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*Ways of spending leisure time by the third year-students
of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University of Lublin*

The paper analyses the ways of spending leisure time by a selected group of Lublin Medical University students, including time for studying and the most frequent forms of leisure activities of the third-year pharmacy students with respect to gender as well as their involvement in cultural life.

On the basis of literature dealing with leisure time activities it can be assumed that it is this part of time free from work which man has at its disposal to be used for rest, entertainment, developing his personality, professional qualifications and social work (1). However, free time is not always used in an effective way (8). In case of students the main factor determining the amount of free time is a strain of studying (7). The weekly rhythm of their work influences the ways of spending it, too (5).

This work aims at defining the amount of free time the third year pharmacy students of the Medical University in Lublin have at their disposal, as well as evaluating the choice of leisure time activities and defining the factors determining this choice.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was carried out on the basis of a group consisting of 114 intramural pharmacy students of the third year, including 82 women (72%) and 32 men (28%). The choice of the group was conditioned by the adaptation of the surveyed to new conditions of student's life, both with respect to the city and the academy, for the first year students spend a lot of time adapting to a new environment, whereas more advanced students are additionally busy with writing their MA theses. The research was carried in April 2000 during non-exam period.

The material was obtained from a survey of 12 problem questions and 6 additional questions (on age, gender, marital status, social background, permanent address and temporary address). The questions were close, which eliminated the ambiguous interpretation of answers and allowed fast collection of material. Statistic calculation was carried using Chi² independence test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information obtained from the Pharmacy Faculty Offices said that the third-year students had 31.5 hours (units) of academic work a week. As the schedule differed for respective groups of students an average time used for studies was calculated for 6.3 units a day, that is 4 hours 45 minutes. Hence, the surveyed had at their disposal 19 h 15 min of free time during five days of the week and 24 hours during weekends, an average of 21 hours a day for the whole week.

The analysis of answers demonstrated that students devoted the smallest amount of their time for studying at the beginning of the week, that is on Monday (3.9 h on average) and the biggest amount of time on Tuesday (6.1 h). Hence, it can be stated that the schedule prepared by the academy for respective days of the week followed the suggestions of specialists, according to whom the smallest amount of work should be planned after a weekend break, the most intense in the middle of the week, and on Friday it should be small again as students get tired with work (7).

It was noticed that the amount of time spent at the academy varied with respect to gender of the surveyed (Fig. 1). Female students spent more time at the academy than male students every day (total of 3 h 55 min). On Friday the difference was the biggest and amounted to 1 h and 35 min. ($p < 0.01$). Every day male students had more free time in comparison with their female friends of the same year as probably they resigned from

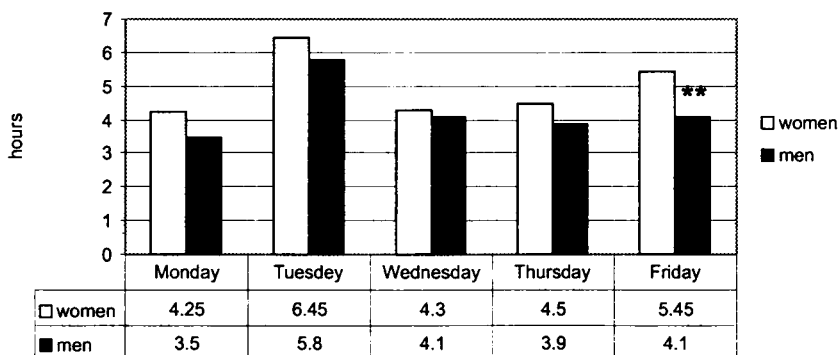


Fig. 1. The comparison of the amount of time devoted to school activity by students: women and men (** $p < 0.01$)

lectures which were not obligatory and the knowledge required for exams was acquired by them from books and classes.

In spite of differences in relation to the amount of free time, the ways of spending it by the surveyed, both women and men, were similar and differences referred only to the amount of time devoted to respective activities (Fig. 2). The third year pharmacy students devoted the biggest portion of their free time for sleep, on average 6.8 hours a day, women slept almost an hour longer ($p < 0.001$). Their care for a proper amount of sleep is

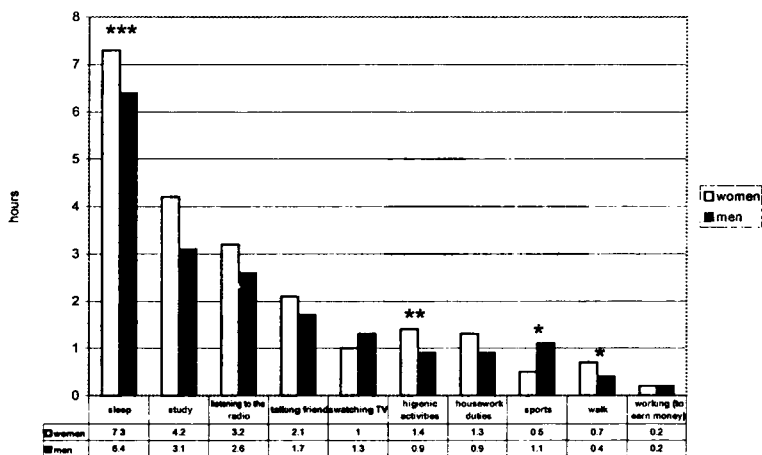


Fig. 2. The comparison of leisure time spent by students (in mean values in hours) on various activities during the 24 hour period

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

understandable, considering the fact that it is a fundamental and most natural form of rest for the whole body (4, 5). Besides, sleep can be a passive form of dealing with stress (5).

The majority of students consider systematic studies necessary to achieve the desired results (7). This particularly refers to the pharmacy students who have to learn a lot of material within a short period of time. It is probably the reason why 94.7% of the surveyed students declared that they study every day, 96.3% women and 90.6% men. On average they spent 3.6 h a day studying (women 4.2 h, men 3.1 h).

A popular way of spending leisure time by the surveyed was listening to the radio, on average 2.9 h a day. 81.5% of the surveyed listened to the radio, with a clear dominance of women (89%) over men (75%), who devoted much less time to it. The popularity of radio resulted probably from the fact that it is easily available and that you can do other things at the same time, without any interference as listening engages only one of our senses. The survey of 1988 at Medical University of Lublin showed that listening to the radio was an equally popular way of spending leisure time, just like twelve years later (2).

Less popular was television, watched by students on average 1.2 h a day (men watched TV a little longer). In spite of an easy access to TV in Medical University dormitories only 63.2% students watched television every day.

Meeting friends was very popular. 95.6% of the surveyed spent on average 1.9 h on it. It apparently resulted from the fact that everybody needs contacts with other people, and in many cases talking with friends is a perfect way of fighting stress, relieving tension and getting comfort having gone through everyday problems (5).

Nearly all surveyed students (96.5%) devoted some of their free time (on average 1.1 h) to everyday housework. The majority of them (75%) did not live with their families, therefore they had to cook, tidy their rooms, wash their clothes, do shopping etc. More women did their domestic chores (99%) than men (90.6%), the difference being statistically essential ($p < 0.05$).

It is a well known fact that living in a healthy way prevents sickness, makes one fit and feel good (6). 99% of pharmacy students spent on average 1.1 h every day on looking after their bodies, women devoting more time to it ($p < 0.01$).

Walking turned out to be rather unpopular form of leisure activity in spite of its significance in overcoming stress and weariness. A very high percentage of students (35.1%) denied walking, men (53%) and women (28%), the difference being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The difference between men and women in relation to the amount of time devoted to walking was equally essential ($p < 0.05$). Apparently students did not realize that walking is a very good form of relax (3). Sport as an active form of leisure activity was not very popular either, for only 57% of the surveyed did any sports. On average they spent 0.8 h a day on it, and gender was a statistically differentiating factor here ($p < 0.05$).

With respect to jobs it turned out that during an academic year students took them up very rarely (6.1% women, 6.2% men), which could be a result of the problems connected with the reconciliation of studies with a possible job, weariness caused by studies or the lack of motivation to earn money (all kinds of scholarships). A number of female students working during summer increased from 6.1% to 34.5% ($p < 0.001$), a number of male students increased from 6.2% to 59.4% ($p < 0.001$, Fig. 3).

It is very important for man's development to participate in cultural life, that is going to the theatre, cinema, opera, museum, concerts, exhibitions as well as taking part in social life. Cinema turned out to be the most popular form of entertainment, particularly enjoyed after work. Presumably cinema was popular as access to it is easy, and in comparison with theatre or opera it is relatively cheap, which is of a considerable significance for the surveyed. The largest group of the students went to the cinema at least once a month (61.2%), whereas only 6.1% did not go to the cinema at all. With respect to gender, it turned out that almost half the male pharmacy students (46.8%) and 2/3 female students (68%) went to the cinema at least once a month (a statistically significant difference, $p < 0.05$).

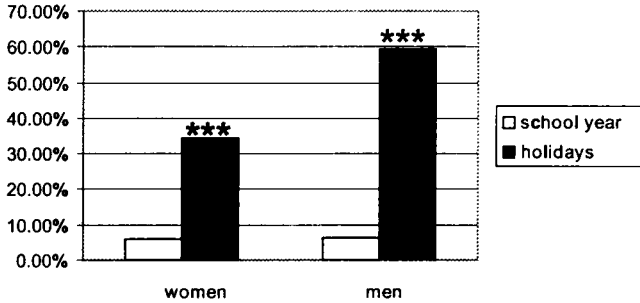


Fig. 3. Comparison of working students during school year and holidays

*** $p < 0,001$

Theatre, opera, concerts and exhibitions were not a very popular form of leisure activity, as up to 43% of the surveyed students did not go there at all. Both men and women practiced this form of spending free time usually once a year (27% of women and 21.8% of men).

To a considerable extent the way of spending leisure time by the surveyed depended on the specific circumstances of student's life, including the weekly rhythm of work characterized by an uneven balance of lectures and classes. Hence, a skill of planning free time allowing the most efficient use of it is extremely vital. 69% of the surveyed planned their leisure time activities, but only 28% considered their academic schedule advantageous for planning and using it – more men than women were of this opinion ($p < 0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Female students of the Faculty of Pharmacy are more dutiful than male students as regards their attendance of lectures and classes. As a result, the amount of leisure time for women was smaller than for men.

2. The most popular form of spending leisure time irrespective of gender are: sleep, learning, listening to the radio, talking with friends, watching television, hygiene, domestic chores. Less popular were active forms like walking and sports.

3. Female students devoted more time to almost all leisure activities apart from sport and watching TV.

4. The participation in cultural life of the third-year pharmacy students was limited to meeting friends and going to the cinema, whereas going to the theatre, opera, concerts and exhibitions were not particularly popular forms of spending leisure time.

5. During holiday, which should be used for rest after the whole year of studying, a number of students taking up jobs increased considerably.

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2001.10.10

SUMMARY

The aim of the study was the assessment of leisure time among third-year students from the Faculty of Pharmacy of the Medical University of Lublin. It analysed quantity of time devoted to school activity and ways of spending free time. The study involved 114 students (82 women and 32 men). The study revealed that women had less free time than men, who, most probably did not attend some lectures. The most popular activities among the questioned students were: sleeping (average 6.8 hours a day), studying (average 3.6 hours a day), listening to the radio (average 2.9 hours a day), talking with friends (average 1.9 hours a day), personal hygiene (average 1.1 hours a day), watching TV (average 1.1 hours a day), housework. Students devoted the least of their free time on active rest, for example walking (women did it more often than men) or practising sport (more popular among men). Cultural life of the students consisted only of meetings with friends and going to the cinema (women did it more often). The least popular way of spending free time was going to the theatre, opera, concerts and exhibitions. Few stu-

dents spent their time working. Their number increased significantly during holidays. The way of spending free time by third-year students from the Faculty of Pharmacy (both men and women) during the day was similar, differences related only to the amount of time devoted to each activity.

Sposoby spędzania czasu wolnego przez studentów III roku Wydziału Farmacji Akademii Medycznej w Lublinie

Celem pracy była ocena wypoczynku studentów III roku Wydziału Farmacji Akademii Medycznej w Lublinie. Przeanalizowano m. in. ilość czasu przeznaczanego na zajęcia na uczelni oraz najczęstsze formy spędzania czasu wolnego w zależności od płci. Badaniami przeprowadzonymi za pomocą ankiety objęto 114 studentów (82 kobiety i 32 mężczyzn). W pracy wykazano, że kobiety okazały się bardziej pracowite i obowiązkowe niż mężczyźni, ponieważ więcej czasu poświęcały na zajęcia na uczelni, stąd dysponowały mniejszą ilością czasu wolnego. Stwierdzono, że najbardziej popularnymi czynnościami wykonywanymi w czasie wolnym były: sen, na który ankietowani poświęcali średnio 6,8 godz. dziennie, nauka (średnio 3,6 godz.), słuchanie radia (2,9 godz.), rozmowy z koleżankami, kolegami (1,9 godz.), czynności higieniczne (1,1 godz.), na którą to czynność kobiety poświęcały więcej czasu niż mężczyźni; oglądanie telewizji (1,1 godz.) oraz obowiązki domowe (1,1 godz.). Najmniej czasu wolnego studenci poświęcali na spacer (kobiety nieco więcej niż mężczyźni) oraz na sport, który był bardziej popularny wśród mężczyzn. Udział studentów w życiu kulturalnym ograniczał się jedynie do spotkań towarzyskich oraz wyjść do kin, natomiast niezbyt popularną formą spędzania czasu wolnego było uczestnictwo w przedstawieniach teatralnych, widowiskach operowych, koncertach i wystawach. W czasie wakacji, które powinny być przeznaczone na wypoczynek, istotnie wzrastała liczba studentów podejmujących pracę zarobkową. Zauważono, że sposób spędzania czasu wolnego przez studentów III roku Wydziału Farmacji Akademii Medycznej w Lublinie, zarówno kobiet, jak i mężczyzn, w ciągu dnia był bardzo podobny, różnice dotyczyły tylko wymiaru czasu poświęcanego na poszczególne czynności.