



## STUDY REGARDING THE PRACTICING OF SWIMMING AS A LEISURE TIME ACTIVITY-INDICATOR OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

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### Abstract

It is known that free time is the individual's ability to organize time in the most efficient way, so to be more productive in the activities proposed.

*The purpose* of this study is to highlight the relationship between free time and the practicing swimming, as a leisure activity with the adult population.

*Material and method:* The present study is based on a questionnaire survey concerning the practice of swimming as leisure activity among adults.

*The results* highlighted that 81% of the subjects in the study practice swimming for pleasure, and only 19% for health reasons.

*The conclusions* of the study allow us to argue that swimming is one of the benefic means of spending their free time, an indicator of the quality of life among active population.

*Key words:* swimming, free time, quality of life.

### Introduction

The quality of life is a concept that began to be studied and be taken into account since 1946 when, in the Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO), health was being defined as follows: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, which is not limited to the absence of disease or to infirmity "(WHO 1946, 2006).

A recent study by the University of Carolina shows that swimming can really help us live longer. The study observed more than 40,000 men over a period of 32 years and shows that swimming reduces, in men, the risk of dying by 50%, as opposed to those who practice jogging, walking or to the sedentary ones (Blair 2008).

In our country, official statistics claim that currently over 40% of the population suffers from a severe or mild obesity. But what worries us is that even the World Health Organization statistics, evokes our country to rank first in Europe in terms of cardiovascular mortality due to over-weight.

Today the quality of life is an evaluative concept, being the resultant of the reporting of the living conditions and activities, that make up human life to needs, values, human aspirations, which refers both to the overall evaluation of life and to the evaluation of the different conditions or areas of life (environment, working conditions, interpersonal relationships, family life, etc.).

According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Quality Of Life Survey, more than one in every eight (13%) adults living in the European Union report having felt downhearted and depressed more than half of the time in the previous two weeks (EQLS, 2012, p.118).

Recreational water activities can have substantial benefits to health and well-being. Swimming pools, beaches, lakes, rivers and spas provide environments for rest and relaxation, physical activity, exercise, pleasure and fun (WHO, 2003).

In this paper we join those who believe that free time is time dedicated to oneself after the completion of professional, domestic activities as well as after the passive rest. Thus time used on free choice is the free time that remains after the bio-socio-cultural activities strictly necessary, such as socialization, enculturation, documentation, care for children and elderly people in our lives, etc. (Păunescu, 2010).

In this study we proceeded from the premise that recreational sport is a form of beneficial use of free time which brings benefits in all areas of personality development.

### Material and method

#### 2.1. Questionnaire regarding the practicing of swimming during leisure time

The present study was based on questionnaire survey. The developed questionnaire comprised 10 items regarding:

- leisure time size among subjects enrolled in the study;
- practicing sports during leisure time;
- practicing swimming during leisure time.

The questionnaire included simple, clear and precise questions, thus the responses were prompt and the information received had a high verisimilitude character.

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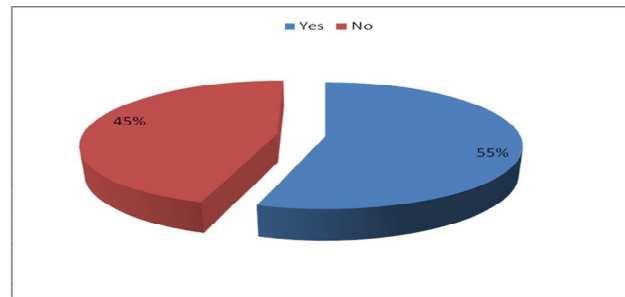
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**2.2. The subjects of the study**  
The questionnaire was applied to a total of 78 subjects aged between 20 and 64, 76% male and 24% female. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki on ethical principles for

research involving human subjects. Under anonymity reserve, subjects gave their consent on the use of data in their study for publication in the present work or in related publications.

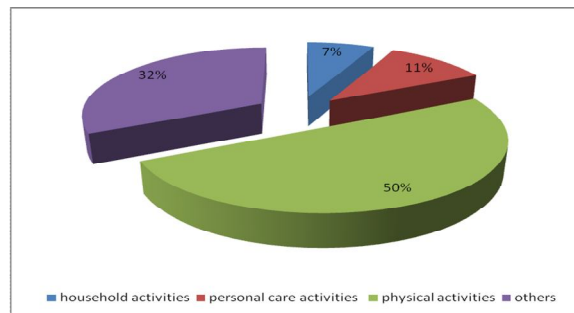
### Results



**Figure 1.** The share of those who declared they have free time

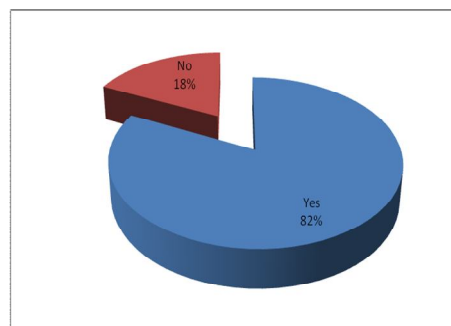
From Figure 1 we can see that there are not significant differences on the size of leisure time among the subjects enrolled in the study, 55% of them saying that they have free time.

The indicator ‘What types of activities do you prefer for your leisure time?’ revealed that 50% of the subjects of the study prefer physical activity, 11% activities of personal care, 7% household activities, while 32% prefer other activities (see Figure 2)



**Figure 2.** The share of leisure activities

In terms of practicing sports during leisure time, 82% of the subjects in the study said they spend their free time practicing sports (see figure 3).



**Figure 3.** The share of sport practicing by the study respondents during free time

It does not seem so surprising that a large percent of the survey respondents practice sport during the free time, because we have to mention that most of

the study subjects are part of the group aged between 20-30 years old, the period of extended adolescence which makes the transition to adulthood.

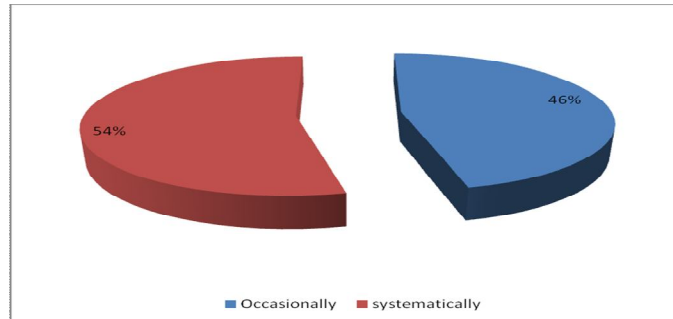


Figure 4. The share of practicing sports during free time

From Figure No.4. we can see that 54% of the respondents occasionally practice sport as a leisure activity and only 46% consistently. 46% of these, said they practice recreation sport as leisure with a

frequency of 3 times per week, 39% of them 4 times per week and only 15% of them 2 times per week (Figure 5).

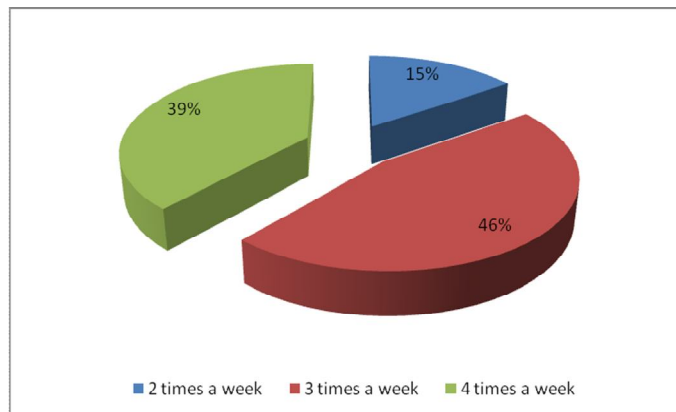


Figure 5. The share of practicing recreational sport

The items on practicing swimming have revealed that 83% (of those who practice recreational sports) argue that swimming is among their

preferences, and only 17% do not prefer swimming as a leisure sport.

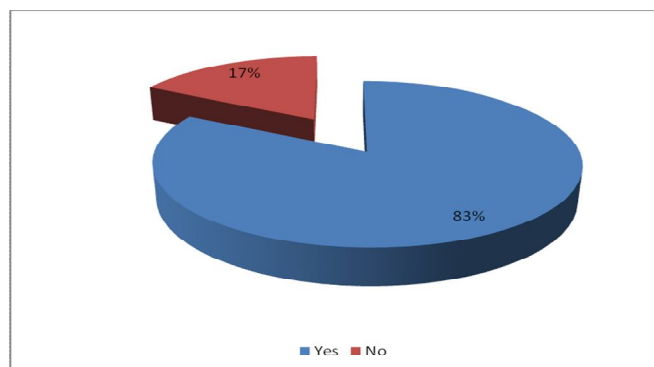


Figure 6. The share of practicing recreational sport

Most of them practice swimming 2 times per week (52%), 20% - 3 times per week, 16% - 4 times a week, and only 12% more than 5 times a week.

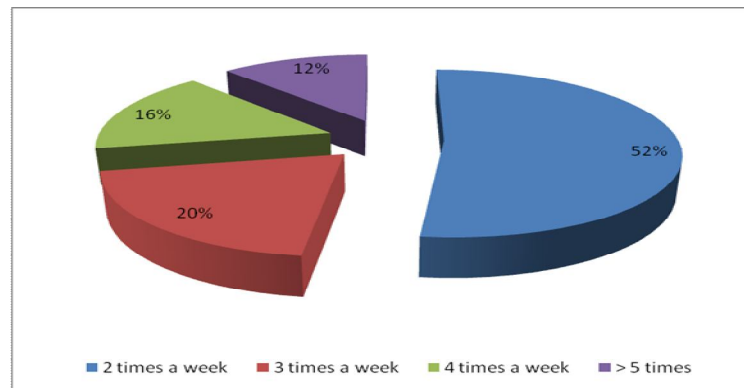


Figure 7. Ways of practicing swimming

The reasons for practicing swimming as a leisure sport are varied, most subjects said they practice

swimming for pleasure (81%) and only 19% for health reasons, as a means of kinesiotherapy.

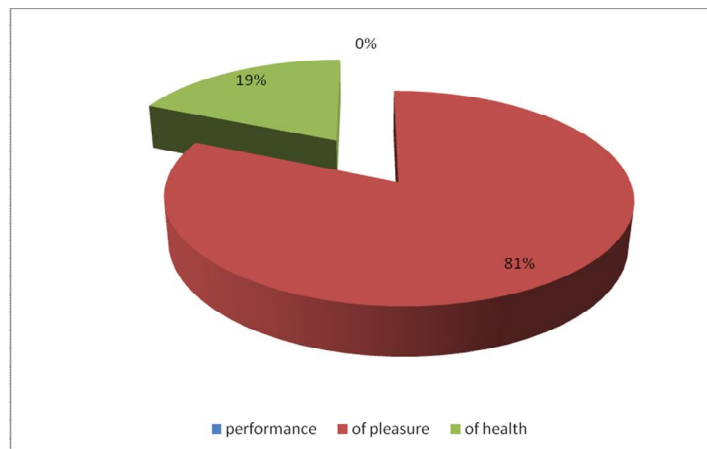


Figure 8. Reasons for practicing swimming as a leisure sport

### Discussions

Today recreational sport is competing with computer activities, the cultural entertainment, with various hobbies. Regarding the effects of practicing different sports on ECG parameters, Venckunas et al. (2008) support the notion that regular exercise training induces cardiac hypertrophy that may be manifested by the LV wall thickening and cavity dilation in young athletes. According to American Heart Association recommends 30-minutes of moderate activity, but three 10-minute periods of activity are almost as beneficial to your overall fitness as one 30-minute session. As shown in past research in USA, swimming is the fourth most popular sports activity and a good way to get

regular aerobic physical activity (US Census Bureau, 2012).

The results of the present study revealed that over 80% of the study subjects practice recreational sport within the time available, and out of these a considerable proportion (83%) said that swimming is among the choices of spending the leisure time. It is also noted that young adults (20-30 years old) are the age group that is the most active physically. If we refer to the sports leisure one of its structuring trends in this period is represented by the search for ways of organizing it as less formal and restrictive as possible, targeting the social relations sphere that satisfy the social affiliation needs.



## Conclusions

What draws the attention to the present study is that swimming is preferred as leisure activity for pleasure by most of the subjects (81%) and not for health (19%) and performance (0%). The results of this study aligns to the official statistics from the developed countries where swimming is one of the most popular leisure sports - indicator of the quality of life among active population. Meanwhile, swimming is and can be practiced as a means of kinesiotherapy in the recovery of various medical illnesses.

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