

LEVEL OF AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELLNESS CONCEPT IN POLAND

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Abstract

In this article, we present general reports on the understanding and ways of realizing the concept of wellness in Poland. We would like to point out the main directions of development of services related to the concept of wellness and good practices in Polish education. We also present a brief summary of the research carried out in Poland regarding the diagnosis of the level of Poles' awareness of the concept of wellness, depending on their gender, age and disability. Based on the available literature and our research, we conclude that despite the fact that the number of receivers of wellness services in Poland is growing, it is necessary to educate Polish society in the scope of the correct definition of the concept of wellness, which belongs to the basic scope of pro-health activities falling within the broad concept of public health.

Keywords

Wellness concept in Poland, Awareness about wellness, Concepts of wellness.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the concept of wellness

In the modern term "health" includes the concept of wellness, meaning "quality of life", "well-being". It refers to the subjective assessment of health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO 2000) wellness is the optimal health of individuals in the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions that enable them to fulfill their duties (role) in: the family, the community in which they live, the workplace, the place of worship and other areas. Historically the term of wellness is coming from USA thanks the unique work of Halbert Dunn and other American experts which followed him in their research (Dunn 1959; Naisbitt 1982; Travis ROK; Maller, 2005, Miller 2005). About the complexity of wellness as

the global phenomena in the context with WHO definition of wellness are focused research outputs of Krejčí (Krejčí a kol. 2016; Krejčí, Tilinger, Vacek 2016; Krejčí, Kornatovská, Jirásko 2017) and Rehor (Rehor 2016; Rehor 2013; Rehor, Krejčí 2015). According Rehor (2016) the approaching to the wellness as a domain from the variety of setting such as school, community, worksite, academic and professional preparation is very helpful.

The concept of wellness - both in Poland and in Europe - is incorrectly defined and understood. It is necessary to educate Polish as well as European society in the scope of the correct definition of the concept of wellness, which belongs to the basic scope of pro-health activities falling within the broad concept of public health.

The term wellness is one of the modern health-related plans, as well

related to quality of life (aspiring for wellness). Wellness is a lifestyle that is supposed to ensure full, well-being and lead to harmony between the body, spirit and mind. Wellness is much more than physical health, it's a lot of overlapping areas in which the quality of life is extremely important. The philosophy of wellness fits in with holistic health prophylaxis (Łubkowska, 2015, Artinovic et al., 2012).

The reaction on the so-called the civilizational fatigue of humanity was the philosophical-existential concept of achieving a state of goodness in all dimensions of the human individual. According to its American creator, this is to be an integrated method of human functioning, focused on maximizing its individual potential in the environment in which it functions. This potential includes physical and mental health, spiritual and intellectual balance, which in general is supposed to lead and determine well-being. As in practice few people are able to follow life in accordance with this idea, offers for several days of trips appeared or even practices in the place of residence, aimed at regeneration of forces (Mazurski, 2014).

Terms “wellness” and “well-being” tourism are also used often synonymously or alternatively. Some authors treat well-being tourism as one of the types of wellness tourism, others replace the term well-being with the term wellness (Mazurski, 2014). Author suggest a more holistic concept of wellness in which wellness contains elements of lifestyle, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, and one’s relationship to oneself, others, and the environment. Several concepts, such as well-being, happiness, quality of life, holistic practice and spiritual beliefs relate to the concept of wellness.

Well-being is connected with nature, community, relaxation, different treatments using art, music and energy, while wellness tourism is a luxury product of five star hotels. They assume that concept of well-being tourism is the offer bought instead of wellness as a cheaper alternative. Perhaps it happens in some cases but well-being tourism is now a new form and have its own environmentally conscious customers expecting holistic approach to health in harmony with nature and local culture. The concepts of wellness and well-being tourism are closely related, and, consequently, have occasionally been used as synonyms (Mazurski, 2014).

Medical tourism and wellness

Marak et al. (2014) stated that modern spa and wellness tourism is developing in four forms: health-care vacation, anti-ageing vacation, wellness vacation and beauty vacation. In Poland it is becoming more common to combine health resort treatment with spa and wellness. On one hand, sanatoriums develop their services by adding spa and wellness procedures. On the other hand, clients and patients get more and more interested in spa and wellness offer in their free time, which makes it logical to provide health resort services together with spa and wellness services as one, branded tourist product of the region.

The trend of combining the benefits of a spa visit with a holiday has increased. An awareness regarding the benefits of healthy eating, nutrition, exercising, beauty, relaxation and pampering is increasing and people love to include those elements in their holidays or purposefully travel to achieve wellness. It is either visiting a local spa or traveling overseas, more and more people are opting to take a break

from their fast-paced life to pamper themselves, relax and rejuvenate. In addition to this, to attract more people and satisfy their demands different spas are promoting variety of wellness programs and treatments including healthy lifestyles, alternative therapies, fitness programs, weight-loss treatments, detox diets, mineral and thermal skin treatments, massage and yoga (Marak et al., 2014).

The basic values of the SPA & Wellness market is to take pleasure in the implementation of various forms of physical activity, searching for small sources of luxury, body care, the need to relax, unwind and free time, conscious nutrition and personal development, respect for the needs of the body, soul and mind and recreation in the bosom of nature. SPA & Wellness is not a product or service, it is the art of living with respect for it and a sense of joy. SPA & Wellness centers offer a wide range of services, affecting in a simple and quick way to improve the well-being and health of people, because all kinds of massages, water treatments and a variety of cosmetic services are much more pleasant for the body than tiring exercises. The list of offered services is becoming longer and longer every year, and the offered treatments are more and more innovative and original.

The result of the ever-wider activity related to health care is the emergence of a new form of travel, called SPA & Wellness tourism, which is based on the idea referred to as the philosophy of well-being. SPA and Wellness offer is addressed to all people who want to improve their physical and mental condition. An important place in this offer deals with the issues of wellness, beauty, physical fitness and the emotional order of a human being.

In Poland, the first SPA facilities began to develop in the mid-90s, currently there are hundreds of them. However, centers that fully deserve this name are currently around 30.

Who benefits from wellness programs?

The number of Poles benefitting of SPA & Wellness centers is still growing, and the main clients providing these services are middle-income people with pro-health consciousness, people who want to improve their health state, well-being, relax, socialization and take maximum advantage of free time which is often lacking in everyday life. The average age of a wellness client, according to ISPA report from 2007, is about 40 years. Most often it is a person who has higher education, occupies a high professional position (managerial position, etc.), lives in a city of over 100 thousand people and owns a property (house). Large percentage of clients using wellness services are women, not only because it is easier to persuade them to undertake beauty treatments and improve their physical condition, but also because nowadays they are able to schedule and take part of these services independently. In the research, the majority were women (57.14%), the remaining group were men (42.86%). Respondents benefitting of SPA & Wellness services were usually people aged 30-40, living in a city (65.71%), married (54%) or unmarried (46%). The vast majority (80%) had higher education. One of the most important factors determining the participation of SPA & Wellness services is income. The higher the income, the more frequent the use of wellness services (Alejziak, 2014).

Artinovic et al. (2012) stated that the survey participants are familiar with the

principles of healthy nutrition, as well as with wellness as a lifestyle which includes proper alimentation, rest and exercise. They also indicated that the greatest number of the surveyed people considers multiple benefits in investing in wellness but, on the other hand, not be willing or able to invest sufficient resources. One of the main prerequisites for the increase of the number of those who practice wellness is the affordability of prices (Stankovic et al., 2012).

The most common motive for visiting the spa and wellness centers is the aim of general relaxation and rest of the client, followed by the improvement of its external appearance, and finally the improvement of health state. Spa and wellness tourism guarantees an escape from the fast pace of life, it is a way of diminishing stress and problems of everyday life (Bajgier-Kowalska, 2015).

Analysis conducted by Alejziak (2014) that verified the needs most often carried out during a stay at a SPA and Wellness center, indicat domains such as psychological rest, a rest from the pressures of everyday life, finding peace of mind and better self-knowledge.

Other most common reasons for using them include: improving and maintaining good health, rest and recreation, beauty and physical attractiveness, fighting stress, pursuit of harmony of the body, the spirit and the mind, personal development, search for sensual experience, life style, building relationships, fashion (Marak et al.,2014).

Wellness as a megatrend in a light of disabled needs

Health state is currently a highly valued quality, because it enables meeting various needs related to self-creation and

self-realization of the individual. Thus, it gives a sense of happiness and life satisfaction. Health behaviors, habits, awareness of health prevention largely determine the high quality of life of modern man (Alejziak, 2014).

The issue of wellness and well-being can be considered as the so-called megatrend, a long-lasting, fast-spreading trend, strongly affecting society in many dimensions and evoking the conviction of its inevitability. Examples of megatrends identified in 2014-2015:

- Ernst & Young (2015), m.in. Digital future, Entrepreneurship rising and health reimaged.
- Frost & Sullivan (2014), m.in. Connectivity and Convergence, Future of Mobility, Infrastructure Development, Social Trends and Health, Wellness and Well-being.

The phenomenon of the occurrence of a wellness megatrend is attributed to an increasing importance in the group of people with disabilities (Maciaszczyk, 2016).

This trend begins to create a new approach to health - the health service is not only to provide medical care, but rather to manage health. Disability is a kind of bargaining power that often helps the outpost stay in the game, as the demand for medical and paramedical services among disabled consumers is at a very high level. People with disabilities declare more and more frequent consumer behaviors following the discussed megatrend. Behaviors associated with it are not limited only to medical issues, but also many other activities aimed at improving subjective well-being, which is defined by the World Health Organization not only on the basis of negative health indicators, but also

subjectively perceived by the individual satisfaction with the physical, mental and social state of your life.

Persons experiencing disability from the cited study also stated that they are willing to use the advice of professionals in the area of eating habits or the diminishing stress level. They declared that their awareness of caring for the environment or buying safe products deepened. The care for the external appearance and well-being has also increased. Despite the understandable barriers of physical nature, at the same time, physical activity gained greater significance. Nearly 63% of surveyed disabled consumers confirmed regular physical activity - regardless of whether the activity was related to the rehabilitation of the musculoskeletal system, whether it was of an individual activity, type of exercise or walk. Almost three quarters of the studied group (72%) declared the use of dietary supplements and the use of health counseling, but it did not concern motor skills (Maciaszczyk, 2016).

Good wellness practices in polish education

Health promotion is aimed at the reduction of the differences in society's access to factors determining the frequency of occurrence of pro-health behaviors (Charzyńska-Gula et al., 2013). Health education is also the key component of health promotion. Adequate competences obtained in the process of health education are necessary to participate in promotion actions, change own life style and own environment, in order that these changes translate into 'health benefits'. Health education is a component of actions undertaken in all areas of health promotion. In the health promotion model

biased towards its empowerment, health education performs creation of conditions in which individuals learn about health and diseases, strengthen their capabilities to act on behalf of own health and the health of others, and become subjects of these actions. Thus, empowerment is a direct effect of education; people may change their life style and, consequently, improve their own health and form communities capable for actions. In this way, a social change may take place which is the goal for which health promotion strives.

Poland is one of the countries where the Health Promoting School concept was implemented earliest. In 2013 there were about 3,000 schools in the regional network of HPSs. (Woynarowska, Woynarowska-Sołdan, 2015). The Polish concept of HPS is based on European principles of health promotion in school and is adjusted to the political, social and economic context, as well as the school system in our country.

The "Health promoting school" (HSP) program, developed in Europe and in Poland since 1991, is the most widespread and dynamically developing habitat health promotion project. It is also an expression of a new approach to the perception of the relationship between upbringing (education) and health and the role of the school in protecting and strengthening the health of the individual and society. A comprehensive approach to health at school (whole school approach to health), which presupposes the existence of coherence between the school policy and its everyday practice and includes:

- focusing health education at school on participation and development of competence to act,
- taking into account how students understand health and well-being,

- creating health policies at school,
- creating a physical and social environment conducive to health,
- shaping life competencies,
- building effective relationships between the school and the local community

In terms of how Polish schools approach mental health support for their students in international context, we found in Patalay's report (2017) that on average Polish schools indicated a greater focus on universal approaches compared with targeted approaches. Universal approaches were least prevalent in France (38%) and most prominent in Poland and Ireland with over 80% of schools reporting a focus on universal provision. This is also observed when considering approaches that are focused on reactive treatment, prevention and promotion approaches, with few countries having high levels of provision in all these categories (Poland and the UK report somewhat high levels across categories) (Patalay et al. 2017).

The trend of health and wellness promotion discussed in this paper in recent years is becoming increasingly popular also in higher education. The growing offer of courses and post-graduate studies at Polish universities encourages the broadening of perspectives in terms of widely understood health education and pro-health behaviors.

Among the areas of great interest can be distinguished:

- Relaxation techniques, Psycho-somatic practices of yoga, Biological renewal- University School of Physical Education in Wrocław;

- Yoga and relaxation - University School of Physical Education in Warsaw;
- Yoga in prevention and therapy, Yoga and Ayurveda GWSP- Upper Silesian School of Entrepreneurship in Chorzów;
- Modern and Traditional Forms in Wellness and SPA and Biological Renewal – University School of Physical Education in Katowice;
- Relaxation techniques and yoga elements - Olsztyn College.

OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

The main aim of the presented study conducted in Poland was to analyse awareness of Polish people about the importance of wellness for human life.

Authors of the study formulated following hypothesis:

Women are much more active than men in the field of wellness and health support.

METHODS

Procedure and material

The study was conducted as part of the cooperation of the University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, Poland with the College of PE and Sport PALESTRA in Prague, Czech Republic. In the Polish part of the project 838 people from different Polish cities participated in the study, of which 408 were females and 430 were males. The subjects were divided into several groups (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of respondents and sums in the investigated groups (N = 838; 408 males, 430 females)

SEX	No disability Age>20	Disability Age>20	Sportsmen Age>20	Age categories (no disability)			
				15-19	20-39	40-59	60+
Females	287	47	74	34	120	132	35
Males	288	49	93	33	135	123	30
Σ	575	96	167	67	255	255	65

Diagnostic tool

The research tool used to assess the awareness of Polish society was WellAwarIn Questionnaire by Krejčí and Vacková (2013), translated and adapted by authors in 2016.

The questionnaire includes demographic data and 10 open questions to fill by participants of the study, related to understanding and definition of wellness, different possibilities of benefiting from wellness practices and tendencies of analyzed group.

Statistics

The hypothesis was verified by testing the compliance of two relative frequencies in two independent populations, assuming two sufficiently large sets (Pacáková, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results analyses showed that in the Polish population twice as many males than females did not hear the word wellness, every third male declared that he did not know anything about this phenomenon. For females the word wellness was most often associated with health and a healthy lifestyle, relaxation-rest, water treatments and massage. For men, wellness is primarily health and a

healthy lifestyle, relaxation as a rest and massage.

The study also showed no significant difference between population with disability and without disability as well as sportsmen, all analyzed groups didn't differ in using specific biological regeneration methods.

For all groups considered in terms of age, except teenagers, the word wellness is usually associated with health and a healthy lifestyle. The most familiar with the word wellness are teenagers and people from the middle age range. The two youngest age groups (15-19 and 20-39) more often than the two other groups associated wellness with fitness and sport. What's interesting, teenagers more often associate wellness with relaxation, well-being, balance, than with health and healthy lifestyle.

The philosophical trend of a return to nature has a significant ecological, demographic, health-related, and economic impact. Active and health-enhancing leisure time by outdoor physical activities can significantly increase the benefits of physical activity and facilitate adoption of a healthy lifestyle in children and adolescents, and can also be combined with the school environment (Fromel et. al., 2017). About the strong context and influence of phenomena of wellness on economy is possible to study in the analyses of Vackova

(2014). Different forms of natural environment (parks, meadows, woods) are associated with a feeling of happiness, a decrease in mental stress and can significantly affect emotional well-being (Pasanen et.al., 2014).

Dylewicz and Michałowska-Krzywicka (2015) draw attention to the fact that the level and scope of commercialization of wellness slogans means that it does not fully reflect the essence of the problem of health prevention. Having no scientific background and permanent connection with the health care system, this slogan has become only a slogan of a specific fashion for relaxation and superficial well-being. Wellness cannot be justified in documented pro-health effects, such as, for example, reduction of basic risk factors for diseases, including cardiovascular diseases.

In the opinion Marak et al. (2014) low validity of recreation and sports (wellness) offer may be a result of a weak identification of such an offer with the spa product, and little experience of national patients and visitors with this type of offer in Poland, where over the years the therapeutic model was dominant. In contrast, the development of other forms of health tourism in Poland, related to: cosmetics and beauty treatments, anti-aging treatments through physical and psychological activities, and rest and relaxation took place only at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century (Marak et al., 2014).

According to Woynarowska and Woynarowska-Soldan (2015) the following difficulties were also revealed in the implementation of the project: lack of knowledge and incomplete understanding of the concept of health promotion by employees of design schools; skill shortage: planning and evaluating activities, school coordinators playing the role of health

promotion leader in working with adults; taking by schools at the same time many projects / programs offered (and even imposed) by various institutions (central, local), causing a high burden on teachers of various, usually joint-stock tasks; lack of financial resources for the implementation of the project at the central level (eg for visits and organization of workshops in schools, preparation of materials), which made it difficult to support the work of schools; insufficient interest and support for schools from the majority of voivodship Schools Promoting Health coordinators and local governing bodies; difficulties in acquiring specialists (eg physicians) to conduct training in schools in rural areas and in small towns (schools were largely dependent on their own resources).

Young adulthood is particularly significant because most young people graduate from school and begin a different way of life, often including taking on studies at institutions of higher education. Most studies have revealed a positive correlation between health literacy and education and the importance of assessing young adults is emphasized by a few studies revealing that their health literacy is inadequate. The role of health educators, librarians, and other professionals in promoting students' skills in finding and understanding health information has been emphasized. Health literacy is also related to the setting in which health information is provided the education programs that teach individuals health information, and the academic courses students study raising the question of how university health education is related to students' health literacy.

Health education is related to the promotion of active recreation, such as health-enhancing physical activity.

Specific attention should be paid to those enrolled in courses related to physical education, physical activity and lifestyle, in where the role of physical activity in health promotion is emphasized (Sukys et al., 2017). Knowledge about health-promoting physical activity may enhance students to look for, understand, and implement it in more rigorous activities. An increase of students' enrollment in health education courses is associated with better competencies in the health promotion domain, which includes the ability to find out about activities that are beneficial for one's own mental well-being, find information on healthy activities such as exercise, and take part in activities that improve health, such as joining an exercise class or sports club. In addition, there is a positive association between enrollment in health-related university courses, and especially the number of such courses, and students' health promotion competencies (Sukys et al., 2017).

Regarding to Marak et al. (2014), Jandová, Vacková (2016), Vacková a kol (2016) there is a need to increase information regarding the very philosophy of wellness and spa or functions of health resort tourism and benefits coming from use of such kind of services. What is still missing is basic knowledge about healthy lifestyle, although much has been done so far in that respect and the respondents see a clear improvement in comparison with a few years ago. Activities in that regard have a great effect in large cities, but customers make better use of them in smaller locations.

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirms the hypothesis with probability 95%: 69% of females try

to include wellness activities into your everyday life compared to only 41% of males.

According to the authors research study realization health care should be based primarily on public health education, but also on offering opportunities for pro-healthy lifestyle, even in free time. Motivation and expectations of people who choose the current wellness offer - unlike those who want to go for typical health purposes are different.

The creation of specific health centers in the area frequently visited for tourism and leisure purposes is also an interesting market, where the self-awareness and self-esteem of guests is the basis for the implementation of a certain offer.

In conclusion we stress the the main importance of wellness concept in nowadays society (according Rehor 2016; Krejčí et al 2016) as "a quest for maximizing individual's and social potential in enhancing of health, productivity and independence", a definition that separates health promoting sustainable self-managed behaviours such as physical activity, nutrition, relaxation and intellectual growth from pampering and "feeling good" interventions aimed and practised with an extensive profit in mind.

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