

Socio-Economic Determinants of Physical Activity of Non-Manual Workers, Including the Early Senior Group, from the City of Wroclaw in Poland

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Abstract : Physical activity as a part of people's everyday life reduces the risk of many diseases, including those induced by lifestyle, e.g. obesity, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, coronary heart disease, degenerative arthritis, and certain types of cancer. That refers particularly to professionally active people, including the early senior group working on non-manual positions. The aim of the study is to evaluate the relationship between physical activity and the socio-economic status of non-manual workers from Wroclaw—one of the biggest cities in Poland, a model setting for such investigations in this part of Europe. The crucial problem in the research is to find out the percentage of respondents who meet the health-related recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) concerning the volume, frequency, and intensity of physical activity, as well as to establish if the most important socio-economic factors, such as gender, age, education, marital status, per capita income, savings and debt, determine the compliance with the WHO physical activity recommendations. During the research, conducted in 2013, 1,170 people (611 women and 559 men) aged 21–60 years were examined. A diagnostic poll method was applied to collect the data. Physical activity was measured with the use of the short form of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire with extended socio-demographic questions, i.e. concerning gender, age, education, marital status, income, savings or debts. To evaluate the relationship between physical activity and selected socio-economic factors, logistic regression was used (odds ratio statistics). Statistical inference was conducted on the adopted ex ante probability level of $p < 0.05$. The majority of respondents met the volume of physical effort recommended for health benefits. It was particularly noticeable in the case of the examined men. The probability of compliance with the WHO physical activity recommendations was highest for workers aged 21–30 years with secondary or higher education who were single, received highest incomes and had savings. The results indicate the relations between physical activity and socio-economic status in the examined women and men. People with lower socio-economic status (e.g. manual workers) are physically active primarily at work, whereas those better educated and wealthier implement physical effort primarily in their leisure time. Among the investigated subjects, the youngest group of non-manual workers have the best chances to meet the WHO standards of physical activity. The study also confirms that secondary education has a positive effect on the public awareness on the role of physical activity in human life. In general, the analysis of the research indicates that there is a relationship between physical activity and some socio-economic factors of the respondents, such as gender, age, education, marital status, income per capita, and the possession of savings. Although the obtained results cannot be applied for the general population, they show some important trends that will be verified in subsequent studies conducted by the authors of the paper.

Keywords : IPAQ, nonmanual workers, physical activity, socioeconomic factors, WHO

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