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Burdensome factors occurring at school according to students

School, regarded as an educational institution, is the environment in which students spend many hours a day. Many various factors affect a student at school. These factors may be both positive and negative (2, 4). School environment as a whole or as its individual components may influence the rise or the increase of existing defects and developmental disturbances (3).

Troublesome factors, to which students are exposed, may be divided into two groups. The first group is related to the physiochemical environment, for example the distance from and to school, the condition of sanitary rooms, inappropriate microclimate of classrooms, excessive noise, and bad organisation of the student's work place. The second group are the factors which result from the child's way of living and working in the school environment (6) such as: stressful situations, disturbance in psychosocial conditions that is caused by improper interpersonal relations both between students and students and teachers as well as bad organisation of the teaching process.

The aim of the work was to find out about the school environment and burdensome factors that occur at school according to students.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted at Primary School no. 23 in Tarnów. 244 students were examined, including 135 students of the 8th form and 109 students of the 4th form. In the examined group boys constituted 55.3% whereas girls 44.7%. The research method was a questionnaire and an individual conversation. The research was anonymous and voluntary.

RESULTS

As far as the hygienic condition of school is considered, there are considerable shortcomings of the sanitary rooms. For 57% of the students the condition of school toilets is bad. As a result, 52% of the children avoid using them. An additional troublesome factor in that school is smoking in toilets by older students. 86% of all the examined students do not use the showers after physical education classes.

Only 21% of the students claim that getting to school causes difficulties for them. As much as 82% of the questioned students get to school within 15 min. The situation results from a good location of the school, which is in the centre of a big residential area. However, according to Gajewska (1) 37% of the students go to school by different means of transport.

105 students (45%) answered that the noise during breaks disturbs them. It is worth noticing that only such a small number of the students claim that the noise disturbs them. In Helbin's (2) research the noise measured during breaks considerably exceeded acceptable standards.

Another difficulty is the necessity of moving from one classroom to another. 58% of the students consider changing of classrooms to be bad. 91% of the questioned students do not spend breaks outdoors regardless of the weather and a season of the year. In 40% the reason are short breaks, in 15% – lack of a suitable recreational area and in 29% – teachers' restrictions. Teachers justify their restrictions claiming that they care about cleanness of the school area. Besides, they want to limit the number of contacts with drug dealers outside the school.

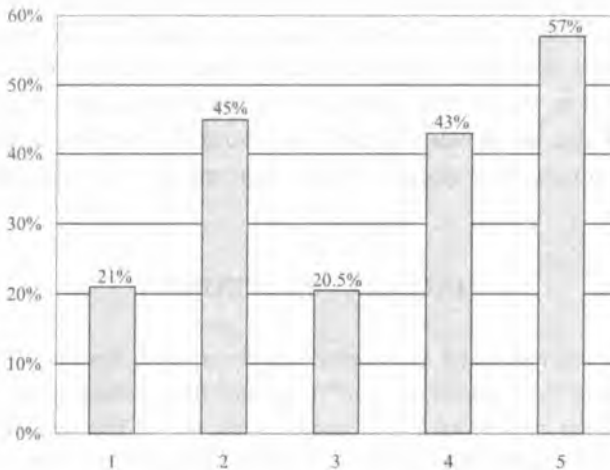


Fig. 1. Physic burdensome factors occurring at school according to the students; 1 – difficulties with getting to school, 2 – noise, 3 – unsuitable microclimate of classrooms, 4 – unsuitable furniture, 5 – bad condition of school toilets

As far as the microclimate of classrooms is concerned, two factors were taken into account: the temperature and how the rooms were aired. 20.5% of the children claimed that the conditions in classrooms were unsuitable. Another troublesome factor was school furniture that was not adapted to students' needs. 43% of the children considered desks and chairs to be uncomfortable and unsuitable to students' height. (Fig. 1) The research of many authors is in accordance with the results of our research. (1, 5, 7) According to Gajewska, 41.5% of the examined students claim that the furniture is not well adjusted to their height.

Analysing a weekly timetable, it was stated that according to 41% of students' the timetable was unfavourable and unequal. For the same group of children (41%) the timetable is good or rather good. 18% of the students have no opinion. There were two factors that influenced the negative assessment of the timetable. The first was the combination of the most difficult subjects during one day. The second one was starting the school day with the most difficult subject. Among the examined children, 57% do not participate in extra curriculum classes. 70% of the examined children perceive school as the source of stress. The students point out that the reason for such a situation are too demanding teachers. Analysing the feeling of safety at school, it was stated that 52% of the children feel threatened by their classmates' behaviour. 36% of the examined students consider their relationships with teachers to be bad (Fig. 2)

On the basis of the analysis of the results, the necessity of restriction of both physical and psychosocial burden of the students is emphasised. What seems to be especially crucial is ergonomic school furniture, decrease in noise, improvement of

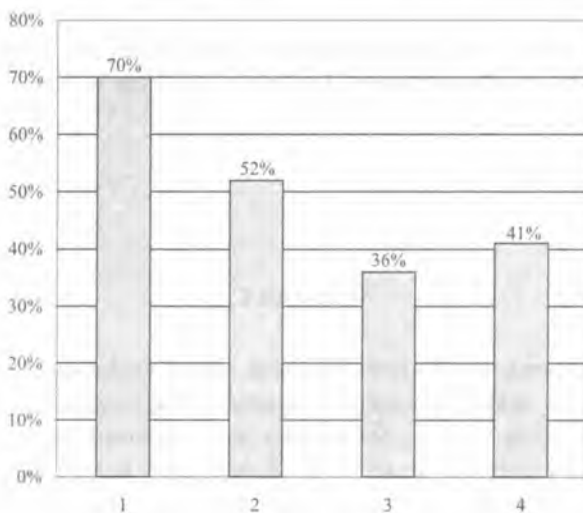


Fig. 2. Psychosocial burdensome factors occurring at school according to the students; 1 – school as the source of stress, 2 – bad student-student relationships, 3 – bad students-teachers relationships, 4 – bad weekly timetable

hygienic condition of toilets, rational school timetable, and elimination of dangers resulting from other students' behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In students' opinion school is a source of many dangers that badly affect both physical and psychological health.

2. The number of factors that may have negative influence on students' health should be limited.

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SUMMARY

The aim of the work was to find out about school environment and burdensome factors that occur at school according to students. The research was conducted at Primary School no. 23 in Tarnów. 244 students were examined, including 135 students of 8th form and 109 students of 4th form. Troublesome factors, which students are exposed to, may be divided into two groups. The first group is related to physiochemical environment, the second group are the factors which result from a child's way of living and working in the school environment. On the basis of the analysis of the results, the necessity of restriction of both physical and psychosocial burden of stu-

dents is emphasised. What seems to be especially crucial is ergonomic school furniture, diminishing of noise, improvement of hygienic condition of toilets, rational school timetable, and elimination of dangers resulting from other students' behaviour.

Czynniki uciążliwe w szkole w opinii uczniów

Celem pracy było poznanie opinii uczniów na temat środowiska szkolnego i występujących w nim czynników uciążliwych. Badania przeprowadzone zostały w Szkole Podstawowej nr 23 w Tarnowie. Przebadano 244 uczniów, z czego 135 z klas ósmych, a 109 z klas czwartych. Czynniki uciążliwe, na które narażeni są uczniowie, można podzielić na dwie grupy. Pierwsza grupa związana jest ze środowiskiem fizykochemicznym, drugą grupę stanowią czynniki wynikające ze specyfiki życia i pracy dziecka w warunkach szkolnych. Na podstawie analizy wyników podkreśla się konieczność ograniczenia zarówno fizycznych, jak i psychospołecznych obciążeń ucznia. Szczególnie ważne wydają się: ergonomiczny dobór mebli szkolnych, ograniczenie hałasu, poprawa stanu higienicznego toalet, racjonalny rozkład zajęć szkolnych i eliminacja zagrożeń wynikających z zachowania innych uczniów.