



## **Kamila Lech**

Student, War Studies University, Warsaw, Poland  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1294-5293>

## **Mirosław Laskowski**

PhD, War Studies University, Warsaw, Poland  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9522-2383>

# Pro-health education of youth and the physical fitness of the 21<sup>st</sup> century society

## Introduction

Nowadays, there are more and more problems related to society's fitness. This is mainly due to the fact that a significant part of society declares that they do not have enough time for regular physical activity. A majority are preoccupied with work, and in their free time they choose a kind of resting that does not require too much physical activity. In 2011, the NATPOL and WOBASZ<sup>1</sup> studies were conducted in Poland, and their aim was to assess people's physical activity in their free time, at work, or when commuting to school or work.

In the NATPOL 2011 study [...], less than a half (48%) of the surveyed adult Poles admitted that they tried to be physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. One in ten replied that they did not try and did not practice physical activity in their spare time. In this study, every fourth Pole of working age (26%) declared medium and hard physical work, and as in the WOBASZ study, a half of the surveyed Polish women

---

<sup>1</sup> NATPOL – National Study of Dissemination of Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Diseases; WOBASZ – Multicenter Population Health Survey.

described their work as sedentary. Significant daily traffic on the way to work or school was reported by every fourth (27%) respondent. Half of the “active” people spent less than 15 minutes walking on their way to work, with every third walk or bicycle journey lasting 15 to 30 minutes, and only every sixth – over 30 minutes.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the international project aimed at assessing 23 health indicators, in which 28 European Union member states participated, carried out in 2015, also played an important role.

Among the 28 EU countries that participated in this project, the average percentage of residents performing the recommended amount of physical activity was 30%. The highest percentage of physically active people was in Iceland, Norway, and Denmark. In these countries, it was 55–65%. In Finland, Sweden, Austria, and Germany, it ranged from 45% to 55%. Poland, with 18%, was placed 24<sup>th</sup>, together with Greece. Worse indicators were found only in Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>3</sup>

The results of these studies show that, despite the desire to maintain any physical activity, its low level and sedentary lifestyle contribute to an increasing the number of overweight and obese people in modern society. In addition, people with physical disabilities are much more likely to develop heart disease, diabetes, and many other serious life-threatening illnesses.

Health is the greatest value for every human being. It is not only the proper functioning of the body, but also the ability to recognise emotions, express them in an appropriate way, and the ability to deal with them. Health is also the ability to think logically and to establish and develop relationships with other people. Nowadays, we underestimate our health very often, we neglect it and forget that we should take care of it because we may lose it. We usually only realise the importance of our health when something bad happens. Many of us only take action when we feel unwell. Before that, we are not interested in it at all, we do not undergo medical check-ups, do not pay attention to how we eat or whether there is even a little physical activity in our lives. In today's society, most people cure rather than prevent, they do nothing to take care of their health and safety, only when something happens, do they start to react. In order to avoid this, the ability to take care of one's own health and that of the community in which we live should be shaped from an early age. It should be one of the goals of a properly running educational process. Therefore, in schools, students are provided with health education, and it is part of the curriculum at all levels of education. According to Louise E. Berman, “students, along with their needs, hopes and dilemmas, need a rich, empowering, energising, and challenging curriculum that would inspire

<sup>2</sup> T. Zdrojewski, B. Wojtyniak, G. Juszczyk, W. Drygas, Quo Vadis Polskie Zdrowie? Niekorzystne zmiany w latach 2011–2020, [in:] *Niedostateczny poziom aktywności fizycznej w Polsce, jako zagrożenie i wyzwanie dla zdrowia publicznego. Raport Komitetu Zdrowia Publicznego Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, eds. W. Drygas, M. Gajewska, T. Zdrojewski, Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Zdrowia Publicznego – Państwowy Zakład Higieny, 2021, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

them to change and boost their comprehensive development”<sup>4</sup>. Health education is one of the possibilities to meet these needs.

## Health and physical fitness of society against contemporary threats

Health education is a process of transferring and acquiring knowledge, skills, and values necessary for maintaining and improving one's health. At all stages of their lives, people should take care of their own health and safety. Therefore, the main goal of pro-health education is to shape and develop in children and adolescents health habits and attitudes conducive to making independent behaviour choices appropriate from the point of view of maintaining full health as well as creating a healthy lifestyle. Pro-health education is not only about imparting knowledge of what is beneficial or harmful to health, but also about developing skills and habits that will help use this knowledge effectively. Here, too, the physical activity of society plays a huge role, which is why physical education classes, where we can develop physically from an early age, are an important element of pro-health education.

Physical education should be understood as planned, purposeful and conscious action aimed at shaping pro-social attitudes, i.e. interpersonal relationships built on the basis of one's own beliefs and recognized moral values.<sup>5</sup> In health education, physical education plays the role of a leading subject and an important role in shaping children and adolescents' social behaviour.

A modern approach to physical education by extending its issues to health education is the result of the integration of two overlapping areas of human education – physical education and health education, emphasising the following needs:

- physical activity as a condition for health,
- nutritional balance,
- active attitude and interpersonal relationships,
- education for safety,
- personal hygiene.<sup>6</sup>

The implementation of physical education classes and the health education they include helps in the current development and improvement of students' physical fitness through their active participation in these classes. Additionally, students are systematically acquainted with the subject of health. Physical education and health education constitute the basis of a healthy life style and enable young people's fuller preparation of for lifelong physical activity, care of their health, and physical fitness.

<sup>4</sup> L.E. Berman, "Perception, Paradox and Passion: Curriculum for Continuity", *Theory into Practice*, XXVI, 1987, pp. 346–350, [as cited in:] D. Michałowska, "Edukacja prozdrowotna – podejścia, modele, metody", *Przegląd Terapeutyczny*, no. 4, 2008, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> W. Osiński, *Zarys teorii wychowania fizycznego*, Poznań: AWF, 1996, pp. 28–48.

<sup>6</sup> B. Wolny, *Edukacja zdrowotna integralnym elementem oceny z wychowania fizycznego*, Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, 2014, p. 4.

The aim of the article is to present the problems of young people's pro-health education and the decline in physical fitness of our society. What is happening in our society today is a very big problem threatening our health and safety. All of this is due to neglecting one's health or physical activity. Most of us do not have time to eat healthy food, spend time actively, or just get to know ourselves. We approach this issue lightly, and then we are unable to accept the consequences, so the sooner we realise how important physical fitness and taking care of our health are, the sooner we can counteract the occurrence of unwanted effects. Our health and safety are the most important, which is why pro-health education is crucial here as it is thanks to it that our society, from an early age, acquires appropriate knowledge and skills which will help them maintain health and physical fitness for years to come.

Physical activity and health are closely related. Our body was designed to move; therefore, to function properly, it requires regular physical activity. Many studies have proven that a sedentary lifestyle is a high-risk factor for the development of many chronic diseases. Publicly available data shows that as much as 40 to 60% of the EU population lead this way of life. Living an active lifestyle has many social and psychological benefits, and physically active people tend to live longer than inactive people. In the modern world, not only chronic diseases, catastrophes, wars, terrorism, and man-made disasters are threats to our health and safety, but also poverty and social pathologies.

However, the most common threats are precisely chronic diseases. The most prevalent chronic diseases are diabetes mellitus, atherosclerosis, hypertension, ischemic heart disease, and cancer. These diseases can affect every person, regardless of their gender or lifestyle. There are many factors considered to be leading causes of these conditions. These include, for example, inadequate diet, a lack of physical activity, chronic stress, addictions, and simply genetic conditions. It is very common that chronic diseases are difficult to prevent. It often happens that they affect people who have always taken care of their health. Nevertheless, each of us should take care of our health to reduce the likelihood of these diseases. We should pay attention to how we eat, introduce some physical activity into our lives and, above all, give up addictions such as smoking. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, a unit of the government's Department of Health and Human Services, recommends exercising for your health at least 150 minutes a week. This advice is confirmed by the research they have been carrying out for many years. One of the studies was conducted by a scientist from Loughborough University on a group of 64,000 people.<sup>7</sup> The participants were at least 40 years old and exercised for 150 minutes a week. The result of this study was a 21% lower risk of developing cancer and 41% lower risk of cardiovascular disease. The results of these studies show us that even such a small amount

---

<sup>7</sup> "Weekend exercise alone 'has significant health benefits'", BBC, 10 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/health-38560616> [accessed: 30 January 2022].

of physical activity pays off, so for our own health, each of us should find a few minutes a day to exercise. The effort is small in comparison with the potential gains.

Ensuring public safety and order is one of the basic tasks of the state authority, the implementation of which is carried out by the administration of public safety and order. It includes, inter alia, uniformed services that are responsible for the direct implementation of specific tasks.<sup>8</sup> Uniformed services's fundamental duty is to ensure safety in society. Each of us planning our future in uniformed services should be aware that fitness and health are of prime importance in the military. Defending the country in times of conflicts, guaranteeing the defence of the state, resisting aggression, ensuring the safety of citizens, supporting internal security, helping with the removal of the effects of natural disasters, and participating in crisis response and humanitarian operations are among the most important tasks undertaken by uniformed services. In addition to keeping a cool head, thinking logically, and being courageous in such situations, endurance and physical fitness are most important. You often need to have strength, e.g., when extinguishing a fire, incapacitating a criminal, or placing sandbags during a flood. These are, of course, just some of the tasks which uniformed services have to deal with. They must also be constantly ready, as they never know when their help will be needed, so it is important to keep their physical readiness. What is more, people who want to pursue their careers in uniformed services should meet the psychophysical requirements specific to their profession. Particular attention is also paid to physical capacity. Each person wishing to work for uniformed services has to undergo medical examinations checking their health condition, psychological tests that allow to determine their psychophysical fitness, as well as fitness tests assessing the candidate's level of physical fitness. Only after passing successfully, is the candidate able to continue with further procedures. As we can see, physical fitness and health play key roles in the recruitment process.

An example of this can be military service. "A professional soldier may be a person of Polish citizenship, of unblemished reputation, whose fidelity to the Republic of Poland is beyond doubt, having appropriate qualifications and physical and mental capacity to perform professional military service."<sup>9</sup> The physical and mental capacity to perform professional military service is established by a military medical board which then issues a certificate based on the examinations and tests carried out. Each soldier is obliged to undergo examinations ordered by the Military Medical Commission, including specialist and psychological tests and, if necessary, additional examinations. These tests allow to define the category of the soldier's physical and mental abilities. Moreover, each candidate for a soldier is referred to a military psychological

<sup>8</sup> M.A. Liwo, *Status służb mundurowych i funkcjonariuszy w nich zatrudnionych*, Wolters Kluwer, <https://sip.lex.pl/komentarze-i-publikacje/monografie/status-sluzb-mundurowych-i-funkcjonariuszy-w-nich-zatrudnionych-369297424> [accessed: 30 January 2022].

<sup>9</sup> Ustawa z dnia 11 września 2003 r. o służbie wojskowej żołnierzy zawodowych, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2003, no. 179, item 1750, article 2.

laboratory in order to take psychological tests on the basis of which psychological assessment is made about the existence or absence of contraindications for performing this service. “Physical fitness is one of the basic abilities required by soldiers to perform their duties in an effective manner.”<sup>10</sup>

In the history of military affairs, we can see how important the level of soldiers’ physical fitness has been in performing obligatory tasks and how important it has been on the battlefield. During every battle or war, the army had to be physically fit to have the strength to fight the enemy for a long time. An example could be husars, who were a phenomenon on a global scale. They fought hundreds of battles and spread terror among European armies for decades. As we can see, in the old days, a lot of attention was paid to physical fitness, and it remains so now. Uniformed services professions are very responsible. They are responsible for the safety of the entire society, which is why physical fitness plays such an important role here, thanks to which the efficiency in the performed tasks increases.

## Education and pro-health prevention of polish youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Health education in schools has a long history. The first guidelines concerned teachers’ obligations to introduce health-related issues date back as early as 1787, and they were initiated by Grzegorz Piramowicz, a co-founder of the Department of National Education. However, it was not until 1982 that the first formal document of the Ministry of Education and Upbringing was issued. It defined the scope, structure, and organisation of health education in primary and secondary schools. Unfortunately, these guidelines did not significantly improve the implementation of health education in schools. In 1997, for the first time in the history of education in Poland, health education was included in general education curricula in all types of schools, and their content was specified for each stage of education. In 1999, thanks to the structural and programme reform of the system, the educational pathway of “pro-health education” was introduced into general education course of study. As a result of subsequent modifications of the core curriculum, this pathway was included in general education requirements in all types of schools in 2002.

Already in grades 1–3, the material to be taught to children included:

- “getting to know your own body;
- care for health, personal and environmental hygiene;
- similarities and differences between people, understanding and tolerance of these differences;
- food and nutrition;

---

<sup>10</sup> J. Jaroszuk, *Sprawność fizyczna i aktywność fizyczna a poczucie jakości życia żołnierzy zawodowych*, doctoral thesis draft, Poznań: AWF im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego w Poznaniu, 2019, p. 3.

- safety, including moving on public roads, recognising danger warning signals emergency signals.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition, it was advisable to organise the entire didactic and educational process in such a way that there were physical activities on each day, and they would last at least 3 hours in total.

In general secondary schools, specialised secondary schools, and technical secondary schools, the main goal was to deepen the awareness of pro-health behaviours aimed at protecting, maintaining and improving individual and public health, as well as to develop life skills conducive to physical, mental, social, and spiritual development. The intention was to raise the need to create a healthy environment and shape active and responsible attitudes towards one's own and other people's health. Therefore, the task of the school was to increase students' interest in health matters and provide them with reliable knowledge about various aspects of and factors contributing to health, the most common threats to health, and the possibilities of eliminating them. It became necessary to create an environment allowing students to practice a healthy lifestyle, strengthen their self-esteem, self-confidence, and their abilities, and provide students with support in difficult situations and in solving their health problems. Having completed their education at this stage, students know they are able to skillfully use medical and psychological help, cope with challenging situations and help others. They also know how to communicate and maintain good relationships with other people, how to function properly and work in a group, and how to deal with environmental pressure. What is more, they know the factors contributing to and threatening human health, and the basic principles of preventing the most common disorders and diseases. As a result, they will strive to protect, maintain, and improve their own and other people's health.

In a vocational school, the goals set include developing basic knowledge about health, its determinants and hazards, making students aware of their responsibility for their own and other people's health, and preventing youth problems. The school has been tasked with making students interested in health matters, and in the possibility of eliminating or reducing threats to their health. In addition, the school is to support students in practicing a healthy lifestyle and to provide them with support in difficult situations. Having learnt the material at this stage of education, students are aware that health is a value for people and a means of achieving life goals and a good quality of life. They accept responsibility for their own health and consciously seek to protect, maintain, and improve it; they skillfully recognise risky behaviours and choose those that are safe for them. Moreover, they can give first aid in life- and health-threatening situations, which is an absolutely necessary skill.

---

<sup>11</sup> Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 26 lutego 2002 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół, Dz.U. 2002, no. 51, item 458, p. 6, attachment no. 2.

In 2007, the new Minister of National Education, Katarzyna Hall, initiated work on a programme reform. As a result, a new core curriculum for general education was developed, in which the existing educational pathways, including “pro-health education”, were abandoned. It was decided that from then on, that material would be included in subjects such as biology or physical education. In the core curriculum of lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools, similarly to primary schools, the educational requirements were incorporated into other subjects. Establishing a separate area of “health education” in the core curriculum of physical education turned out to be the most important and a very good idea. This solution includes many requirements for various aspects of health and is a clear improvement on the previous changes and provisions. Moreover, it was agreed that health education classes would be compulsory and carried out within the pool of elective physical education classes. In recent years, issues related to health education have gained quite a significant importance and are still developing.

By including pro-health education in the core curriculum of physical education, an opportunity was created to gradually improve the implementation of health education of students at all stages of education. Unfortunately, a big problem in Poland today is the fact that most students avoid physical education. This problem is widely known, but frequently underestimated and neglected. Students very often make excuses not to take part in physical education. They often miss the classes or bring long-term sick leave. This causes their fitness level to decline. Sport allows you to shape your character, teaches you to overcome your weaknesses, develops perseverance, orientation, and agility. In addition, thanks to it, students’ physical condition is improved, which has a positive effect on their health. Therefore, unjustified exemptions of students from physical education classes prevent them from actively developing their physical fitness. What is more, physical education teachers lack training and materials which would prepare them and improve their knowledge necessary to conduct classes in the field of health education. All of this means that knowledge about health education is not fully passed on to students, so they do not realise the importance of physical fitness in their lives. Here we also need to address the issue of parents and doctors consciously taking part in children’s avoidance of physical activity. Additionally, “using the advances in technology, the modern man increasingly limits their physical activity to the necessary minimum, and as shown by the research to date, gradual reduction of general mobility leads to lower physical efficiency and limits the possibilities of individual development; it also reduces adaptability to constantly changing living conditions.”<sup>12</sup> Each of these elements, to a greater or lesser extent, contributes to lowering the physical fitness of our society.

---

<sup>12</sup> R. Dutkiewicz, I. Niesłuchowska, M. Dutkiewicz, *Rekreacyjna aktywność fizyczna studentów wychowania fizycznego*, [in:] *Zdrowy styl życia jako kapitał XXI wieku*, eds. A. Borcuch, M. Knefel, A. Krzysztok, Kielce: Laboratorium Wiedzy Artur Borcuch, 2019, p. 20.



To sum up, children and adolescents should be encouraged to actively participate in physical culture from an early age. It is an essential element for their smooth and healthy functioning for years to come. Much research has been done to show that physical activity can positively affect our health. Research has shown that regular exercise contributes to, e.g., reducing the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, increasing cardiac output, and improving concentration. Moreover, physical activity also has a positive effect on our well-being, e.g., helps to fight stress and makes it easier to fall asleep. It helps us feel good and enjoy life. Despite all this pro-health education, young people very often approach this matter lightly. Living as a young and able-bodied person, they push away the thought of growing old and neglect their physical sphere, remembering it only when they notice problems. Therefore, let us not neglect our physical sphere and health education, let us be a good example to our society.

## Summary

The contemporary prosperity of developed countries means that people do not lack anything; therefore, they should focus on self-fulfilment and taking care of their own health. By undertaking regular activity, you can fully develop physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. There is much to be said about the issues of physical activity and proper nutrition, but all this falls by the wayside because people focus mainly on pursuing material wealth and social status. As a result, they forget about the most important value, which is health. "If the world's population were more active, four to five million deaths each year could be avoided."<sup>13</sup> To this end, World Health Organization (WHO) has presented the 2018–2030 Physical Activity Guidelines to help you achieve good health and quality of life. Unfortunately, global estimates show that 27.5% of adults and 81% of adolescents do not comply with WHO's 2010 recommendations for physical activity, so there has been hardly any positive change in the last decade. The new WHO guidelines recommend that children and adolescents should on average have at least 60 minutes a day of moderate to high-intensity exercise, and that this should be mainly aerobic exercise. In addition, to strengthen bones and muscles, children and adolescents should perform high-intensity aerobic exercise at least 3 times a week.

Nowadays, it is very important to develop education and health promotion among young people. Teachers, especially of physical education, play an important role here, as they have a significant impact on children's and adolescents' development

---

<sup>13</sup> *Wtyczne WHO dotyczące aktywności fizycznej i siedzącego trybu życia: omówienie*, Kopenhaga: Biuro Regionalne WHO na Europę, 2021, p. 1, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/341120/WHO-EURO-2021-1204-40953-58211-pol.pdf> [accessed: 31 January 2022].

and health, and on their current and future lifestyle. The entire level of society's culture depends on teachers, their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Due to the constantly changing living conditions, different expectations are placed on physical activity and care for health. Motivation to take up physical activity is built from an early age; therefore, school education has a large impact on the type and frequency of physical activity throughout students' entire life. It is at school that children should acquire basic knowledge about their body and health. The educational system helps prepare young people to undertake physical activity later in their adult life. "Regular physical activity at any age is of great importance. The right amount of exercise shapes young organisms, allows adults to maintain an appropriate level of fitness and physical efficiency, and delays the aging process."<sup>14</sup> Thanks to proper physical activity, well-being and the quality of life, regardless of age, also improve. Moreover, physical activity is the most effective factor in preventing of lifestyle diseases. Unfortunately, activities at all levels of school education do not bring the expected results, and in recent years, the health of our society has deteriorated significantly. Due to the fact that modern society is subjected to multimedia influence at an increasingly young age, and traditional forms of education and influence are replaced by television, computer, radio, or magazines, it is with their help that we should additionally promote physical culture and a healthy and active style of life. Increasing the whole society's physical activity should be one of our most important goals.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, there are many factors contributing to a healthy lifestyle. The knowledge we acquire thanks to health education helps us pursue the right course of action. That is why children are taught in schools how to properly take care of their health and safety from an early age. This education should be constantly developed and improved in order to best present knowledge about the proper protection of their life and health to students, and to encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Thanks to this, they will become an example for society. Physical activity, healthy diet, and eliminating addictions that harm our health are other factors influencing our lifestyle. By maintaining regular physical activity, we are able to prevent the occurrence and development of diseases. This will have a beneficial effect not only on our physical but also mental fitness. Reducing fatigue and improving our well-being will make it possible for us to fully enjoy life. However, all of that depends primarily on ourselves and how we approach this topic. Today's pace of life, the constant race against the clock, and a growing number of lifestyle diseases make it more and more difficult for people to

---

<sup>14</sup> E. Sieńko-Awierianów, J. Wesołowska, „Edukacja szkolna a aktywność ruchowa”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. Ekonomiczne Problemy Usług*, no. 78, 2011, p. 301.

properly take care of their health. On the one hand, they claim that the most important value for them is health; on the other, many of them do not take care of it well enough, eat unhealthy food and lead a sedentary lifestyle. Many people do not engage in any physical activity or do any sports. As a result, the number of people not only suffering from chronic diseases, but also from obesity and lack of physical fitness is increasing. A pro-health policy and promoting a proper lifestyle play an important role here because only regular care for yourself and your health from an early age can bring positive results. We recommend that you read the WHO guidelines for physical activity and sedentary lifestyle more closely and try to follow them. For anything to change, we must take the initiative ourselves and take appropriate steps for our health.

## References

- Aktywność przez całe życie. Zdrowie i sprawność studentów pod kontrolą / Aktivita počas celého života. Zdravie a zdatnosť študentov pod kontrolou*, eds. Z. Barabaszy, E. Zadarko, Krosno: Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Krośnie, 2010.
- Choroby XXI wieku – wyzwania w pracy fizjoterapeuty*, ed. M. Podgórska, Gdańsk, Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania w Gdańsku, 2017.
- Dutkiewicz R., Niesłuchowska I., Dutkiewicz M., Rekreacyjna aktywność fizyczna studentów wychowania fizycznego, [in:] *Zdrowy styl życia jako kapitał XXI wieku*, eds. A. Borcuch, M. Knefel, A. Krzysztofek, Kielce: Laboratorium Wiedzy Artur Borcuch, 2019, pp. 19–25.
- Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world*, Geneva: World Health Organisation, 2018.
- Jaroszuk J., *Sprawność fizyczna i aktywność fizyczna a poczucie jakości życia żołnierzy zawodowych*, doctoral thesis draft, Poznań: AWF im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego w Poznaniu, 2019.
- Jaroszuk J., *Sprawność fizyczna i aktywność fizyczna w czasie wolnym a poczucie jakości życia żołnierzy zawodowych 2 Skrzydła Lotnictwa Taktycznego*, doctoral dissertation draft, Poznań: AWF im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego w Poznaniu, 2018.
- Kubusiak-Słonina A., Grzegorzczak J., Mazur A., “Ocena sprawności i aktywności fizycznej dzieci szkolnych z nadmierną i prawidłową masą ciała”, *Endokrynologia, Otyłość i Zaburzenia Przemiany Materii*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 16–23.
- Liwo M.A., *Status służb mundurowych i funkcjonariuszy w nich zatrudnionych*, Wolters Kluwer, <https://sip.lex.pl/komentarze-i-publicacje/monografie/status-sluzb-mundurowych-i-funkcjonariuszy-w-nich-zatrudnionych-369297424> [accessed: 30 January 2022].
- Michałowska D., “Edukacja prozdrowotna – podejścia, modele, metody”, *Przegląd Terapeutyczny*, no. 4, 2008, pp. 1–26.
- Osiński W., *Zarys teorii wychowania fizycznego*, Poznań: AWF, 1996.
- Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 26 lutego 2002 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół, Dz.U. 2002, no. 51, item. 458.
- Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 lutego 1999 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego, Dz.U. 1999, no. 14, item 129.
- Sienko-Awierianów E., Wesołowska J., “Edukacja szkolna a aktywność ruchowa”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego. Ekonomiczne Problemy Usług*, no. 78, 2011, pp. 301–312.

- Ustawa z dnia 11 września 2003 r. o służbie wojskowej żołnierzy zawodowych, Dz.U. 2003, no. 179, item 1750.
- “Weekend exercise alone ‘has significant health benefits’”, BBC, 10 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/health-38560616> [accessed: 30 January 2022].
- Wolny B., *Edukacja zdrowotna integralnym elementem oceny z wychowania fizycznego*, Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, 2014.
- Woynarowska B., *Edukacja zdrowotna*, WN PWN, Warszawa 2007.
- Woynarowska B., “Edukacja zdrowotna w szkole w Polsce. Zmiany w ostatnich dekadach i nowa propozycja”, *Problemy Higieny i Epidemiologii*, no. 89(4), 2008, pp. 445–452.
- Woynarowska B., Oblacińska A., “Stan zdrowia dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce. Najważniejsze problemy zdrowotne”, *Studia BAS*, no. 2(38), 2014, pp. 41–64.
- Wychowanie zdrowotne – osiągnięcia i perspektywy wdrażania do szkół. Ogólnopolska konferencja naukowa, Kraków, 14–15 czerwca 1996. Cz. 2*, eds. W. Wrona-Wolny, B. Makowska, Kraków: Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego im. Bronisława Czecha (Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego im. Bronisława Czecha w Krakowie, no. 74).
- Wytyczne WHO dotyczące aktywności fizycznej i siedzącego trybu życia: omówienie*, Kopenhaga: Biuro Regionalne WHO na Europę, 2021, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/341120/WHO-EURO-2021-1204-40953-58211-pol.pdf> [accessed: 31 January 2022].
- Zdrojewski T., Wojtyniak B., Juszczak G., Drygas W., *Quo Vadis Polskie Zdrowie? Niekorzystne zmiany w latach 2011–2020*, [in:] *Niedostateczny poziom aktywności fizycznej w Polsce jako zagrożenie i wyzwanie dla zdrowia publicznego. Raport Komitetu Zdrowia Publicznego Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, eds. W. Drygas, M. Gajewska, T. Zdrojewski, Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Zdrowia Publicznego – Państwowy Zakład Higieny, 2021, pp. 13–30.

## Pro-health education of youth and the physical fitness of the 21<sup>st</sup> century society

### Abstract

The problem of physical fitness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century society is, on the one hand, the result of the last century negligence, and on the other, a natural result of a deepening regression of pro-health education among young people. Such a situation negatively affects both the health and physical condition of society, which indirectly also affects the level of state security. Physical fitness is an indispensable condition for the effective functioning of all services in this sector, especially uniformed formations such as the armed forces, the police, and many others in their areas of responsibility. Unfortunately, it will be difficult to change the society's habits, but it is possible to develop new habits among young people by focusing on pro-health education, i.e., education and upbringing in the spirit of responsibility for their own health and physical fitness. Therefore, the main goal of this article is to show the essence of the problem of young people's pro-health education in the context of the fitness level decline in the 21<sup>st</sup> century society, and how these issues can be discussed in the face of contemporary threats. The paper also includes references to the issue of education and health promotion strategy among young people in order to identify the causes of the decline in society's fitness level. The issues addressed were studied using theoretical research methods, i.e., analysis, synthesis, abstraction, explanation, generalisation, and inference.

Key words: education, health, physical fitness, youth, society