

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING OPTIMAL HEALTH THROUGH PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN ASSESSING STUDENTS UBB CLUJ-NAPOCA

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**ABSTRACT.** Physical health of man means a good health of the body, obtained through regular physical activity (exercise), good nutrition, and adequate rest. Optimal health many advantages a person's life. The way in which he understood to acquire and maintain health has great significance both for him and for society. Health is deeply connected lifestyle. Achieving perfect health, with all the effort, will remain a target difficult if not impossible, because human life is subject to permanent change. In the present study we aimed to what extent Babes-Bolyai University (BBU) students appreciate the importance of the physical exercise in maintaining optimal health status. We applied a questionnaire on a number of 465 students from 13 faculties. Respondents were aged between 18 and 40 years, with the vast majority being students between 19-21 years. A percentage of 71.7% of the students appreciated the physical activities as very important, 20.2% important and we appreciate that only 8.1% unimportant. In assessing the importance of weight control 52.2% felt it was very important, 25.3% important, and for 22,5% unimportant. Assessment of body image reflects the vision of respondents on a body in optimal standards that maintain through physical activities. In this context 48.8% of students say it is very important, 29.4% say it is important, and 21.8% do not appreciate bodily appearance. Recognizing the benefits of physical exercise is important, as well as efficient organization of leisure that include physical activities.

**Keywords:** *physical and mental health, physical activities, weight control, body image, leisure.*

**REZUMAT.** *Importanța menținerii stării de sănătate optimă prin exerciții fizice în aprecierea studenților din UBB Cluj-Napoca.* Sănătatea fizică a omului înseamnă o stare bună de sănătate a corpului, obținută datorită activității fizice regulate (exercițiu), unei bune nutriții, și odihnei adecvate. Sănătatea optimă aduce multe avantaje vieții unui om. Felul în care acesta înțelege să-și dobândească și să-și

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mențină sănătatea are mare însemnătate atât pentru el cât și pentru societate. Sănătatea este legată profund de stilul de viață. Obținerea unei sănătăți ideale, cu toată strădania, va rămâne o țintă dificil de atins dacă nu chiar imposibilă, pentru că viața umană este supusă schimbării permanente. În lucrarea de față am urmărit în ce măsură studenții UBB apreciază importanța exercițiilor fizice în menținerea unei stări de sănătate optime. Am aplicat un chestionar pe un număr de 465 de studenți din 13 facultăți. Repondenții au avut vârste cuprinse între 18 și 40 de ani, majoritari fiind studenții cu vârsta cuprinsă între 19 – 21 de ani. Un procent de 71,7% din studenți au apreciat exercițiile fizice ca fiind foarte importante, 20,2% le apreciază ca importante și numai 8,1 % neimportante. În aprecierea importanței controlului greutateii corporale 52,2% l-au considerat foarte important, pentru 25,3% este important, iar pentru 22,5 neimportant. Aprecierea imaginii corporale reflectă viziunea repondenților asupra unui corp în standarde optime ce se menține prin exercițiu fizic. În acest context 48,8% dintre studenți susțin că aceasta este foarte importantă, 29,4% spun că este importantă, iar 21,8 nu apreciază aspectul corporal. Recunoașterea beneficiilor exercițiilor fizice este importantă, la fel și organizarea eficientă a timpului liber ce să cuprindă practicarea activităților fizice.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *sănătate fizică și psihică, activitate fizică, controlul greutății, imagine corporală, timp liber.*

## Introduction

Modern life of individual brings many disadvantages in health plan in the reduced physical usability at work, but also outside it. Because many technical means resulting from scientific progress in the life of modern man have decreased considerably situations that require the body to manifest through physical activities. A good health is a fundamental component of human welfare (Alber and Kohler, 2004, cf. Pop C.E., 2010, p. 274), representing a value in itself. On an individual level, a good health is an important part of human capital, enabling people to perform their work, meet their goals, to have a full life and be active members of society (Mărginean and others, 2006, cf. Pop C. E., 2010, p. 274).

Optimal health many advantages a man's life giving energy, enthusiasm and joy of life, and psychological balance to overcome life's challenges. The way in which he understood to acquire and maintain health reflects both personally and on society to which it belongs.

## **Hypothesis**

The significance of physical activity to maintain health among students from Babes-Bolyai University.

## **Methods and materials**

The subjects of this study were students from 13 faculties BBU. We applied a questionnaire on a number of 465 students, boys (n = 116) and girls (n = 349), aged between 18 and 40 years of years of study I and II, the vast majority having between 19 to 21 years, representing 91.3% of students.

To investigate the issues addressed in the research, we used a questionnaire with which we pursued several objectives. Among others we analyzed the frequency of student participation in physical activity during their leisure time and their recognition and awareness of the importance of the influence of these types of activities in weight control, stress management, body image, physical and mental health. The questionnaire contained closed questions with multiple choice answers for which we used ordinal Likert scale with 5 steps. Data obtained using research tools and techniques have been processed and presented in interpreting and drawing conclusions. To achieve the plots we used the Software Microsoft EXCELL, version 2007. For processing the data collected in the study, after they have been defined and grouped, as well as for the calculation of statistical indicators and correlational analysis was used for statistical analysis program SPSS 20.

From the range of tools provided by this software product we used in this analysis, calculating the frequency and the correlation coefficients between some selected variables.

As an important requirement to the students was to specify how often participate in physical activities such as sports, fitness or walking in their leisure time. Response options were "never," "several times a year", "several times a month", "several times a week" and "every day".

Satisfaction participation in physical activities such as sports, fitness or leisure walks was measured graded on a scale from 1 - 5, where 1 means not at all satisfactory and 5 - very satisfactory.

In another item of the questionnaire was aimed at assessing students vis-a-vis the importance of practicing physical activity for weight control, stress management, body image and maintaining physical and mental health. Students were assented a score from 1 - 5, where 1- means not important and 5 - very important for these goals.

## Results

**Table 1.** Participation in physical activities such as sports, fitness or walk

	Never	The many times per year	The many times per month	The several times a week	Every day	Total
Frequency	11	53	145	163	93	465
Valid percent	2,4%	11,4%	31,2%	35,1%	20%	100%

When asked how often participate in physical activities such as sports, fitness or walks in their leisure time, Table 1 shows a high student participation in physical activities in their leisure time. It is appreciated that most of their leisure time doing various forms of movement.

From the high percentage of students who spend time engaging in various forms of movement, it highlights a great satisfaction for them that offers them participation in sport, fitness exercises and walks outdoors. Satisfaction is outlined clearly in Table 2 in which a percentage of 32.3% are very satisfied with what they offer physical activity through the palette of forms of movement. This category of students with those who feel only satisfaction through movement (28.2%) go over 60% of the sample compared to those for whom physical activity does not have much importance.

**Table 2.** The satisfaction of participating in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking

The satisfaction of participating in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking	Never not satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Total
Frequency	16	43	125	131	150	465
Valid Percent	3,4 %	9,2 %	26,9 %	28,2 %	32,3 %	100,0 %

For the variable satisfaction participation in physical activities aimed to identify the degree of satisfaction of students to physical activities. I wanted to know the frequency of attitudes youth favorable to the practice of physical

activities. After analyzing the results we found that students have a positive attitude to involvement in physical movement, as shown in Table 1. A small number of young people express an attitude of indifference to this type of activities.

Table 3 presents awareness of the importance of physical activity for students from BBU on physical and mental health.

**Table 3.** The importance of physical and mental health

Scale of importance	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Frequency	6	8	23	92	327	456	9	465
Valid Percent	1,3 %	1,8	5,0 %	20,2 %	71,7 %	100,0 %		

After collecting data and analyzing the results we found that the higher frequencies were recorded on the upper range of the scale (5). This enables us to conclude that young people have a very good perception, raised the importance of physical activity for physical and mental health.

**Table 4.** The importance of weight control

Scale of importance	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Frequency	14	21	68	116	239	458	7	465
Valid Percent	3,4 %	9,2 %	26,9 %	28,2 %	32,3 %	100,0 %		

**Table 5.** The importance of stress management

Scale of importance	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Frequency	12	13	58	121	253	457	8	465
	3,4 %	9,2 %	26,9 %	28,2 %	32,3 %	100,0 %		

Analysis of the results of the importance of physical activity in weight control and stress management as it can follow in Table 4 and 5 was found that the higher frequencies and close in value were recorded in the upper range of the

last three values of the scale (3, 4 and 5). As a conclusion we can say that young people appreciate the importance of physical activity in weight control and stress management but are not as important as physical and mental health.

**Table 6.** The importance of body image

Scale of importance	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Missing	Total
Frequency	12	25	63	135	224	459	6	465
	2,6 %	5,4 %	13,7 %	29,4 %	48,8 %	100,0 %		

Body image can be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that represents how individuals think, feel, and act on their own physical attributes (Heatherton and Held 1998).

Research has shown that participation in sports has a positive effect on children and adolescents that is manifested by increasing self-esteem in parallel with overall better physical condition (Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009; Taylor & Turek, 2010 cf. Omarsson 2013).

In this study the importance of physical activity to the students body image appears slightly modified in the sense of an increase in the range of the highest compared to the last two variables, we increase that to the fact that students overwhelmingly participated in the research because they are a significant number among students of UBB. It may reveal that exercise is considered as an important factor shaping the body and maintain the desired appearance.

Correlation Coefficients (Pearson) between weight control, stress control, body image, the importance of physical and mental health, the satisfaction of participating in physical activities are all positive, relatively weak, but significant. Each of the calculated coefficients are significantly different from zero which shows that there is correlation between variables. Significant correlations, averages are between body weight and body image (0.55), the importance of physical and mental health and stress management (0.494), the satisfaction of Participating in physical activities and participation in physical activities (0.464) higher. The lowest recorded weak correlation between participation in physical activities and stress management (0.063) and participation in physical activities and the importance of physical and mental health (0.147).

**Table 7.** Correlation coefficients (Pearson) between weight control, stress control, body image, the importance of physical and mental health, the satisfaction of participating in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking and participation in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking.

	Weight control	Stress control	Body image	The importance of physical and mental health	The satisfaction of participating in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking	Participation in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking
Weight control	1	0.448	0.550	0.297	0.152	0.151
Stress management	-	1	0.374	0.494	0.167	0.063
Body image	-	-	1	0.280	0.214	0.172
The importance of physical and mental health	-	-	-	1	0.240	0.147
The satisfaction of participating in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking	-	-	-	-	1	0.464
Participation in physical activities: sports, fitness, walking	-	-	-	-	-	1

## Conclusions

Most students of Babeş-Bolyai University, practice physical activity in their leisure time, the study revealing that motivation is, among other things, their importance in the health sphere. So, young demonstrates awareness of the beneficial effects of exercise on the body and psyche. In addition, it maintaining optimal health and gives them personal and social satisfaction. The values of correlation coefficients indicate that there are significant correlations between behaviors to practice physical exercise and perception of the effects of its value for himself.

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