

Ways of spending leisure time in Romania and other European countries

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Abstract

Background. It is a fact that the amount of spare time varies from one individual to another, from one society to another and it often depends on the degree of the socio-economic development of the society. The use of free time is an indicator of the commonly called term „quality of life”.

Aims. The research aims to determine leisure time activities, in both Romania and some countries of the European Union.

Methods. In Romania, the research was performed on a randomized sample of 730 adult persons, defined as a professionally active population; within the age range of 22 to 43 years, further divided into two age groups: 22-32 years and 33-43 years. The research was established by an orientating outline validated by psychology experts. The interview scheme „face to face” included a reduced number of basic questions, clearly formulated and related to the two subjects of interest. The research was accomplished within the 4th stage of the campaign „Sports for Life”/2009; a project initiated by Gabriela Szabo. The project’s aims were to present sports as a family activity and create favorable opportunities in order to extend recreational activities by practicing different types of team sports, involving all family members.

Results. Compared to the EU countries, in Romania, the most active population category are those aged 22-32 where 70% of those interviewed declared that they had the leisure time to practice recreational activities. Within the age range 33-43, only 8% of those polled admitted to having spare time. The most preferred recreational activities and sports included ball games (15%), fitness training (14%), bicycling (7%), tennis (7%), swimming (10%) or combat sports (4%), as well as walking and hiking in natural environments (approx.11%). In countries such as Germany, UK and Austria, the most active persons belong to the age 15- 29 years, followed by the population aged 30-44.

Conclusions. In Romania the general meaning of leisure is closely related to practicing recreational sports. The subsequent extended evaluation of the data achieved revealed a correlation, resulting in a significant positive coefficient, between the extent of spare time the subjects have at their disposal and their involvement in recreational sports activities. In other countries of the European Union, the use of leisure time for physical activity and sport refers in fact to „quality of life”.

Keywords: leisure time, recreational sports, quality of life, European countries.