SHOULD THE POPULARIZATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BE INDIVIDUALIZED AND DIFFERENT IN MEN AND WOMEN? CONCLUSIONS FROM A SURVEY EXAMINING ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF HEALTHY LIFE STYLE IN PATIENTS FROM PRIMARY CARE PRACTICE IN POLAND

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Introduction: The other side of economical development is sedentary life style and increased consumption of rich in fat, processed food. In parallel to economical growth, a deficit of physical activity is becoming more and more prevalent in Poland with the threat of civilization diseases such as obesity, hypertension, atherosclerosis, diabetes and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis.

Objectives: To analyze the attitudes to healthy life style, free time and physical activities of patients from a single primary care practice to find out effective methods of promoting healthy life style.

Materials and methods: 500 primary care patients aged 15-56 (31% women) were anonymously examined using written questionnaire including 17 demographical and closed questions in a single primary care practice in the town of Minsk Mazowiecki in Poland in June 2010. About 80% of distributed questionnaires were filled and returned. The result were stored and analyzed with Epi-Info 3.5 software. The p-values were calculated using two-tailed Fisher's exact test and regarded as insignificant (i.) if p > 0.05.

Results: 39% women and 20% of men reported chronic health problems such as: hypertension, osteoporosis, diabetes (women) and coronary disease, hypertension and back pains (men). As the most important element of healthy life style was considered: physical activity (29 vs. 47%, i.), diet (22 vs. 15%, i.), significantly more often stress avoidance in women (30 vs. 13%) and habits and addictions avoidance (19 vs. 25%, i. women and men, respectively). While 100% of women and 95% of men regarded physical activity as an important element of healthy life style, significantly more women (100 vs. 69%) consider physical activity as necessary. The other 28% of men found it irrelevant and 3% unnecessary to health. Physical activity is usually performed once a week (33 vs. 27%, i.), less often everyday (28 vs. 18% i. women and men, respectively). Men exercise significantly more often 2-3 times a week (11 vs. 47%), while women considerably more commonly never exercise (28 vs. 8%). Similar proportion of both sexes (67 vs. 82%, i.) reported positive effects as a result of their physical activity, such as: improvement in general health (14% vs. 27% i.), physical fitness (38 vs. 49%, i.), but significantly more women feel improved psychological well-being mental comfort (48 vs. 20%). As the most important obstacles to physical activity were listed: reluctance/indolence (35 vs. 28%, i.), lack of time (25 vs. 46%, i.), chronic disease (20 vs. 6%) significantly more often by women, and others (10 vs. 9%, i. women and men respectively). Women more often pointed out lack of money (10 vs. 1%) while men, more commonly, a fear of a shame due to imperfect body shape and low physical fitness (1 vs. 11%). As preferable physical activities respondents listed: riding a bike (27 vs. 24%, i.), walking (16 vs. 15%, i.), swimming (14 vs. 12%, i.), skiing (9 vs. 11%, i.) and tennis (5 vs.