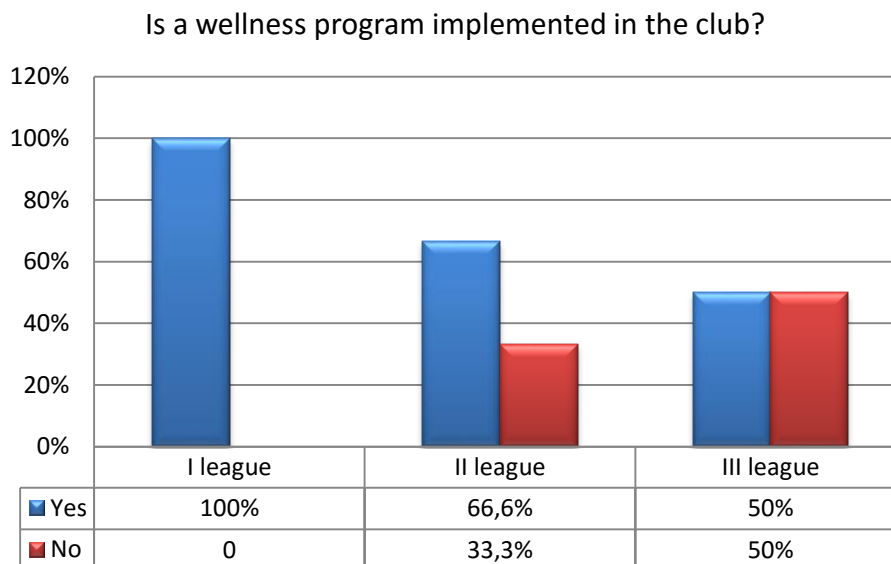


Figure 1. Implementation of wellness program in sports clubs depending on the level of competition (source: author's own study, 2013).

Wellness program was conducted in all I-league teams (figure 1). In II-league biological regeneration of players was carried out in 66.6% of clubs, while among III-league teams, this percentage drops to 50%.

Who is responsible for wellness program in the club?

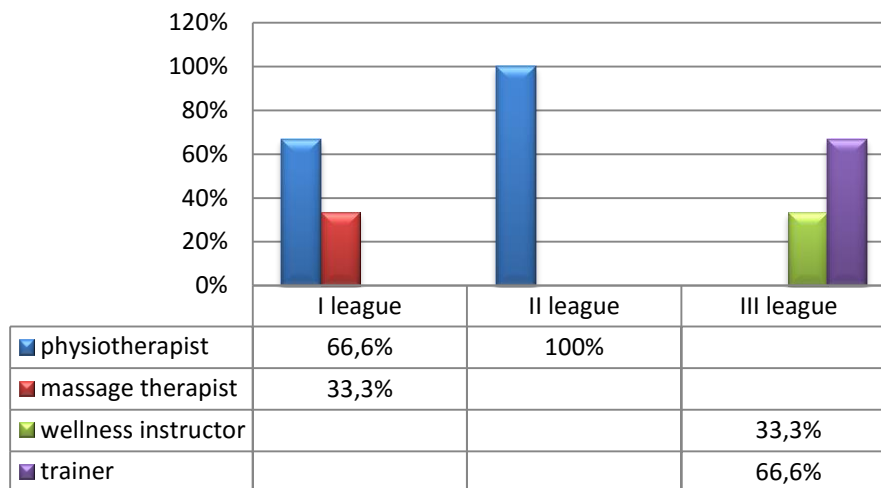


Figure 2. Specialists responsible for the implementation of wellness program in sports clubs depending on the level of the competition (source: author's own study, 2013).

For the implementation of wellness program in clubs competing in the higher leagues are mainly responsible physiotherapists (figure 2). In 66.6% of I-league teams, these tasks were realized by physiotherapists, and in 1/3 of the teams this person was a massage therapist. In II-league, for assisting the regeneration of the players were responsible only physiotherapists. Only in III-league wellness process was led mostly by trainer, and in 33.3% of the cases - a wellness instructor.

How often wellness treatments are conducted?

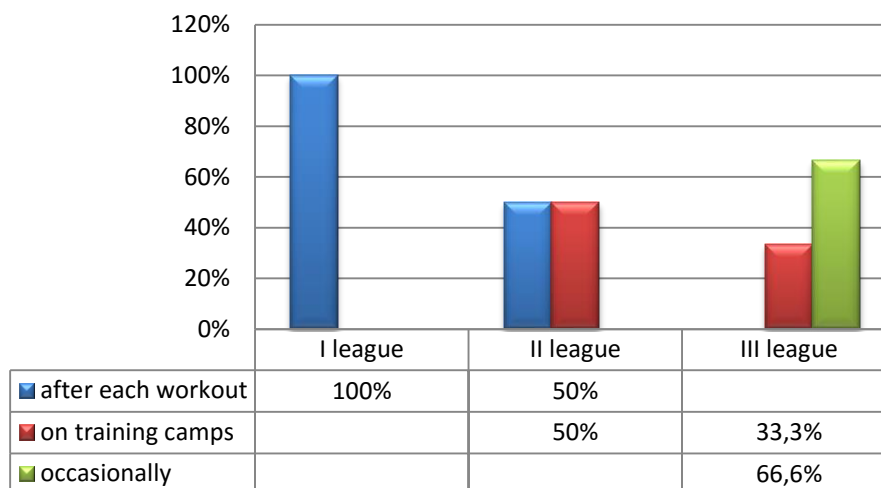


Figure 3. Frequency of wellness treatments application in individual leagues (source: author's own study, 2013).

In all clubs of I-league renewing treatments are carried out after each workout (figure 3). In 50% of II-league teams wellness is carried out after each workout, and in 50% - only on the training camps. In III-league treatments to accelerate the regeneration of the organism after exercise are executed occasionally.

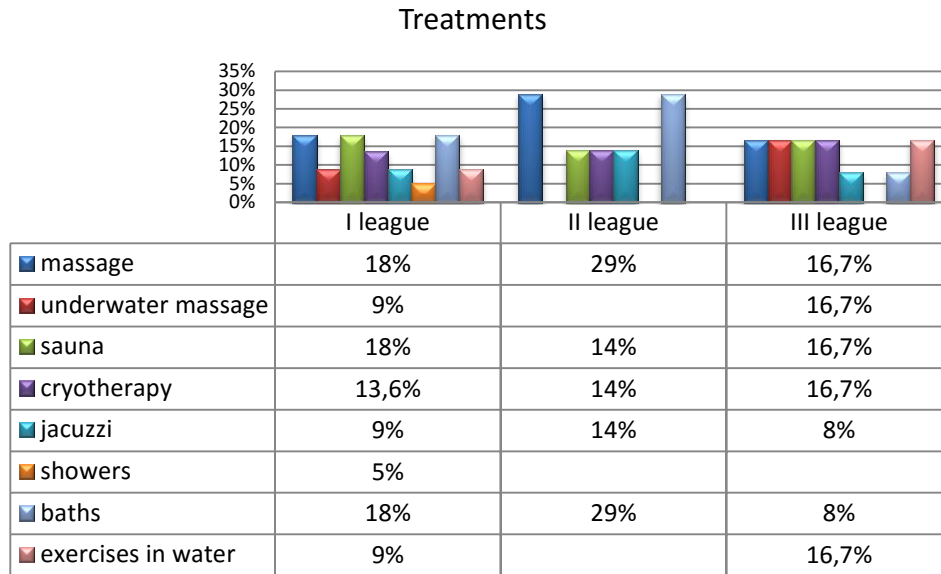


Figure 4. The most commonly used wellness treatments in individual leagues (source: author's own study, 2013).

In this question, apart from the proposed treatments, respondents could also indicate others. In I-league, the most commonly performed procedures were massage (18%), sauna (18%) and baths (18%) - figure 4. Cryotherapy was also popular (13.6%). Players rarely used underwater massage (9%), exercises in water (9%) and jacuzzi (9%). In II- league definitely dominated massage (29%) and baths (29%). In III-league popularity of treatments is distributed more evenly. Dominated massage, underwater massage, sauna, cryotherapy and exercises in water -16.7%.

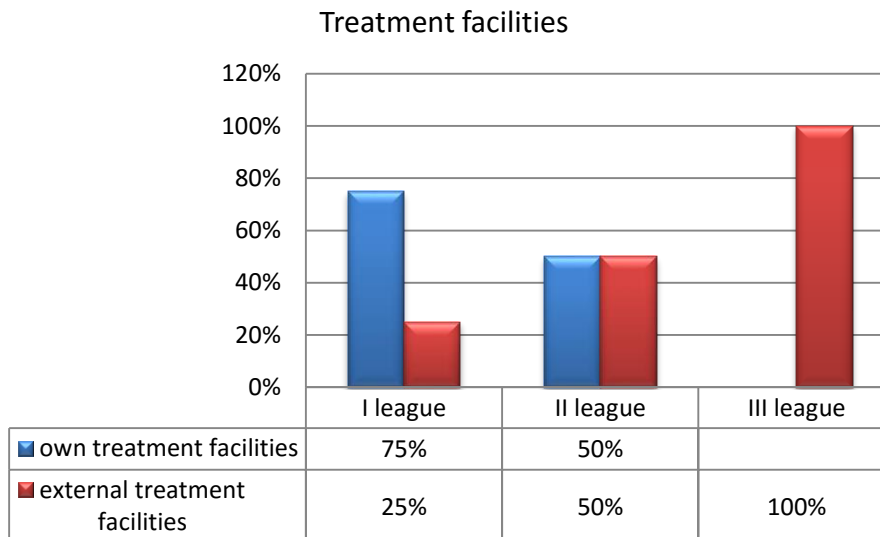


Figure 5. Place of wellness facilities in individual leagues (source: author's own study, 2013).

In I-league, renewing treatments were carried out by most teams (75%) using own wellness facilities (figure 5). In II-league, half the teams implemented wellness based on own treatment facilities, and the other half used the external facilities. The III-league teams only benefited from external wellness facilities.

DISCUSSION

Wellness starts to become increasingly important in contemporary sport, both competitive and amateur. If wellness is not realized in sports clubs, it is not due to a lack of conviction about its effectiveness, but financial constraints or lack of access to treatment facilities. Despite the popularity of the issue, there are relatively few publications on wellness in sport.

Our research shows that the availability of renewing treatment depends on the level of competition, in which the team competes. This is most likely related to the amount of the budget, which the club has. If wellness was already conducted in the team, the players most often benefited from massage, sauna, baths, exercising in water and cryotherapy, and less frequently from jacuzzi, showers and underwater massage. Choraży i Kwaśny confirm the popularity of sauna among weightlifters, as a treatment favorably affecting the psyche and the physical condition of athletes [2]. Also Błażkiewicz and Domaniecki in their work indicate showers, massages, baths and sauna as commonly used treatments for young soccer players [1].

Szafraniec et al. found that the use of wellness after a workout, even to a limited extent, helps to improve strength endurance of disabled powerlifters [11]. Wellness was carried out only once a week, after the last training session, for a period of six weeks and consisted of the Finnish sauna bath, combined with cold Scottish showers. Wellness applied after exercise accelerates the regeneration of the organism. Zimmer has observed that when a treatment in cryogenic chamber was used after exercise, there has been an increase in the efficiency of muscle contraction, and the player quicker demonstrated a willingness to take the next exercise [12]. Similar results were obtained by Chwalbińska-Moneta, who applied the whole body cryotherapy in six rowers of Polish Olympic Team for a period of 12 days (3-minute stay in a cryogenic chamber x 2 times a day; the average temperature of -150 °C). After 12 days of cryotherapy, the author noted a decrease in HR, lactate, hormones (HGH, cortisol, testosterone) and subjective perceived exertion (Borg scale) during the progressive test [3]. After a series of 10 treatments of the whole body cryotherapy, an improvement of body balance and flexibility was observed [8, 9]. Research conducted on single muscles proves that cooling leads to improve their ability to contract [6].

Wellness is also often used in the final phase of the treatment of sports injuries. During convalescence of an athlete, the most common performed are procedures from the scope of electrotherapy, cryotherapy, thermotherapy, laserotherapy, magnetotherapy and stretching. Complementary to these treatments may be gymnastics in water or strength training [10].

The results of our study show that the regularity of the implementation of wellness is clearly dependent on the level of competition. Wellness is systematically implemented in all tested I-league clubs, while in the lower leagues situation is various. The reasons for this can be seen in the fact that most of I-league teams has its own treatment facilities, while in the case of III-league, all teams use external facilities. Similar results were obtained by Grzywacz and Sawaryn who found that among hockey players, wellness was the most frequently performed regularly, rarely - in occasional way. In order to regenerate the organism, physical therapy, sauna, hand massage and baths were used [5].

CONCLUSIONS

1. The prevalence of wellness in sport is strongly dependent on the level of competition. Only in the top league it is carried out systematically, and in the lower divisions, mainly during training camps or even less frequently.
2. The most commonly performed renewing procedures include massage, sauna, baths and exercises in water.
3. The person who is responsible for the implementation of wellness in a club is most often a

physiotherapist, a trainer or rarely a massage therapist.

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