

# Physical activity in free time of physical education teachers in Tarnów

## Aktywność fizyczna w czasie wolnym tarnowskich nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego

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### Summary

**Purpose:** The paper objective was to assess physical activity in free time for physical education teachers teaching in Tarnów schools.

**Materials and methods:** The study is of pilot nature and was carried out in 2018 among 30 teachers in the 30–50 age range, teaching physical education in primary, junior high and senior high schools in Tarnów. The study covered the participants of the thematic workshops. The study was carried out using the diagnostic survey method, and the questionnaire technique was used to obtain the necessary information and data.

**Results:** Physical education teachers eagerly take up physical activity in their free time, but it is usually leisure activity. Teachers prefer to exercise twice and once a week. Men showed higher frequency of physical activity. Playing sports in the past is reflected in the approach to taking care of health and maintaining physical fitness later in life. The way of spending free time of the surveyed teachers varied depending on gender.

**Conclusions:** Systematic participation of physical education teachers in physical activity is not satisfactory, and yet the teacher with its attitude should set an example and make students aware of how to take care of their bodies and physical health.

**Keywords:** physical activity, physical education teacher, free time

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### Introduction

Physical activity is most often defined as any body movement triggered by muscles that causes energy expenditure [1]. Functions of physical activity at various stages of human life are constantly changing. In childhood and early youth, physical activity is spontaneous, resulting from the internal need for movement. During this period of ontogenesis, undertaking such activities supports development and serves to improve health, which in adulthood should be maintained at an appropriate level in order to slow down involutory changes in old age [2].

Lifestyle and health behaviors in the youth are mainly shaped by the immediate environment, i.e. family, peer group and school. In this process, education of children and young people is important, which aims to shape pro-health attitudes [3]. In the school environment, this task rests primarily with physical education teachers who, by their attitude, are to set an example of appropriate health-oriented behavior. According to K. Danek,

physical education teachers are to be characterized not only by their passion for the profession, but also by care for health, above-average level of physical fitness and movement skills, organizational sense, harmonious physique and athletic build [4]. In turn, E. Wodnicka believes that the work of a physical education teacher with adolescents should consist in preparing them for care and concern for their bodies throughout their lives and organizing free time, including active participation in broadly understood physical culture, and especially physical activity [5].

The organization of free time depends on many factors, including age, type of work performed, other duties, own preferences, interests, habits of the given person, socioeconomic status, etc. Participation in systematic physical activity contributes to improving perseverance, responsibility, awakening interest in various forms of movement, strengthening the habits of active rest [6].

The paper objective was to assess physical activity in free time for physical education teachers teaching in Tarnów schools. Study questions:

1. What is the frequency of physical activity of the teachers surveyed?

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2. Does physical activity of physical education teachers in the past have an impact on the activity currently practiced?
3. What is the difference in the way of taking up physical activity depending on gender?

## Materials and methods

The study was of trial nature and carried out in 2018 among 30 teachers (15 females and 15 males) in the 30–50 age group, teaching physical education in primary, junior high and senior high schools in Tarnów, participating in thematic workshops. Most of the surveyed teachers were in the 30–50 age range. Work experience was 7–25 years.

The study was carried out using the diagnostic survey method, and the own questionnaire was used to obtain the necessary information and data. All study results were developed in Microsoft Excel. For the statistical description of qualitative data, the number and percentage summary was used.

## Results

The vast majority of physical education teachers have played sports in the past (73.3%). Sports training sessions were undertaken more often by men (80%) than women (66.7%). Slightly more than 1/5 of the respondents did not do any sports in the past (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
Past sport activity of the respondents

Sports activity	Gender				Total	
	F		M		Nr	%
	Nr	%	Nr	%		
Yes	10	66.7	12	80.0	22	73.3
No	5	33.3	3	20.0	8	26.7
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100

Study has shown that the frequency of taking part in training sessions in the past varied by gender. Frequency of training sessions is higher among men. The highest percentage of men (40%) trained five to six times a week. In turn, most women (33.3%) – three times a week, four and five times a week. Only 20% of respondents declared that they trained every day (Table 2).

The results of the conducted study revealed that the vast majority of physical education teachers (83.3%) is physically active. There was a slight difference (6.7%) between male and female activity. However, almost every fifth teacher does not engage in any form of movement (Table 3).

Physically active teachers usually exercise twice and once a week (26.7%). Only 16.7% of respondents exercise every day.

**Table 2.**  
Frequency of participation in training sessions in the past

Frequency	Gender				Total	
	F		M		Nr	%
	Nr	%	Nr	%		
Physically inactive	5	33.3	3	20.0	8	26.7
Once a week	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Twice a week	3	20.0	2	13.3	5	16.7
Every day	2	13.3	4	26.7	6	20.0
Other answer	5	33.3	6	40.0	11	36.6
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100

**Table 3.**  
Current physical activity of teachers

Physical activity	Gender				Total	
	F		M		Nr	%
	Nr	%	Nr	%		
Yes	12	80.0	13	86.7	25	83.3
No	3	20.0	2	13.3	5	16.7
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100

This group clearly dominated by men (26.7%) compared to women (6.7%). Among other answers (four, five times a week, every two days) a clear advantage of men was also noted (Table 4).

**Table 4.**  
Frequency of teachers' current physical activity

Frequency	Gender				Total	
	F		M		Nr	%
	Nr	%	Nr	%		
Physically inactive	3	20.0	2	13.3	5	16.7
Once a week	5	33.3	3	20.0	8	26.7
Twice a week	5	33.3	3	20.0	8	26.7
Every day	1	6.7	4	26.7	5	16.7
Other answer	1	6.7	3	20.0	4	13.2
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100

Among the physical education teachers surveyed, regardless of gender, walking was the most popular form of movement (46.7%). Very popular forms of activity included cycling (23.3%) and running (20%). In this case, men were more likely to run and women were cycling. Dancing and roller skating were

also popular in the group of women. In turn, every fifth man preferred hiking. Among other forms of movement, women mentioned playing volleyball, swimming, hiking, and men martial arts, swimming, rock climbing, and tennis (Table 5).

**Table 5.**

Preferred forms of physical activity of the teachers surveyed

Forms of physical activity	Gender				Total	
	F		M		Nr	%
	Nr	%	Nr	%		
Walking	7	46.7	7	46.7	14	46.7
Jogging	2	13.3	4	26.7	6	20.0
Cycling	4	26.7	3	20.0	7	23.3
Roller skating	3	20.0	0	0.0	3	10.0
Dancing	3	20.0	1	6.7	4	13.3
Hiking	1	6.7	3	20.0	5	16.7
Other answers	7	46.7	7	46.7	14	46.7

Note percentages do not add up to 100 because the respondents could provide more than one answer

## Discussion

Physical activity has been and is the subject of many studies. The paper objective was the preliminary analysis of physical activity of physical education teachers teaching in Tarnów schools at various educational levels. The study shows that teachers are eager to undertake physical activity in their free time (83.3%). Comparable results were reported in the studies conducted by E. Madejski and A. Kumorek (78.1%) [7] and K. Szczerby-Melion (69.2%) [8]. Frequency of physical activity of physical education teachers is most often at the level of: once and twice a week (26.7%). Similar results were obtained in studies of other authors [9–11].

Studies conducted by M. Woynarowska-Soldan and I. Tabak [12] showed that physical education teachers are more active in free time than teachers teaching other subjects.

Based on the analysis of the results obtained, it can be stated that men showed higher frequency of physical activity. This is also confirmed by other studies [7, 13].

Gender differences also occurred when analyzing preferred forms of physical activity. This phenomenon was also noted in the studies conducted by Lipowski and Szczepańska-Klunder. The most common form of physical activity (walking) among men and women is similar (46.7%), while the biggest difference can be seen among other preferred forms of physical activity, these are: among women (46.7%) – playing volleyball, swimming, hiking, gardening; the same number of men prefer martial arts, swimming, rock climbing, tennis, mowing. 26.7% of women choose cycling, while an identical percentage of men prefer

running. Studies conducted by Lipowski and Szczepańska-Klunder were quite convergent also regarding the chosen forms of physical activity of physical education teachers, however they show higher values among the preferred disciplines. Among women: swimming (79.3%), cycling (69.0%), walking (67.2%); among men – team games (76.8%) and, like women, swimming (71.0%) and cycling (63.7%) [13].

Most of the society recognizes and appreciates the importance of regular sport activity benefiting the health, but their declarations are not reflected in the actions actually taken [14]. According to Woynarowska, only every third Pole engages in moderately intense activity (on average 8 hours a week); only 5% of the population takes up intensive activity, and men do so four times more compared to women [15].

The conducted study provided valuable information on the physical activity of physical education teachers of Tarnów schools as well as enabled comparison of the results with the studies of other authors.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of the study and its analysis, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Most physical education teachers spend their free time in an active way, whereas it is usually leisure activity. A significant difference in the frequency of physical activity among men and women can be seen. Men declare much higher frequency of doing sports than women.
2. There is a certain relationship between sports training sessions done in the past and physical activity practiced today. Only a small group of teachers surveyed, who have not done any sports in the past, began to spend their free time actively in adulthood.
3. There is a clear differentiation of preferences in the area of physical activity between the women and men surveyed. Only walking enjoys the same popularity regardless of gender.

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## Streszczenie

**Cel:** Celem pracy była ocena aktywności fizycznej w czasie wolnym nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego uczących w szkołach tarnowskich.

**Material i metody:** Badania mają charakter pilotażowy i były zrealizowane w 2018 r. wśród 30 nauczycieli, w przedziale wiekowym 30–50 lat, uczących wychowania fizycznego w szkołach podstawowych, gimnazjach i szkołach ponadgimnazjalnych na terenie Tarnowa. Badaniami objęto uczestników warsztatów przedmiotowych. Badania przeprowadzono metodą sondażu diagnostycznego, a do uzyskania niezbędnych informacji i danych zastosowano technikę ankietowania.

**Wyniki:** Nauczyciele wychowania fizycznego chętnie podejmują aktywność ruchową w czasie wolnym, jednak jest to najczęściej aktywność rekreacyjna. Nauczyciele najchętniej ćwiczą dwa razy oraz raz w tygodniu. Większą częstotliwość podejmowania aktywności fizycznej wykazali mężczyźni. Uprawianie sportu w przeszłości ma odzwierciedlenie w podejściu do dbania o zdrowie i utrzymanie sprawności fizycznej w późniejszym życiu. Sposób spędzania czasu wolnego badanych nauczycieli był różnicowany w zależności od płci.

**Wnioski:** Systematyczny udział nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego w aktywności fizycznej nie jest satysfakcjonujący, a przecież nauczyciel swoją postawą powinien dawać przykład oraz uświadamiać uczniom jak dbać o ciało i zdrowie fizyczne.

**Słowa kluczowe:** aktywność fizyczna, nauczyciel wychowania fizycznego, czas wolny

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