

# NUTRITIONAL HABITS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FOOD AND NUTRITION AMONG PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS DEPENDING ON THEIR LEVEL OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Nutritional habits as well as views on food and nutrition are determined by a number of factors regarding an individual, social group, or population. The aim of the study was to determine differences in nutritional habits and knowledge about food and nutrition in physical education (PE) students depending on their level of higher education and physical activity. **Material and methods.** The study included 207 first-year and last-year students of physical education from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Biała Podlaska. The eating habits of the study participants and their knowledge about food and nutrition were evaluated using a questionnaire developed by Gawęcki, while physical activity was assessed with the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ – short version). Statistical significance of differences between groups distinguished on the basis of the students' level of higher education and physical activity was analysed with Student's t-test or the  $\chi^2$  test. **Results and conclusions.** Regardless of the level of higher education and physical activity, the students examined most often demonstrated low intensity of nutritional behaviours that were either beneficial or detrimental to health, which means that they did not choose products with a potentially beneficial influence on their health very often, but, at the same time, they limited their consumption of unhealthy products. However, the comparison of students in terms of their level of education revealed that last-year students consumed poultry, fruit, and vegetables more often, whereas first-year students consumed white bread, butter, cold meat, cheese, and sweets more frequently. Women with a high level of physical activity consumed healthy foods more often, while men exhibited such a tendency in the case of dairy products only. Most students demonstrated sufficient knowledge about food and nutrition, and it was noted that their university studies increased their level of knowledge in this area.

**Key words:** diet, physical activity, students