ABSTRACT

Purpose: To explore the influence of parents on the physical activity and sport of adolescents in families from different ethnic groups of Plovdiv Municipality.

Material and methods: During the summer term of the 2018/19 academic year, a survey had been conducted among parents of the students who study in certain schools on the territory of the Plovdiv municipality (the city of Plovdiv and the village of Karadjovo). The subject of the study has been 185 parents of adolescents from three different ethnic groups—Bulgarians, Turkish, and Roma. Have been developed and used specifically for this purpose an author’s questionnaire for parents, which contains open, closed, and mixed questions. For the statistical processing, we have used the data analysis software IBM SPSS Statistics v. 25.

Results: The subject of the study has been 185 parents from different ethnic groups. Bulgarians 96 (51.9%), Turkish 29 (15.7%) and Roma 60 (32.4%). Of all the parents at the time of the survey, only 23 (12.4%) played sports, 162 (87.6%) did not play sports, and 43 (23.2%) of the parents believed that additional sports would make it difficult for their children to prepare for school.

Conclusion: Many parents are reluctant to engage in additional leisure activities for their children that would link them to restricting or disrupting their free time.

Keywords: Adolescents’ health, physical activity, school environment, school physical educations, family education, ethnic groups.

INTRODUCTION:

The influence of the family environment on the construction of sports habits and needs is decisive. Teachers, parents, and sports coaches have to refer to the inherent objectives of physical activity (FA) contributing, children to enjoy sports and increasing the likelihood of regular and long-term commitment to the FA. Results from Nancy University Study, France, show that children of parents who are sporting also have sports activities to a higher degree. There is a correlation between the physical activity of adolescents and that of their parents influenced by their personal example [1].

Building a healthy and sustainable organism is the result of multiple components that include healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. In order to cover all factors influencing the construction of positive health behavior among adolescents, all areas related to young people - school, family, and social environment should be covered. Physical activity is related to parental support and family [2]. It is the first step on which children have to step on the path of healthy behavior and build a positive attitude towards sport in all its forms. Everything goes from the family environment - habits, mires and child shaping as personalities. Research results (Matouga et al., 2012) show that the establishment of an attitude to improve nutritional behavior and physical activity among pupils, with health behavior being determined by the age and occupation of the father and family characteristics [3]. This finding can direct future health promotional interventions to support disadvantaged families.

We can not expect young people to show a certain type of behavior or attitude to anything if they do not see similar patterns of behavior and lifestyle in the family and the surrounding environment.

PURPOSE:

To explore the influence of parents on the physical activity and sport of adolescents in families from different ethnic groups of Plovdiv Municipality.
MATERIAL AND METHODS:

During the summer term of the 2018/19 academic year, a survey had been conducted among parents of the students who study in certain schools on the territory of the Plovdiv municipality (the city of Plovdiv and the village of Karadjovo). The subject of the study has been 185 parents of adolescents from three different ethnic groups—Bulgarians, Turkish and Roma. Have been developed and used specifically for this purpose an author’s questionnaire for parents, which contains open, closed, and mixed questions. Have been used descriptive statistics. For the statistical processing, we have used the data analysis software IBM SPSS Statistics v. 25.

RESULTS:

The parents covered in the study have been allocated to three ethnic groups in Bulgaria, with the preview of the Bulgarians 96 (51.9%), followed by Turks 29 (15.7%) and Roma 60 (32.4%). Their allocation of educational cities shows that a higher educational certificate owns parents from the Bulgarian ethnicity; respectively, 20 (20.8%) have a Bachelor’s degree and 27 (20.8%) with Masters. Among the Bulgarians, the relative share of secondary education graduates is 46 (47.9%), while among Turks and Roma with the largest relative share are the primary education 13 (44.8%) and 37 (61.7%) (Figure 1).

There has been a statistically significant difference between the ethnic and education of parents ($\chi^2 = 132.255; df = 8; p = 0.000$). Of all parents covered by the survey who had sports, only 23 (12.4%) and 162 (87.6%) are not (Figure 2). Statistically, significant difference has been between sporting and non-having sports parents from Bulgarian and Roma ethnicity ($\chi^2 = 12.936; df = 2; p = 0.002$).

Fig. 1. Distribution of parents by ethnicity and education

Fig. 2. Distribution of parents – sporting and not having sport
A predominant part of the parents, 43 (23.2%), believe that the additional sport would make their children needing more time in preparation for school. Fig. 3 shows the distribution of parents who responded to this issue by ethnicity. A statistically significant difference has been established in the answers with “no” and those who “cannot decide” - Bulgarians and Roma ($\chi^2 = 12.805; \text{df} = 4; p = 0.012)$.

**Fig. 3.** shows the distribution of parents who responded to this issue by ethnicity.

There has been no statistically significant difference between responses of the parents and children about the frequency of sports in the leisure time of pupils ($\chi^2 = 0.781; \text{df} = 4; p = 0.941$). Almost half (49.7%) of parents believe that children should sport extra in school. Ethnic distribution (Figure 4) shows that only 1% of the Bulgarians responded with “no”, while in other ethnicities, the relative share of respondents with “no” and more than (20.7%) of the Turks and (15%) of the Roma. The statistical difference here is between the Bulgarians and the other two ethnicities ($\chi^2 = 19.291; \text{df} = 4; p = 0.001$).

**Fig. 4.** Should children play extra sports outside of school - the answers are divided by ethnicity

The largest share of parents is from Bulgarian origin, who think that sports classes are not enough at school. The distribution of respondents to this issue is shown in Fig. 5. A statistically significant difference has been established between the opinion of the Bulgarians and the other two ethnicities ($\chi^2 = 40.186; \text{df} = 4; p = 0.000$).
The results of the study have shown a tendency to shift the family’s responsibility for health education and the health behavior of their own children. This responsibility is transferred and expected from all other institutions. The most important responsibility is delegated to families and in the three ethnicities of the Ministry of Youth and Sports referred to 36 (37.89%) Bulgarian families, 18 (62.07%) Turkish and 28 (46.67%) Roma families. A significant difference between parents’ responses from different ethnicities have been observed when they have indicated that the responsibility for promoting the sport and the FA of their own children is in the family and the sports clubs. Where the family is indicated by 41 (43.16%) of the Bulgarians, 5 (8.33%) of the Roma and only 2 parents (6.9%) of the Turks. The sports clubs are listed in 32 (33.68%) the Bulgarian parents, 6 (10%) the Roma and 2 parents (6.9%) of Turkish origin (Figure 6). A statistically significant difference has been found between the opinion of the Bulgarians and the other two ethnicities to declare that the responsibility is of the family and the sports clubs ($\chi^2 = 59.399; \text{df} = 14; p = 0.000)$.

DISCUSSION:
Physical activity (FA) promotes an adequate level of health in adolescents. Moderation of behavior FA to be guided by the perception of adolescents’ FA of their parents. We assume that a higher involvement of parents in physical activity influences physical activity practiced in adolescents. Perceptions that adolescents have the FA of their parents should underlie the development of common programs of sport and FA [4]. The results of several studies highlight the importance of involving the family...
and parents in promoting healthy behaviors such as physical and sports activities that may constitute a powerful educational tool for the prevention of social risks [5].

Our results about the influence of family on attitudes to sport and physical activity among children in the family are like those from studies of several authors.

In research González-García H, Pelegrín A, (2020) concluded that there are other variables that influence more on hardy personality in athletes apart from parents. Although challenging, hardy personality and commitment in men reported an influence by parental educational styles. [6].

In a scale-feasibility study (Khan SR, et al. [7]), adolescents were asked how many days /weeks they were physically active and about their parental and peer support. Meta-analysis showed that adolescents who had high parental or peer support had higher odds of attaining sufficient PA (odds ratio (OR): 1.40, 95% confidence interval (CI): 1.34-1.46; OR: 1.57, 95% CI: 1.49-1.65, respectively). Pooled estimates of association were significant across all World Health Organization (WHO) regions and country-income categories, with the highest estimate from the low-income countries. The Western Pacific region showed the highest association between parental support and adolescents’ PA (OR: 1.49, 95% CI: 1.41-1.59), while South-East Asia exhibited the highest association between peer support and adolescents’ PA (OR: 1.80, 95% CI: 1.59-2.04) [7].

Of great importance, according to Kanellopoulou A. and the team is to that increased participation in extracurricular sports was associated with a healthier dietary pattern, containing more “non-obesogenic” food choices [8].

Children’s health behaviors are highly influenced by their parents and family. According to (Sekulic D, et al. [10]). The results of this study point to a significant decline in PALs in the period between 16 and 18 years of age. Therefore, in order to prevent a decline in PALs in this period of life, public health authorities should target all ages with similar respect and attention. In other words, there is no evidence that a specific age only should be considered “critical” in terms of a more rapid decline in PALs. [9]. The results showed that the relationship between perceived parental support and physical activity enjoyment is mediated by the overweight and obese adolescents’ perceived cardiorespiratory fitness and flexibility. We suggest creating educational guidelines for parents to increase the support and improve overweight and obese students’ perceived physical competence in order to achieve greater adherence to physical activity and greater physical activity enjoyment. [10].

The authors Yoon HJ, et al. in opined that Increasing maternal PA levels could stimulate their adolescent’s PA levels. Therefore, intervention at the family level may lead to an increase in adolescent PA levels. [11].

Besides the model of education in the family and the family as an institution, another important factor for the formation of healthy behavior among adolescents is the school and the school environment. The results of our study show that parents have high expectations of the school for the formation of proper health education among their children, determining the leading or sole role. According to S. Mladenova, towards achieving a holistic approach to health, the school established itself increasingly as an institution for health promotion. Moreover, the modern ideas for health promotion are associated with the concept of indivisibility of the problems of health and education [12, 13].

The latest systematic reviews of the efficiency of young people’s physical activity are basically focused on the school environment [14]. The school social environment is associated with PA during adolescence [15].

**CONCLUSION:**

OF all parents covered by the survey have sports, only 23 (12.4%) and 162 (87.6%) do not. There is no personal example from the parents for the positive physical activity and sport of children in their families. There is a big difference between ethnicities in the attitude, understanding, and opinion of parents to sport and their children’s sporting activities.

A predominant part of the parents, 43 (23.2%), believe that the additional sport would make their children need more time in preparation for school. A small part of parents took responsibility and commitment to creating a positive attitude in their own children toward sport, predominates the attitude that sports embarrass children from preparing for school than help them.

Almost half of 49.7% of parents believe that children should sport extra time in school, despite the parental opinion that they do not want and do not want to make further commitments to the sports their children.

The conducted study outlines the worrying fact that parents often transfer their responsibility and obligations to different institutions such as schools, municipalities friends and more. At the same time, unclear and unrecognizable remains the government’s intervention in encouraging and stimulating the FA and sport in adolescents and their families. It should be noted that, despite the increasing number of sports grounds and street fitness areas, this type of activity does not follow the same effect that it has on the young adolescent organism organized by sport clubs and sports federations.

The results obtained by us allow us to make the following recommendations to various institutions in our country.

**To schools:**

Diversification of the methods and forms of teaching in physical education and sports classes at school, taking into account the specifics of different ethnic groups. Organization of extracurricular activities in various sports disciplines by forming teams for the school.

**To the Ministry of Education:**

To develop strategies for the inclusion and commitment of parents from different ethnic groups to sports in children’s free time, and for this purpose, moderators from different ethnicities to be trained to respect the cultural characteristics of individuals in the community.
To sports federations and clubs:
To be more active in promoting their activities among different ethnic groups by holding demonstrations in key places for the population together with the municipality. Also, to distributing flyers, advertisements, etc. Organization of an “open day” for children and parents, so that they can get to know and be informed on the place and sport that is practiced in the given club.

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