



## THE ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS TOWARDS SPORTS ACTIVITIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON FORMING THEIR HEALTH BEHAVIOUR

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Over the last few years, there is reduction in the physical activities of people, especially in young people up to 18 years of age.

**Objective:** To study the attitude of adolescents towards sports activities and the influence of family environment on forming their health behaviour.

**Materials and methods:** A pilot study was conducted among 12-year old students from Hristo Danov Primary School in Plovdiv in February of the 2013/14 school year. The pilot sample included 16 students from a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class. The study was conducted in the form of anonymous direct individual survey. Data were statistically processed using variation, dispersion analysis and non-parametric and classification methods using the SPSS software package.

**Results:** Most of the respondents (88%) like sports and 25% of them confirm the need to practice sports because it makes them feel well. 87% of the respondents from the pilot sample practice sports out of school and 69% participate to unorganised sports activities. 50% of them do this 2 to 3 times a week. More than half of the students (56%) stated that no other member of their families practices sports actively. Same is the proportion of students who do not smoke but home is the place where they are exposed to cigarette smoke.

**Conclusions:** Adolescents are physically active during their free time but they participate mostly to unorganised activities and the level of participation is below the recommended level.

**Key words:** Health behaviour, adolescence, sports activities, physical activities, family education

### INTRODUCTION

The term "physical activity" can mean many different things to different people. For the professionals in public health, this behavior is to support health; others may see it as a phrase that brings a wide range of sports, leisure or active travel [2].

According to recent reports of physical activity for adolescents, sedentary behaviour was

established with a cut-off level of 300 min of moderate/vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per week [3].

During childhood and adolescence, families critically influence their children's health behaviors including physical activity. Our findings suggest that a parenting style characterized by warmth and support, while providing adolescents with appropriate levels of autonomy, may be important for achieving recommended levels of physical activity. Together with the results of other studies, our results indicate that an essential component of a

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health promoting household environment is a well-functioning family system [4].

**OBJEKTIVE**

To study the attitude of adolescents towards sports activities and the influence of family environment on forming their health behaviour.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A pilot study was conducted among 12-year old students from Hristo Danov Primary School in Plovdiv in February of the 2013/14 school year. The pilot sample included 16 students from a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class. The study was conducted in the form of anonymous direct individual survey.

Data were statistically processed using variation, dispersion analysis and non-parametric and classification methods using the SPSS software package [1].

**RESULTS**

The allocation by sex is 9 boys and 7 girls. The survey reveals that (88%) of the young people like sports. Generally all boys (56%) and 31% of the girls declare they love sports. Only the girls (12%) have preferences for a specific type of sport. The responses show an attitude rather than readiness for regular physical activity.

63% of all respondents point out as compulsory practicing of sports, while 37% believe that this should be done occasionally.

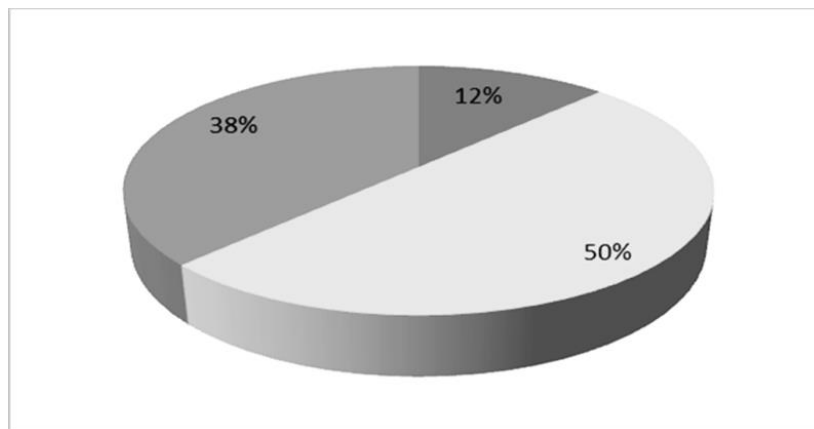
We put forward the question “Why is it necessary to practice sports?” None of the respondents pointed out the previously formulated answer “Because it is fashionable”. Maintaining good health is indicated as a leading

reason for practicing sports (75%) followed by the statement that by practicing sports the young people feel good (25%) and keeping in good shape (19%) is also important. The results obtained are indicative of the positive attitude of the twelve-year old people to physical activity. Whether they practice sports only to obtain a better figure or a pleasant feeling after physical exercises, it also has a positive effect on their health and contributes to the increase in the physical activity of young people.

To the question “Do you practice sports outside school?” 87% of the respondents give a positive answer, of which all boys and 33% of the girls. Only 13% determine themselves as not practicing sports, all of whom are girls.

The attitude of the young people towards the organized or non-organized sports is in favour of the non-organized - (69%) of all respondents practice unorganized sports in the form of free games with friends or independently and only 31% practice organized sports at sports clubs, organizations, teams, etc. There is a lack of organized, systematic and regular physical activity as a factor of good health. Those practicing organized sports are mostly boys (25%) and non-organized – almost equal share from both sexes (38% of the girls and 31% of the boys).

The following results were obtained when the question “How often do you practice sports?” was asked: 50% of the respondents answered that this happens 2-3 times a week, 12% that it is once a week and only 38% of the children practice sports daily (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** How often do you practice sports?

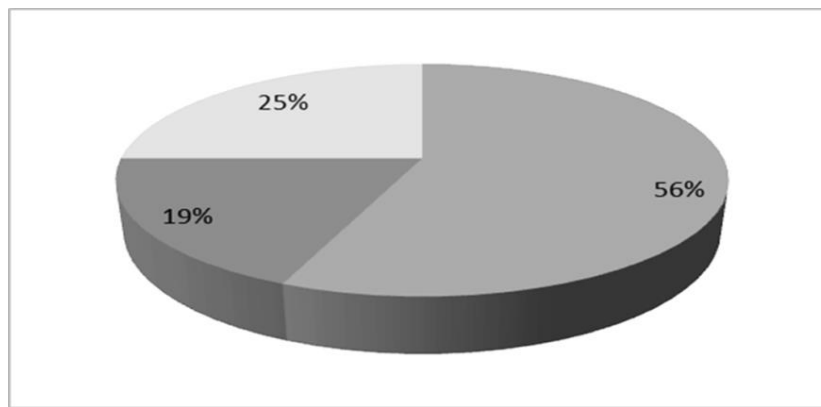
Gender does not influence the frequency of practicing sports, when this is not a daily activity, i.e. the data are equal both for boys and girls who practice sports once a week (6% for both sexes) and for those practicing sports 2-3 times a week (25% for both sexes).

For young people practicing sports on a daily basis the results obtained are in favour of the boys (25%), compared with (13%) of the girls. The obtained results outline readiness of the young people to practice sports.

In the period of adolescence the influence of the family environment and family upbringing are

leading for determination of the future attitude and motivation towards sports as a healthy way of life. In this connection the following results were obtained: more than half of the respondents (56%) point out that there is another family member who practices sports. A smaller share (44%) belongs to those children who indicate that there is not another member of their family who practices sports.

It is interesting to note that (56%) of the adolescents who have defined themselves as “non-smokers” are exposed to tobacco smoke at home (**Figure 2**).



**Figure 2.** Where are you exposed to tobacco smoke?

For the remaining (19%) of “non-smokers” no other members of their family smoke, which means that they are only exposed to tobacco smoke in public places. The fact that one fourth of all respondents are protected against the harmful influence of tobacco smoke is very inspiring.

The influence of the family on the control of the time spent behind the computer or monitor (TV, cell phone, video games, etc.) is also very important. The study found out that only in (25%) of the respondents the parents have control over the time spent behind the screen. Equally control is not exercised in the girls (38%) and boys (37%). Parents who exercise control are (19%) for the boys and only (6%) for the girls respectively. The results show low control on behalf of the parents on the time spent behind monitors and from there – increased risk of sedentary, which brings a number of risks for

the health, such as obesity, diabetes, arterial hypertension, spinal bending and other non-infectious diseases, provided that the girls are threatened to a larger extent in comparison with the boys.

## CONCLUSION

- Despite the increased interest of the adolescents in sports, this is not enough for us to speak of regular physical activity. The unorganized sports activity in the form of games prevails at the account of the planned and organized physical activity in sports clubs, teams, federations, etc.
- At this age there is no difference between the two genders regarding the attitude and disposition towards sports in any of its forms and the frequency of practicing sports.
- The influence of the family upon the establishment of sports habits and needs is decisive. The responsibility of the parents for

the formation of positive health behavior in adolescents as well as the creation of an environment which builds up, accustoms and stimulates positive attitude towards sports and choice of a healthy way of life is still unrealized.

A large-scale strategy is necessary for stimulation of those groups of growing-ups who have a sedentary way of life and are threatened of the influence of the risk factors or are insufficiently physically active, according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

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