

Social Support for Physical Activity Received by Youth at the Age of 14–18 from Their Parents, Peers and PE Teachers

Abstract

In the face of maintaining a high level of morbidity of civilization diseases, the etiology of which is to a large degree connected with scarcity of physical activity (obesity, coronary heart disease, type II diabetes mellitus etc.), an education dealing with participation in physical culture has become an important social task. In order to be efficient the process should be aimed at developing psychological and behavioural determinants of physical activity but also building social relationships enhancing an active life style. One of the mechanisms through which social environment may influence physical activity of children and youth is social support. The paper presents the results of the study of four kinds of social support for physical activity (instrumental, informational, emotional and evaluational) received by pupils at the age of 14 to 18 from their parents, peers and physical education teachers. The results suggest that the most often received form of support is emotional one (especially from parents and peers) and the least frequent – instrumental support, which is a more direct form of support than the above mentioned one. Moreover, the frequency with which respondents receive social support for their physical activity significantly differentiates particular categories of significant others, with the most rare support from physical education (PE) teachers. Also an interesting phenomenon was observed of parents' decreasing social support for physical activity of girls as they are growing up.

Key words: *social support, physical activity*