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## Evaluation of the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle by the citizens of Poznań

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### Ocena propagowania idei zdrowego aktywnego stylu życia przez mieszkańców miasta Poznania

#### Streszczenie

Ważnym celem strategicznym władz Poznania jest propagowanie idei zdrowego, aktywnego stylu życia wśród mieszkańców i poprawa jakości życia w zakresie dostępnych form spędzania wolnego czasu. Tym samym podniesienie świadomości prozdrowotnej wśród mieszkańców miasta Poznania.

Badaniem na terenie krytych kortów tenisowych (16 obiektów), krytych pływalni (12 obiektów) oraz fitness klubów (11 obiektów) miasta Poznania, zostało objętych 1159 usługobiorców (korzystających z usług danego obiektu sportowo-rekreacyjnego).

Kwestionariusze ankietowe skierowano do usługobiorców (mieszkańcy miasta Poznania korzystający z oferowanych usług w badanych obiektach sportowo-rekreacyjnych). Usługobiorcy zostali dodatkowo podzieleni na grupę osób wyczynowo uprawiającą sport i tych, którzy nigdy nie uprawiali.

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wiali sportu wyczynowo. Badana grupa respondentów, w kwestionariuszu ankietowym, miała możliwość zaznaczenia odpowiedzi TAK lub NIE, oraz wyrażenia swojego poziomu zadowolenia/oceny przy pomocy określonej skali punktowej od 1 do 10 (1 – niezadowolony, 10 – bardzo zadowolony).

Wypowiedzi ankietowanych usługobiorców oceniają realizację propagowania idei zdrowego, aktywnego stylu życia w kategoriach wyższych niż wartości przeciętne, zarówno w grupie amatorów, jak i wyczynowo uprawiających sport. Różnice pomiędzy nimi nie są istotne statystycznie. Ujemne wartości współczynnika skośności w obu badanych grupach pokazują silną tendencję do stawiania ocen wyższych, niż przeciętna.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zdrowy i aktywny tryb życia, infrastruktura sportowo-rekreacyjna.

## Abstract

An important strategic goal of the authorities of the city of Poznań is to promote the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among residents, and to improve the quality of life in terms of available forms of spending free time, thus raising health awareness among residents of the city of Poznań.

The research carried out at indoor tennis courts (16 facilities), indoor swimming pools (12 facilities) and fitness clubs (11 facilities) in the city of Poznań, covered 1159 service recipients (using the services of a given sports and recreation facility).

The survey questionnaires were addressed to the recipients (residents of the city of Poznań who use the services offered in the examined sports and recreation facilities). The service recipients were additionally divided into a group of people professionally practicing sports and those who have never practiced sports competitively. The surveyed group of respondents could mark the YES or NO answer, and express their level of satisfaction/evaluation with a specific point scale from 1 to 10 (1 – unsatisfied, 10 – very satisfied) in the questionnaire.

The surveyed service recipients evaluated the implementation of the idea of promoting a healthy and active lifestyle higher than the average values, both in the group of amateurs as well as in people practicing sports competitively. The differences between them are not statistically significant. Negative values of skewness coefficient in both groups show a strong tendency to assign higher scores than the average.

**Keywords:** healthy and active lifestyle, sports and recreation infrastructure.

## Introduction

The objectives of the Health Plan of the City of Poznań, being a strategic document in planning the long-term health policy for the residents of Poznań, are guidelines for actions in the field of public health. The priorities presented in the Plan's objectives will be implemented in accordance with the objectives of the Development Strategy for the City of Poznań to 2030, the aim of which is to improve the quality of life of residents. This paper comprises proposals for actions aimed at improving the quality of life and health of Poznań residents. These proposals will be formulated primarily in preventive programmes and within the framework of health education programmes based on cross-sectoral cooperation. The programmes in the field of health education will be implemented in cooper-

ation with other units, as well as through carrying out activities related to the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle initiated by the Department of Health and Social Affairs of the City of Poznań. Moreover, their financing will be provided from the City's budget as well as funds obtained from EU programmes and NGOs. As part of its activities in the field of health protection and promotion, Poznań cooperates, among others, with the World Health Organization<sup>1</sup>. Since 1993, it has been implementing the Healthy Cities project launched by the World Health Organization – currently Poznań is in the fifth phase of this project, which aims to improve the health conditions of cities, i.e. the health of residents and environmental conditions. Healthy City is not an honorary title, but a goal of joint efforts to improve the health and living conditions of residents. A Healthy City is a city that takes health into account when making decisions regarding various spheres of life, and also is aware of its problems and strives to solve them.

For a long time, health was defined in a negative way as absence of disease or infirmity. The first positive definition of health was formulated in 1948 by the World Health Organization. *Health* is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity [3]. Health is an indispensable value for economic and social development, and constitutes a condition for improving the quality of life of every person and entire communities. The definition of health proposed by the World Health Organization presents the so-called holistic approach, which means comprehensive and complex recognition of all factors and determinants of health, as presented in Fig. 1.

This is a comprehensive approach to health in a different form that illustrates various interrelations between the social, cultural and physical environment of life and health [1]. This model of the human ecosystem is the mandala of health – a figure which is built on a circle plan and is a symbol of the universe. The health mandala was developed by the Department of Public Health in Toronto. This model assumes interrelations between culture and the environment and their simultaneous impact on the human being understood as a physical, intellectual and spiritual unity.

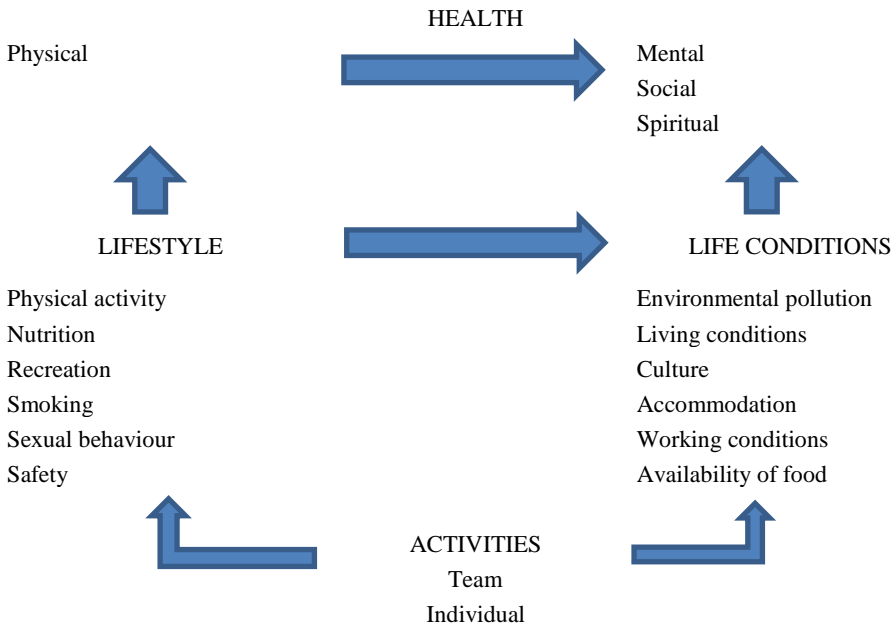
Factors affecting health were divided into four main groups called Marc LaLonde's determinants of health fields<sup>2</sup>. These are: lifestyle, genetic features,

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<sup>1</sup> One of the organizations operating within the framework of the United Nations and headquartered in Geneva. It was established in 1948 and comprises 193 countries. The WHO's aim is to increase cooperation between countries in the field of health protection and fight against infectious disease epidemics, as well as to set standards for the composition of medicines and food quality; it also strives to provide medical care to the world's population and reduce infant mortality (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki>, entry "World Health Organization", access: 29 October 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Marc LaLonde – a Canadian epidemiologist and politician, who on May 1, 1974 presented the Canadian parliament with a report entitled "A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians – a Working Document" on the fields of health determinants. The report for the first time drew attention to lifestyle and the environment as important determinants of health.

health care and environmental impact. It was considered that lifestyle, habits, and everyday behaviours determine human health to the greatest extent.



**Fig. 1.** Holistic view of health and determinants according to B.B. Jansen (1992) [9]

Source: B. Woynarowska, M. Kapica (eds.), *Teoretyczne podstawy edukacji zdrowotnej. Stan i oczekiwania*, KOWEZ, Warszawa 2001.

Lifestyle is defined as a way of being that results from human interactions and conditions in which they live, as well as individual behaviour patterns that have been determined by socio-cultural factors and personal character traits<sup>3</sup>. The main components of a healthy lifestyle are: physical activity, nutrition and eating habits, avoidance of intoxicants including tobacco and alcohol, correct interpersonal relationships, good environmental and working conditions, natural environment, sexual behaviour, safety and prevention of injuries, reduced exposure to toxic substances and excessive sunlight, rest, participation in preventive vaccinations and examinations. It is believed that lifestyle has an increasing impact on health. Today, the chart of Marc LaLonde is as follows: lifestyle 56%, health care 18%, environmental impact 14%, genetic features 12%. It should be emphasized that lifestyle can be changed by any person. Achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle is the subject of research in the area called health promotion. Health promotion is a process that enables individuals and social groups to increase their control over health determinants in order to improve it and foster the development

<sup>3</sup> According to the World Health Organization.

of a healthy lifestyle, as well as shape other social, environmental and personal factors leading to health. Whereas, prophylaxis (disease prevention) is mainly a medical action against a specific disease or group of diseases [3]. The term 'preventive healthcare' is often used in practice. Despite its incorrectness, as this term might be understood as preventive actions against health and not disease, it is widely used. Often, prophylaxis is divided into three stages. Primary prevention aims to reduce the likelihood of disease and health disorders and certain deviations from good health by counteracting harmful conditions before they are able to cause disease. Secondary prevention aims to stop the development of the disease or disorders and shorten their duration when early signals are detected; special emphasis is placed on early diagnosis and treatment of any symptoms of the disease. Tertiary prevention aims to prevent the effects of the illness, relapse and re-hospitalization, as well as minimize secondary injuries, complications and possible defects caused by the disease. People should be taught how to control their health condition and behave in difficult situations [1].

Therefore, the goal of health promotion is both prevention and supporting positive health. Positive health is a health condition that is more than just a lack of disease symptoms, as it constitutes a full range of development opportunities and self-fulfilment of a person. The key issue of health promotion is to achieve effective participation of the population in defining problems, as well as making decisions and carrying out activities to change health determinants [1]. An important component of health promotion is health education, which is defined as the conscious creation of opportunities for learning, so that changes in behaviour are easy and achievable [1].

One of the tasks of health promotion is to develop health policy, that is, intentional activity focusing on regulation and shaping mutual relations between various social groups in order to improve the health of the population [10]. Public health is defined as the organized effort by society to protect, promote and restore health of the population, with all programmes, services and institutions dealing with this issue being aimed at preventing diseases and catering health needs of the population as a whole [3]. Therefore, public health promotes health. This means that all institutions at every level of administration should be interested in health. It is important for the health promotion process to include a pro-health policy, which is understood as a concern for health and equality in all policy areas as well as accountability for health consequences. Its main goal is to create a supportive environment that enables people to lead a healthy life [3]. When considering health as a value, it should be noted that from an economic point of view, being healthy simply pays off. Estimating the profit from being healthy is very difficult, if not impossible, since investing in health is a long-term process, whose effects are not always immediately visible.

Physical activity is a very important factor that affects health. Polish society reports low level of physical activity. Only about 30% of children and teenagers

and 10% of adults are physically active to the extent that the intensity and type of physical exercise load meet the physiological needs of the body [5]. In Poznań, the level of physical activity visibly decreases with age. Sport is intensively practiced by about 30% of the citizens of Poznań in the age group up to 24 years old, whereas in the group of 25- and 34-year-olds the number of people practicing sports is halved. In the group of 35- and 44-year-olds, the number of physically active people is slightly over 6%, and in older groups – 3% or less [6]. Physical exercises lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and malignant tumours, increase bone mass, protect against osteoporosis, reduce the risk of diabetes by improving glucose tolerance, increase tissue sensitivity to insulin; thanks to exercises, body fat is reduced and the well-being of a person practicing regular physical exercise is improved. Intensive physical activity positively affects the proper functioning of the mind, reduces anxiety, and improves the quality of sleep, even when under stress. Regular exercise contributes to maintaining a better posture and strengthens the muscles of the back and spine. Appropriately selected exercises that include reducing the load on joints (e.g. by swimming) facilitate weight loss and support pharmacotherapy and health recovery measures. Loss of 5–10 kg of excessive body weight contributes to the reduction of pain in the hip and knee joints [8].

Sport and recreation, in addition to their aesthetic qualities, are undoubtedly one of the elements of the lifestyle of many people and to a large extent affect its quality. In general, the concept of the quality of life is understood as the level of satisfaction that a person feels as a result of consumption of material goods and services purchased on the market, public goods, forms of spending free time and other characteristics of the environment in which they exist [4]. Since every person needs to socialize and integrate with other individuals in their life, people are looking for such forms and relationships with others that will be conducive to satisfying these needs. Sport and recreation perfectly allow everyone (through passive or active attitude) to express their own beliefs and values. At the local community level, sport and recreation could and should integrate residents. It is worth noting that the overriding goal of each local government unit is to meet the needs of the local community by performing its own and commissioned tasks.

The concept of a healthy lifestyle may be interpreted in several ways. Some people will indicate a proper diet (although the opinions about ingredients may vary), others will underline skilful activities that allow avoiding stressful situations, while the rest may mention physical activity (the concept itself is very rich in meaning), especially in cities that are the living environment of the majority of the inhabitants of our country. The need to expand the recreational infrastructure necessary to popularize a healthy lifestyle should be pointed out.

Creating conditions for practicing sports and recreational activities meets the growing interest in a healthy lifestyle, care for own figure and physical condition reported by various social groups. Residents should be able to not only pay for

having their needs met, but also achieve them for free or only by partially covering the costs of provided services. In response to such presented needs of residents, the supply of sports and recreational services should be shaped. When using available funds and relying on extensive cooperation with other entities, local self-government authorities should make every effort to best meet the reported needs.

The aim of this article is to present how residents of Poznań evaluate the promotion of an active lifestyle by the authorities of the city of Poznań, and thus conclude if according to the citizens of Poznań, support for physical activity, defined in the “Sportowy Poznań” (“Sporty Poznań”) programme as a priority action of the city authorities, is implemented in a satisfactory manner. It should be remembered that the key factor influencing the popularity of sports and recreational activity among the inhabitants of urban agglomerations is, in addition to the preparation of adequate sports and recreational infrastructure, the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle.

## Materials and methods

The research carried out at covered tennis indoor (16 facilities), indoor swimming pools (12 facilities) and fitness clubs (11 facilities) in the city of Poznań, covered 1159 service recipients (using the services of a given sports and recreation facility).

The survey questionnaires were addressed to the recipients (residents of the city of Poznań who use the services offered in the examined sports and recreation facilities). The service recipients were additionally divided into a group of people professionally practicing sports and those who have never practiced sports competitively. One of the questions included in the survey was: How do you evaluate the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań?

The surveyed group of respondents could mark the YES or NO answer, and express their level of satisfaction/evaluation with a specific point scale from 1 to 10 (1 – unsatisfied, 10 – very satisfied) in the questionnaire.

The following research methods were used to conduct the analysis of the studied phenomena:

- Descriptive statistics
- Histograms
- Testing equality of means (ANOVA)
- Testing equality of variance (test)

## Research results

An important strategic goal of the City of Poznań is to promote the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among residents and improve the quality of life in terms of available forms of spending free time. Thus, raising health awareness among residents of the city of Poznań.

The surveyed service recipients evaluated the implementation of the idea of promoting a healthy and active lifestyle higher than the average values, both in the group of amateurs as well as in people practicing sports competitively. The differences between them are not statistically significant. Negative values of skewness coefficient in both groups show a strong tendency to assign higher scores than the average [Tab. 1 and Fig. 2, 3].

It is an important fact that a group of people performing competitive sport have been more critical in their assessment of the promotion of the idea of an active healthy lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań, since, as it should be presumed, they have higher expectations towards it.

The latest Eurobarometer research shows that Poland is in the group of countries where the majority of citizens do not do any sport or do it very rarely (66%). The opinions of European Union citizens about the attitude of local authorities to physical activity of residents included in the surveys are also interesting. The majority of respondents believe that local government policies allow physical activity. Over half of respondents (54%) believe that local authorities support physical activity. Poland is one of the three European Union countries where the majority of respondents felt that local authorities were not working enough to support sports and recreation (52%) [7]. Surveys conducted by the Statistics Poland in 2017 on the participation of Poles in sports and physical recreation in large part confirm this opinion.

The data presented below regard the opinion of the residents of the city of Poznań examined in this paper against the background of the opinions of respondents from Poland and citizens of the European Union.

- Environment and the possibilities of being active: 42.2% of respondents from Poland had reservations about their place of residence, whereas in Europe this percentage amounted to 23%. In Poznań, the level of satisfaction of the surveyed residents was average and reached approx. 5 points on a scale from 1 to 10.
- The offer of local sports clubs and other service providers (swimming pools, fitness clubs, etc.): 33.5% of Polish residents and 21.7% of citizens of the fifteen examined European Union countries negatively evaluated the offer. In Poznań, the level of satisfaction of the surveyed residents expressed in points is above the average – about 7 on a scale from 1 to 10.
- Evaluation of the local authorities' policies to improve the physical activity of residents: over half of Poles (54.3%) and one third of Europeans (32%) negatively assessed the authorities' efforts to promote physical activity of res-

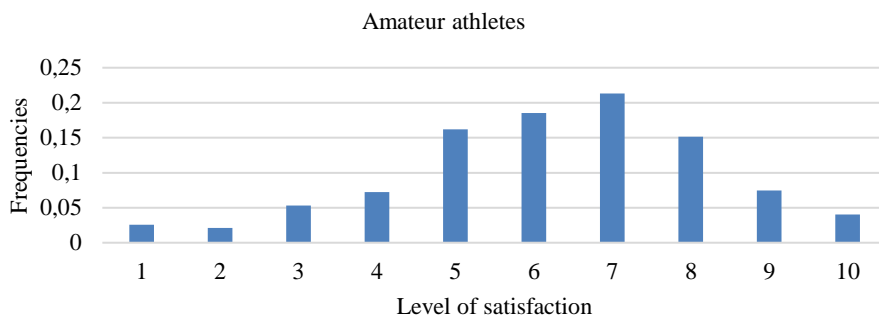


idents. In Poznań, the level of satisfaction of the surveyed residents ranked above the average and reached the value over 6 on a scale from 1 to 10.

**Table 1.** Statistical characteristics of the evaluation of the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań, in the opinion of the service recipients

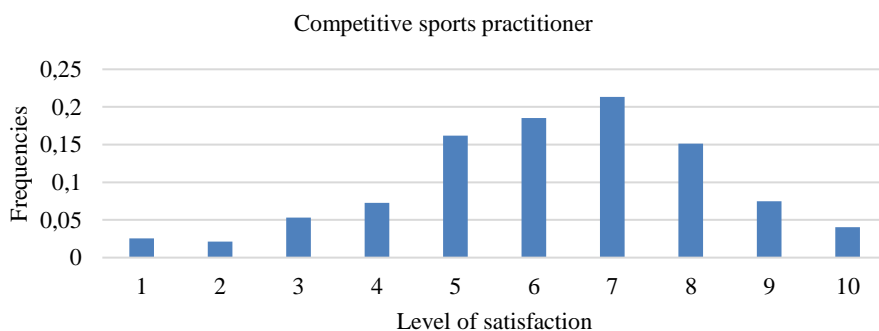
| Statistical measures | $\bar{X}$ | S     | SK     | K     | N   | Test for the equality of means<br>$p$ | Test for the equality of variants<br>$p$ |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-----|---------------------------------------|--|
| Amateurs             | 6.237     | 1.998 | -0.397 | 3.171 | 683 | 0.1419                                | 0.0279                                   |
| Professionals        | 6.055     | 2.194 | -0.262 | 2.600 | 476 | 0.1419                                | 0.0279                                   |

Source: own work.



**Figure 2.** Evaluation of the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań, in the opinion of service recipients (amateur sports practitioner)

Source: own work.



**Figure 3.** Evaluation of the promotion of the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań, in the opinion of service recipients (competitive sports practitioner)

Source: own work.

## Conclusion

The opinions of the surveyed residents included in the paper concern one of the strategic objectives included in the plan of the city of Poznań named “Sporty Poznań”, which is described as “Promoting the idea of an active and healthy lifestyle”. Based on the obtained results, it should be stated that the support for physical activity in Poznań by local authorities, defined in the program as a continuous priority activity (2009–2030), did not find recognition in the opinion of the surveyed residents. They are aware of the importance of pro-health activities of the city authorities (as their answers indicate) and have specific expectations towards local authorities, which is why they evaluated the promotion of an active lifestyle in such a way (slightly above average values). When implementing the process of promoting the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle among the residents of the city of Poznań, the city authorities should remember that effective policy in this regard based on meeting the expectations and recreational needs of the residents of Poznań should be a key factor supporting the idea of a healthy and active lifestyle. Such actions should be carried out already among the youngest residents of Poznań and apply to all age groups.

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