

YOUTH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS AN OUT-OF-CLASS OCCUPATION

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Abstract

Introduction. Every year, the lack of physical activity causes the death of 600,000 people in Europe; lack of exercise also leads to overweight and obesity in more than one million people [1]. The study of the Latvian Public Health Agency (PHA) concerning students' health habits shows that the proportion of students whose general physical activity level could be considered as sufficient is only 46.3% [2]. In several countries, different programmes are designed to facilitate school students' physical activity, and beneficial out-of-class occupation is emphasised, recommending physical activities on the way to school and coming back home. **Material and methods.** Sixty-five students (grade 10 of secondary school located in a town) aged 15 to 18 participated in the survey. **Results.** Only 5% of the students questioned used a bicycle as a means of going to and from school during the previous four months. In the inquiry, students mentioned that if they were given the possibility to choose the mode of travel between school and home, then 36% would choose a bicycle, 13% would go on foot, and 48% would go by car. **Conclusions.** In Latvia, riding a bike has a seasonal character, and during the school year, it is possible to cycle from home to school in spring and autumn. Having analysed the students' answers, we concluded that most often, the students from the region in question preferred to ride a bike in spring. There was a large difference between the number of students who would like to use a bicycle and the number of students who actually used it.

Key words: physical activity, mode of travel, cycling, habit