



ATTITUDE OF MASTERS OF HEALTH CARES MANAGEMENT TO A HEALTHY LIFE STYLE AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

The present study is aimed at the attitude to a healthy life style with university students in the Masters Programme of Health Cares Management at the Medical University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Public Health.

An empirical sociological study has been carried out by means of an anonymous direct-group inquiry. Fifty students of the abovementioned programme have been included in the inquiry during the academic year 2009/2010.

Three basic aspects have been analyzed: attitude to tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, and physical activity of the students.

The results of the study indicate that the highest portion of the studied is non-smokers. The alcohol consumption with most of them is only 'on occasion' while a big part of them declare that they do not consume alcohol at all.

The low physical activity appears as a major concern (is impressive). The prevailing part of the students is engaged with physical exercises only once in a week, followed by those who do not make physical exercises at all.

In conclusion, we may generalize that it is necessary to optimize the physical activity of the students as one of the key elements of a healthy life style directed at the prevention of their health.

Key words: healthy life style, health behavior, health habits, Masters of Health Cares, medical students

INTRODUCTION

The Master's programme in Healthcare Management is intended for students with basic medical education and Bachelor's degree in the above specialty or in another humanitarian specialty. The qualification obtained in Healthcare, the medical knowledge adopted throughout the course of studies and the professional and worldly experience gained are in the basis of the responsible and serious attitude towards people's own health.

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The objective of the present survey is to study the attitude towards healthy style of life of students from the Master's programme in Healthcare Management at the Medical University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Public Health.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

An empiric sociological study was carried out using an anonymous direct group questionnaire. The survey was carried out on fifty students from the Master's programme in Healthcare Management at the Medical University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Public Health in the academic year 2009/2010.

The questionnaire comprises three main aspects: attitude towards smoking, alcohol

consumption and physical activity of the students from the Master's programme.

Statistical processing of the results was performed using the programme SPSS v 13, with application of parametrical, non-parametrical and graphic analyses.

RESULTS

The analysis of the results shows that all respondents are female. Most of them ($66.00 \pm 6.70\%$) are married, with basic nursing education ($87.50 \pm 4.77\%$), currently

($46.94 \pm 7.13\%$) of them occupy management positions. The majority of them ($57.14 \pm 7.07\%$) are at the age 25-39, followed by the age group 40-54 ($36.73 \pm 6.89\%$). Naturally, the students with professional experience over 15 years prevail ($46.94 \pm 7.13\%$).

The results from the study regarding the investigated parameter **smoking** are inspiring. The fact that the highest share of the respondents ($41.67 \pm 7.12\%$) is of non-smokers, is very indicative (**Fig. 1**).

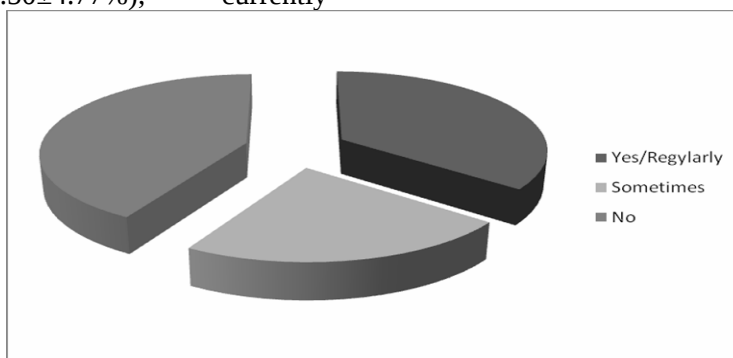


Fig. 1. Results from the answer of the question "Do you smoke?"

The analysis of the results of those who define themselves as smokers shows that the smokers for over 10 years prevail ($20.69 \pm 7.52\%$), followed by the group of smokers for over 15 years ($34.48 \pm 8.83\%$). The group of students smoking up to ten cigarettes a day stands out ($65.52 \pm 6.24\%$), and a considerably smaller part of them smoke over ten cigarettes a day ($17.24 \pm 4.96\%$).

Alcohol consumption for most of the respondents is only "sometimes" in ($64.00 \pm 6.79\%$), and ($34.00 \pm 6.70\%$) declare that they do not consume alcohol (**Fig. 2**). Irrespective of that, their preferences are mainly connected with the use of wine ($60.53 \pm 7.93\%$) and hard liquor ($23.68 \pm 6.90\%$) of the respondents.

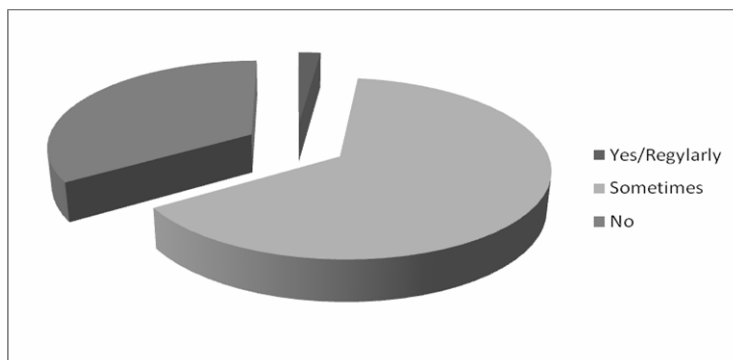


Fig. 2. Results from the answer to the question: "Do you consume alcohol?"

A more comprehensive study of the use of hard liquids shows that the opinion of those who consume them several times a month prevails ($29.55 \pm 6.88\%$), followed by the share of those

who never use them ($27.27 \pm 6.71\%$) or use them only several times a year ($22.73 \pm 6.32\%$) (**Fig. 3**).

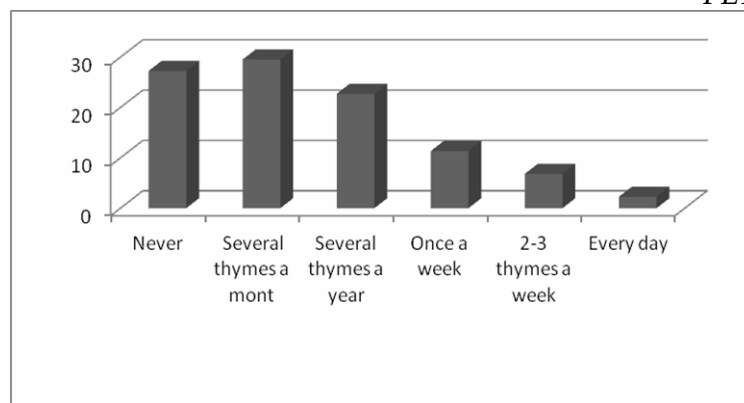


Fig. 3. Frequency of alcohol consumption

To the question „*How often do you do physical exercises?*” the responses of the students who practice physical exercises once a week prevail ($47.83 \pm 7.37\%$), followed by the group of the students who do not do physical exercises at all ($30.43 \pm 6.78\%$). The share of the students who

do physical exercises every day is only ($13.04 \pm 4.79\%$). The time spent sitting which is an index for hypokinesia in the past week is more than 5 hours for ($41.67 \pm 7.12\%$) and from 2-5 hours for ($31.25 \pm 6.69\%$) (**Fig. 4**).

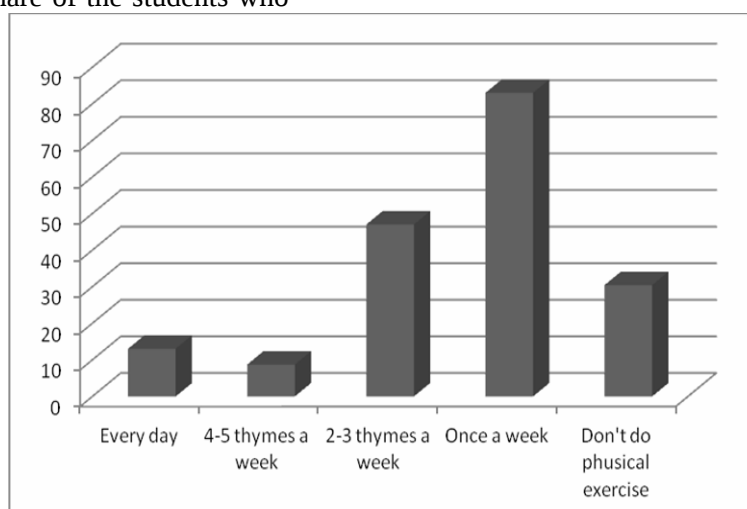


Fig. 4. Physical training

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

In the survey carried out among Masters of Healthcare Management the largest part of the respondents declared the fact that they are non-smokers.

When reviewing literature sources we came across results completely opposite to ours. A large-scale study of Sutfin EL et al in 2009, comprising 10 colleges of North Carolina, USA, eloquently illustrates the opinion of 28% of the respondents who define themselves as active smokers, 22% define themselves as medium smokers and 19% join the group of social smokers. The common thing between the last two groups is the fact that they only smoke when they go to a party which is connected with the use of alcohol [1].

A similar study among students from Saudi Arabia carried out by Abolfotouh MA et al, 1988 summarizes the opinions of two groups: students from a medical college and from a teacher's college. The following results prevail in both groups: regular smokers (17.5% vs. 13.6%; $P=0.25$); active smokers (39.5% vs. 27.8%; $P=0.38$); medium smokers (92.7% vs. 50%, $P=0.0004$), and the group of those not susceptible to smoking (48.8% vs. 16.7%, $P=0.02$) [2].

When studying the second aspect – alcohol consumption, the largest group of the respondents – Masters in Healthcare Management indicate that alcohol consumption is “only sometimes” and a large part of them declares that they do not use alcohol.

Interesting results in connection with this problem are published by Jong W., Schneider SK, Towvim LG, 2010. The authors perform a comparative analysis of the opinions of those defining themselves as active alcohol consumers, medium consumers and the group of students who do not consume alcohol the total number of which being 2500 from 18 colleges in the USA. The interest comes from the fact that non-drinkers point out more reasons not to consume alcohol, compared with the regular drinkers. On the other hand, the group of medium drinkers also indicates more and more versatile reasons not to drink on a regular basis such as the active drinkers. The decision to refrain from alcohol consumption was dictated by their desire to live a healthy life. This decision comprises a number of reasons, such as: personal specifications, religious affinities, unwillingness of those people to have the image of alcoholic and alcoholic habits [3].

The results obtained as regards the attitude to smoking and alcohol consumption are completely satisfying. We found confirmation of our working hypothesis related to transfer of accumulated medical knowledge, professional and life experience with the application of the principles of healthy life and motivated health behavior reflecting on the non-use of alcohol and cigarettes.

The data received after analysis of the third aspect on the physical activity of the masters in Healthcare Management are however different.

Sports and physical activity may improve to a considerable degree the students' health status and serve as a preventive factor of many diseases. Our results correspond to those of S. Mladenova, 2011 from a survey conducted at Medical University Sofia, Faculty of Public Health. The respondents (bachelors and masters of Healthcare Management) outline "negative" in the author's opinion results showing that a larger part of the questioned students do not practice sports or tourism in their free time. The physical activity of the students from the specialty of Healthcare Management is low and they cannot serve as role models [4].

The results from a comparative study among students of Physical Therapy and Computer Studies conducted by Rocz Panstw, 2011, are also impressive. Naturally, the attitude towards the motor activity of students studying physical therapy is better compared with those from the Technical University. The students even indicate

the sports they practice: cycling, swimming, collective sports, etc. The author emphasizes on the health education which must provide knowledge of health promotion and lifestyle directed towards prevention of a number of diseases [5].

The results from our survey of the motor activity are absolutely identical with those obtained by S. Mladenova, 2011 [4] of the students in the same specialty from the Medical University Sofia, which speaks about the importance of the problem which affects a large number of students from different universities.

Our survey allowed us to come to the following major conclusions:

1. The highest share of the respondents is of non-smokers.
2. Alcohol consumption in most respondents is only "sometimes" and a large part of the students declare that they do not consume alcohol at.
3. The motor activity of the students is low. The highest share of the respondents does physical exercises once a week but the share of those who do not do physical training is also very high. Physical activity should be optimized as one of the elements of the healthy lifestyle aiming at health prevention.

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