

# COUNTERACTING SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH MOTOR DYSFUNCTIONS THROUGH PHYSICAL CULTURE — OPINIONS OF PEOPLE WITH AND WITHOUT PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

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**Abstract** In the years 2010–2012, the research survey was carried out on 480 people with or without physical disabilities. The aim of the research was to obtain information on attitudes and opinions of people with physical disabilities towards the possibility of reducing social marginalization through participation in physical culture. The research confirmed that the respondents' attitudes towards participation of those people in physical culture were, in majority, positive. Participants of the research expressed the opinion that the feeling of marginalization of physically disabled persons would not have been so strong if there had been the possibility of an active participation in sport, recreation and tourism as well as in active rehabilitation. The possibilities of an active participation in physical activity should be inexpensive and widely accessible regardless of the year season and with providing volunteer assistance and transport facilitations.

**Key words** physical culture, marginalization and social exclusion, people with physical disability

## Introduction

The quality of life of excluded and marginalized people with motor disabilities constitutes an important social problem (Abramowska, 2005; Pluym, Keur, Gerritsen, Post, 1997). The motive for the research was a social need to obtain some useful data in order to improve disabled people's life quality (Błażejowski, Cynarski, 2014; Simeonsson, Carison, Huntington, McMillen, Brent, 2001.) Widespread disabilities and their consequences such as marginalization and social exclusion fully explain the purpose of the research (Koperski, 2012). Integration with the society can be seen on many levels. One of them is physical culture, which is a part of global culture. That part of

a man's activity influences the development of emotional, volitional, intellectual and motor spheres and covers some multiple needs of the modern society (Ślężyński, 1997).

## Subjects and methods

The subject of the research included attitudes, declared knowledge, opinions, behavior, and emotions of healthy and disabled people towards the reduction of social marginalisation through physical culture such as sport, physical activity, rehabilitation and active forms of tourism.

The survey was carried out in the years 2010–2012 on 480 persons: 240 physically healthy and 240 physically disabled from Podkarpckie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie provinces. People in the age 20–45 were deliberately chosen for the research, proportionally men and women. The education level of the respondents was similar. Professional and basic education prevailed: physically healthy 180 persons (75%), disabled 177 persons (73,7%), high school education: healthy 60 persons (25%) disabled 63 persons (26,3%). The reason for the selective choice of volunteers was the conviction that participation consent was the key factor to obtain relatively full, honest and credible opinions.

## Research questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What is the opinion of persons with different psycho-physical condition on the possibilities and the necessity to counteract social marginalization of physically disabled persons through physical culture?
2. What forms of physical culture activities can effectively support the reduction of social marginalization of disabled people?
3. What benefits, according to respondents, do people with physical disability expect from participation in physical culture?

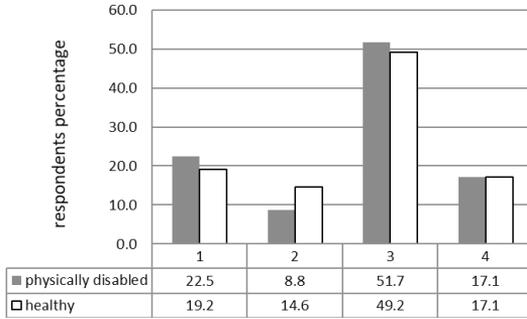
## Results

The research showed that the knowledge of the needs and possibilities of physically disabled people's participation in different forms of physical activity is unsatisfactory, which proves that information, education and promotion is insufficient. Half of the respondents (52 and 49%) admit their low knowledge about the entities organizing and supporting disabled persons, and some even admit (9 and 15%) that they do not possess such knowledge at all (Figure 1). None of the respondents chose the option that their knowledge is very good.

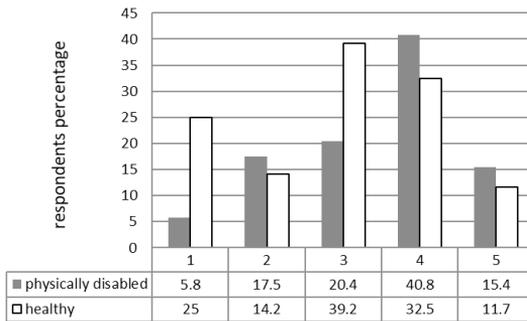
The majority of the respondents assess their knowledge about health benefits of sport, tourism and recreation as moderate (41 and 32%) or insufficient (20 and 39%), and part of them admits they do not possess such knowledge (17 and 14%) (Figure 2). Just few of them think their knowledge is very good (15 and 12%).

Assessment of the conditions created for disabled people for their participation in physical culture through recreation is mostly negative (Figure 3). Those conditions – according to most respondents – are insufficient (63 and 42%) or bad (6 and 12%). Only few consider them as good (7 and 17%). No one assessed them as very good.

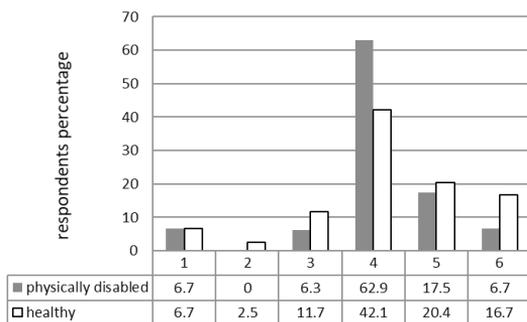
Asked about the impact of the lack of possibilities for participation in physical culture on disabled people's life quality (Figure 4), the majority of respondents said that it is rather negative (33 and 34%), definitely negative (20 and 30%) or moderately negative (30 and 24%). It proves respondents' high awareness of the significance of physical activity in disabled people's lives.



**Figure 1.** Assessment of the subjective knowledge about the entities supporting the participation of disabled persons in physical culture 1 – cannot be assessed, 2 – do not possess such knowledge, 3 – incomplete knowledge, 4 – sufficient knowledge ( $\chi^2 = 4,289$ )

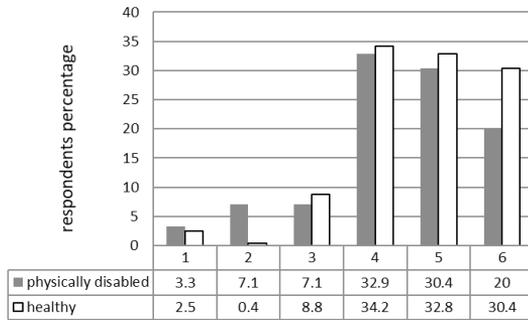


**Figure 2.** Subjective assessment of the knowledge about health benefits of sport, tourism and recreation: 1 – not able to assess, 2 – no such knowledge, 3 – incomplete knowledge, 4 – moderate knowledge, 5 – very good knowledge ( $\chi^2 = 21,722$ )<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 3.** Assessment of the conditions created for disabled people for their participation in physical culture through recreation: 1 – not able to assess, 2 – lack of conditions, 3 – bad conditions, 4 – insufficient conditions, 5 – sufficient conditions, 6 – good conditions ( $\chi^2 = 30,675$ )

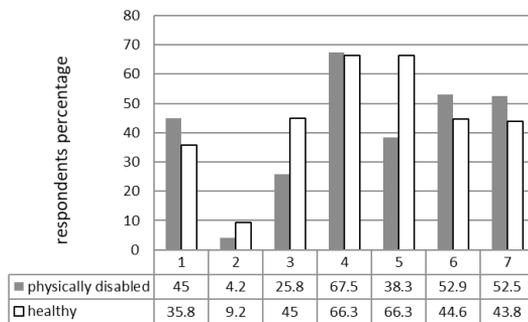
<sup>1</sup>  $\chi^2$  value  $p < 0,01$  is marked **bold**,  $p > 0,05$  is marked **bold italic**



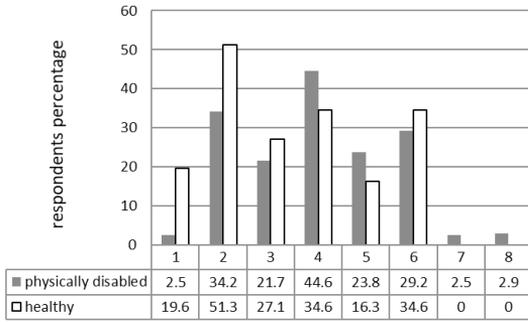
**Figure 4.** The impact of the lack of the possibility of participation in physical culture on disabled people's life quality: 1 – no answer, 2 – do not have any influence, 3 – not able to assess, 4 – rather positive, 5 – moderately negative, 6) definitely negative ( $\chi^2 = 22,221$ )

Expectations related to participation in physical culture of disabled people are carefully and in a balanced manner expressed by the respondents. They are limited to usually one or two expected benefits – to strengthen psycho-physical condition (67 and 66%), overcome various fears and insecurities (45 and 36%), establish attractive relationships with people (53 and 45%), enrich their everyday life (52 and 44%), and also to strengthen their self-confidence (34 and 51%) and improve their self-reliance (45 and 35%) (Figures 5, 6). That indicates great expectations of disabled people which they place in physical culture.

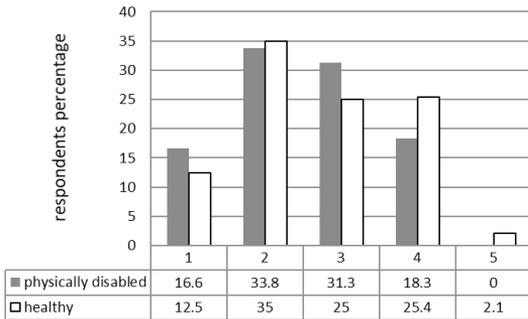
There are divergent opinions as to the chances of disabled people's participation in physical culture through sport and tourism to reduce their social marginalization. Approximately half of the respondent believes that they have such possibilities – as such conditions are sufficiently created – accordingly to Polish economic realities – while the other half expresses just the opposite opinion (Figures 7, 8).



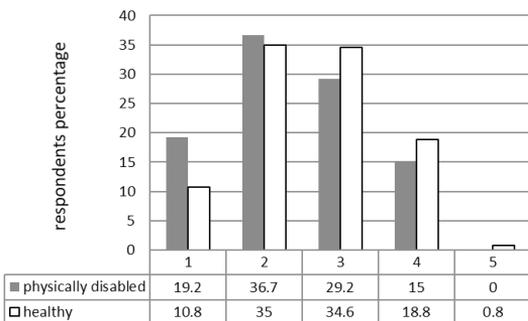
**Figure 5.** Benefits expected from participation in physical culture: 1 – lack of insecurity, frustration, and stress, 2 – material benefits, 3 – optimism, 4 – better psycho-physical condition, 5 – self-realisation and life satisfaction, 6 – new relationships, 7 – breaking life monotony ( $\chi^2 = 38,609$ )



**Figure 6.** Additional benefits expected from participation in physical culture: 1 – trust in people, 2 – self-confidence, 2 – discovering own possibilities, 4 – self-reliance, 5 – enhancing employability, 6 – experiencing life, world and people, 7 – other benefits, 8 – not able to assess ( $\chi^2 = 58,717$ )

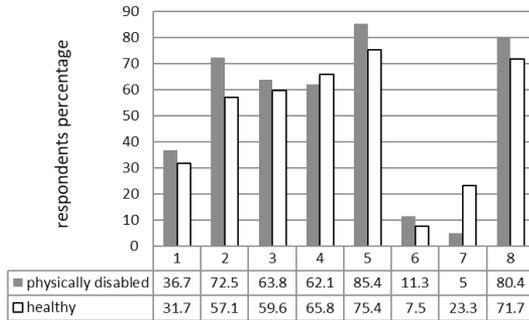


**Figure 7.** Assessment of the chances for satisfactory participation of disabled people in physical culture through sport: 1 – very little, 2 – little, 3 – sufficient, 4 – very good, 5 – not able to assess ( $\chi^2 = 10,902$ )



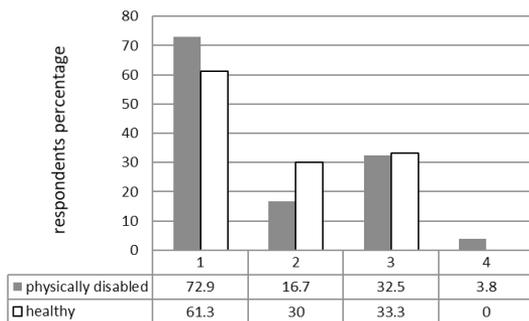
**Figure 8.** Assessment of the chances for satisfactory participation of disabled people in physical culture through tourism: 1 – very little, 2 – little, 3 – sufficient, 4 – very good, 5 – not able to assess ( $\chi^2 = 9,753$ )

When answering the question about expected offers of participation in physical culture, the most frequent choice was their availability regardless of the year season (85 and 75%), free or partly paid (discounts) (92 and 79%), with provided volunteers' assistance (72 and 57%), means of transport to the place of the event (64 and 60%) convenient individual transport (62 and 66%) (Figure 9). It may prove a great motivation of both healthy and physically disabled persons to participate in physical activity.



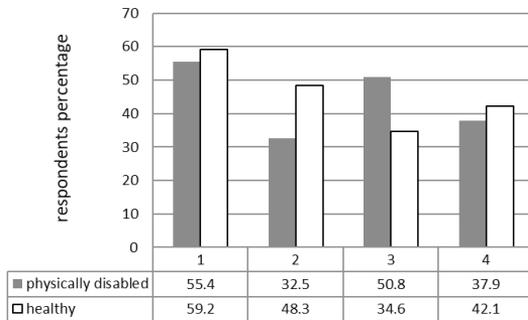
**Figure 9.** Offers for disabled persons' participation in physical culture: 1 – promoted by local media, 2 – with provided volunteers' assistance, 3 – with organized transport, 4 – with individual transport, 5 – available all year, 6 – organized occasionally, 7 – partly paid, 8 – free of charge ( $\chi^2 = 37,034$ )

The vast majority of healthy and disabled respondents stated that participation in various sport, tourism and recreation events can be satisfactory for people with motor dysfunctions (73 and 61%). One in three respondents from both groups believe that watching sport and recreation events in mass media can be also satisfactory for disabled people (32 and 33%) (Figure 10). However, their observation that personal participation in the events can be even more satisfactory for those persons may instill optimism.



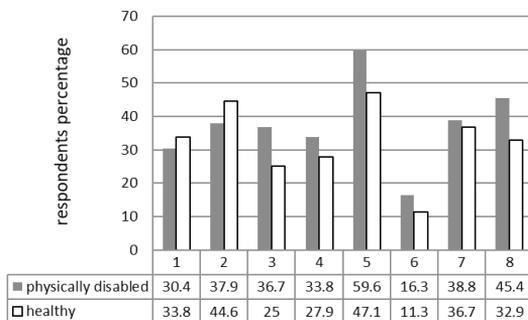
**Figure 10.** Satisfactory forms of disabled persons' participation in physical culture: 1 – direct participation, 2 – cheering at sport events, 3 – media transmissions, 4 – different forms of participation ( $\chi^2 = 20,588$ )

Most respondents rightly point out that the promotion of physical culture among disabled people should be ensured by official institutions, local authorities, mass media, and health services (Figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Entities promoting disabled people’s participation in physical culture: 1 – sport and tourism department, 2 – health department, 3 – local authorities, 4 – mass media ( $\chi^2 = 15,311$ )

Most respondents considered associations of disabled people as, above all, responsible for supporting people with motor dysfunctions (60 and 47%), part of them pointed also sport organizations (45 and 33%) and national institutions (38 and 45%). Healthy interviewees’ answers were similar (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Institutions and organizations which should support disabled persons’ efforts to participate in physical activity: 1 – health centres, 2 – public administration, 3 – mass media, 4 – social organizations, 5 – associations of disabled people, 6 – church, 7 – local authorities, 8 – sport associations ( $\chi^2 = 12,275$ )

## Conclusions

1. The research showed that the respondents’ knowledge of disabled persons’ needs and their possibilities for participation in physical activity are insufficient. It may indicate insufficient education and promotion of this important social problem.

2. It is shocking that most healthy and disabled interviewees are not aware of health benefits of sport, tourism and physical recreation.

3. The respondents are aware of the fact that by limiting the chances for participation in physical activity life quality of disabled persons may be negatively affected.

4. People with motor disabilities associate their participation in physical culture mostly with strengthening their psychophysical condition, limiting insecurity, better self-confidence, attractive relationships, breaking life monotony and enhancing self-reliability.

5. Disabled people expect free of charge participation in physical activity, regardless of the year season, with the possibility of using public or individual transport and volunteers' assistance.

6. The problem of disabled people's participation in physical culture attracts social interest, proved by the positive attitude of the interviewees towards the interviewers, reliably filled out questionnaires and eager participation in the survey.

7. To promote disabled persons' participation in physical culture it is necessary to overcome barriers connected with education and information, organization, finance, and mentality. Modern program of participation in physical culture for disabled persons should be constructed in order to reduce their social marginalization..

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**Cite this article as:** Grzybowska, M., Cynarski, W.J., Błażejowski, G. (2017). Counteracting Social Exclusion of People with Motor Dysfunctions through Physical Culture – Opinions of People with and without Physical Disabilities. *Central European Journal of Sport Sciences and Medicine*, 4 (20), 61–68. DOI: 10.18276/cej.2017.4-07.