

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS DISENGAGED IN SPORTS AT KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Research background and hypothesis. Students' lifestyle and daily routines change at the moment of entering higher education institutions, their load for mental activity increases, whereas physical activity decreases. It becomes complicated to maintain proper health, necessary levels of physical development, fitness and functional potential (Daledo et al., 2008). The analysis of previously conducted research on physical activity of students at Lithuanian universities showed that motivation to individually engage in sports and be physically active has dropped. Around 40.0% of university students have no stimulus for physical self-improvement and almost do not spend time for exercising (Poteliūnienė et al., 2005). The attitudes of the majority of students towards physical activity are negative – about 92.0% of females and 91.0% of males claim that they do not approve of compulsory physical activities and slightly more than half of females (51.0%) and a lower percentage of males (44.0%) expressed doubt in relation to their intent of being physically active throughout an entire period of studying (Daledo et al., 2008). There is still a gap in research analysing such situation among students of Klaipėda University. There were also no studies found which would analyse the attitudes towards physical activity expressed by students of Klaipėda University. *Hypothesis:* Klaipėda university female students engage in sports less frequently compared to male students.

Research aim was to reveal the attitudes towards physical activity of students disengaged in sport at Klaipėda University.

Research methods. Quantitative research was conducted using the method of questionnaire survey in October of 2011. A probability random sample was comprised of 203 (104 males and 99 females) first year full-time students, disengaged in sports, aged 19–21 years.

Research results show that 70.9% of females and 49.0% of males lack knowledge about physical activity. One third of academic youth do not dedicate a decent share of time for their physical self-improvement, and less than one fifth of students are completely disengaged in sports activities; 30.7% of males and 30.7% of females name a lack of informal physical education clubs which would be free of charge as the main reason for their disengagement in sport-related activities. Supposedly this is the reason why more than two thirds of men and women are absolutely willing to refuse compulsory exercising.

Discussion and conclusions. The results of the conducted research allow concluding that the attitudes towards physical activity expressed by the majority of Klaipėda University students are poor. It has been revealed that the academic community neglects proper development of students' attitudes towards physical activity by deciding to deprive students of sufficient information. Therefore, the results highlighted a lack of such knowledge among students. Drawing on the conducted research results we suggest that application of methodological research materials will create better conditions to develop physical activity and especially physical self-improvement of Klaipėda university students providing more subject-related and methodological knowledge.

Keywords: physical activity, attitude, physical self-improvement.

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO (2010), the Council of Europe and the European Community, the future of the new Europe is a growing

and a maturing person who should be guaranteed a possibility to grow healthy, seek education, develop healthy skills and a sense of responsibility,

which is relevant to Lithuania as well. Such idea is substantiated by the educational institutions of the Republic of Lithuania, one of the tasks of which is to promote spiritual and physical potential of a person, to lay firm foundations of morality and healthy lifestyle, to develop motivation to engage in sports and individual exercising throughout the entire life.

The benefits of sports and physical activity for a young person, their health, development of physical skills are unquestionable. Research literature has proved a positive effect of physical activity on health (Kardelis et al., 2001; Adaškevičienė, 2004). Physical activity is essential not only for the normal growth and cognitive development of a person, which is a very important criterion of physical state and a health, but also for the maturity of the body functional systems, prevention of health issues, development of physical potential, and it can assist in avoiding coronary and vein-related diseases, diabetes, obesity and a tendency for depression (Dencker et al., 2006; Dregval, 2008; Kardelienė, 2009; Trinkūnienė, Emeljanovas, 2009, and others). It was observed that a physically active person was characterised by higher self-esteem, positive health-related behaviour and proper nutrition, absence of addictions and harmful habits (Zaborskis et al., 2005). However, direct and indirect evidence confirming the decrease in physical activity of youth is increasing (Anderssen et al., 2005; Hallal et al., 2006). Motivation of around 40.0% of university students to engage in sport related activities and exercising daily has dropped down (Poteliūnienė et al., 2003, 2005). Attitudes towards vigorous physical activity of the majority students are negative – about 92.0% of females and 91.0% of males do not approve of compulsory physical activities and slightly more than half of females (51.0%) and 44.0% of males express a doubt in relation to their intention of being physically active throughout the entire period of studying (Dadelo et al., 2008).

The aim of the research was to reveal attitudes towards physical activity of Klaipėda University students disengaged in sports.

Research hypothesis – Klaipėda university female students engage in sports less frequently compared to male students.

RESEARCH METHODS

A total number of 203 (females (n = 99) and males (n = 104)) full-time Klaipėda university

students disengaged in sports, aged 19–21 years, having entered the University in 2011 and studying at 7 faculties (Pedagogy, Social Sciences, Marine Engineering, Art, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Maritime institute, Humanities) participated in the research. The research participants were selected using the random sampling method. The research employed a method of a written questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of 17 multiple choice questions. The majority of questions were closed, i. e. only one answer was possible from the choices provided. The procedures of the questionnaire survey complied with the principles of anonymity and students' consent to participate in the research. The research was conducted at the beginning of compulsory physical education classes.

Data analysis. The obtained research results were processed using *Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS 17.0*. For the interpretation of the reliability level of the obtained statistical data, a Chi-square (χ^2) test was applied (to test hypotheses of non-parametric criteria in respect to distribution of variables in the population, i. e. to verify if the difference between empirical and theoretical distributions is significant according to Pearson's formula), while differences of responses for females and males were rated using Mann-Whitney U test (significance of differences between two independent samples based on rank choices of responses).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Results of the quantitative research revealed that more than half of females (57.6%) and males (56.7%) attended physical education classes at the university because of compulsory attendance. Only a low number of female research participants (22.2%) attended the class with the intention to improve the shape, whereas 21.2% of males claimed they cared to improve their physical potential (Figure 1).

After the analysis of the time spent for individual exercising and sports throughout a week it was established that the majority, i. e. almost one third (28.6% of females and 25.2% of males) of academic youth dedicated only 1–2 hours per week for physical self-improvement, and almost 15.0%, i. e. 7.1% of females and 7.8% of males, were completely disengaged in sports and exercising. Using the non-parametric test of Chi-square (χ^2) it was identified that males more often than females

engaged in sports and exercising for 5-6 hours and more males and females often engaged in individual sports for 7 hours per week ($\chi^2 = 7.353$; $p = 0.007$) (Figure 2).

Analysing the causes which determine reluctance to engage in individual sports and exercising, it was identified that a similar number of males (30.7%) and females (31.1%) named a lack of free informal physical education clubs as the principal reason for the disengagement in sports. The remaining number of females (26.2%) mentioned being lazy to engage in sports and 27.7% of males claimed having insufficient amount of time to engage in independent sport-related activities (Figure 3). There were no statistically significant differences identified in respect to gender to the question provided.

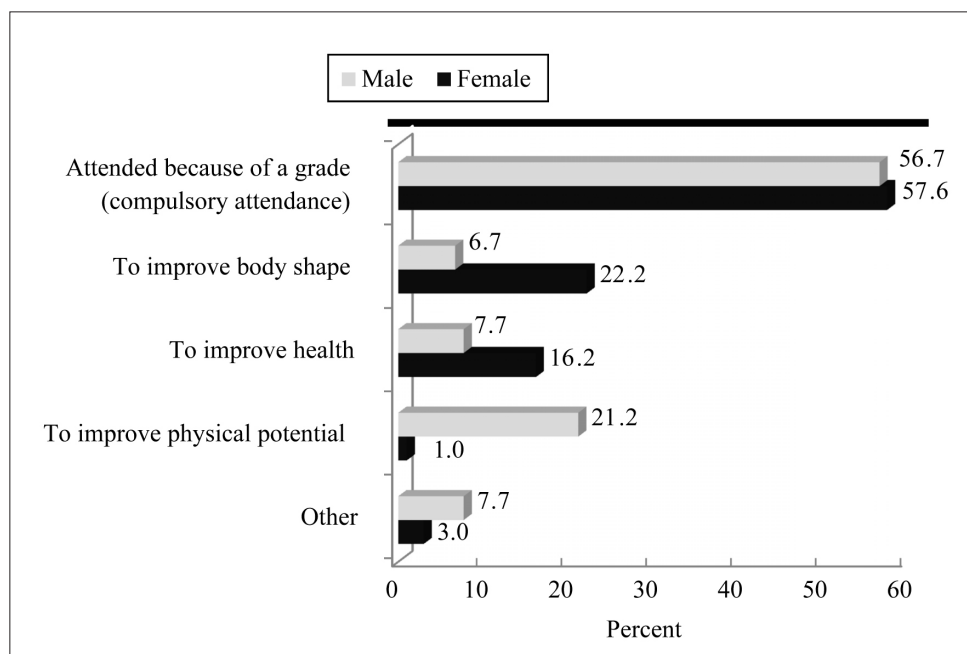
It was revealed that significantly more than two thirds (79.8% of females and 65.4% of males) of respondents claimed willing to have no compulsory physical education classes and expressed their wish to choose sport-related activities on voluntary basis, and only a minority of students would approve of the compulsory physical education classes – 12.1% of females and twice as many males – 25.9%, which conditioned a statistically significant difference between the genders – it is possible to presume that men are willing to engage in sports more

often compared to women ($\chi^2 = 6.527$; $p = 0.040$) (Figure 4).

Knowledge, skills, competencies and motivation are an integral part of positive and targeted physical activity. There is no doubt that properly delivered knowledge allows shaping positive attitudes towards physical activity, i. e. it can motivate young adults to engage in sports more actively and be more physically active. Obtained research data revealed that a greater majority of females (70.9%) compared to males (49.0%) did not have adequate information in relation to physical activity ($\chi^2 = 12.007$; $p = 0.001$), and only a minority of students claimed having sufficient amount of information (6.1% of males and 2.9% of females) (Figure 5).

It was identified that the academic community neglected a proper formation of students' attitudes towards physical activity by deciding to deprive students of sufficient amount of information. Only 16.5% of males and 15.2% of females believed that information about physical activity was provided by the academic staff, even though the majority, i. e. almost one third of males and females, most of the time received information from mass media (Figure 6). There were no statistically significant differences identified in respect to gender to the question provided.

Figure 1. Main reasons for attending physical education classes at the university



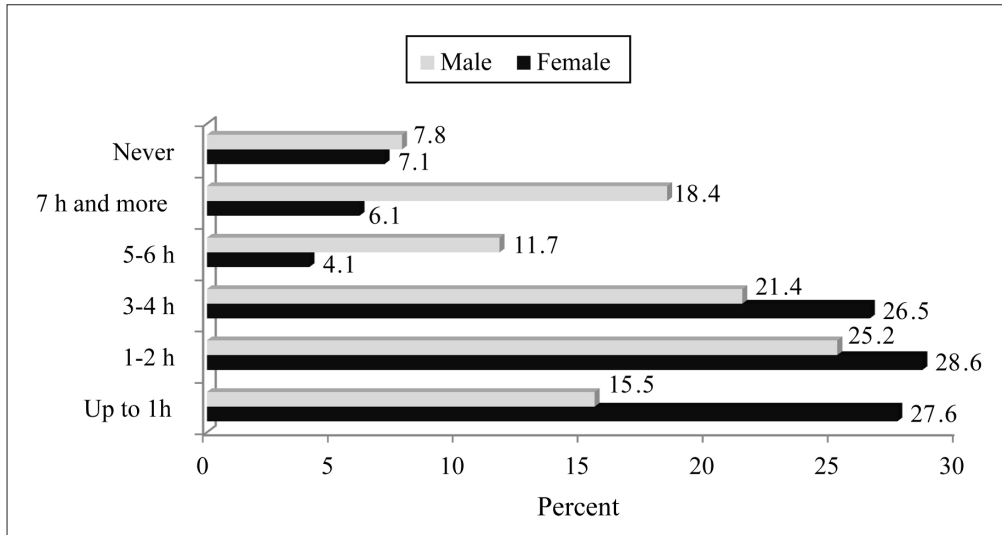


Figure 2. Time (hours per week) spent by students for individual exercising and playing sports

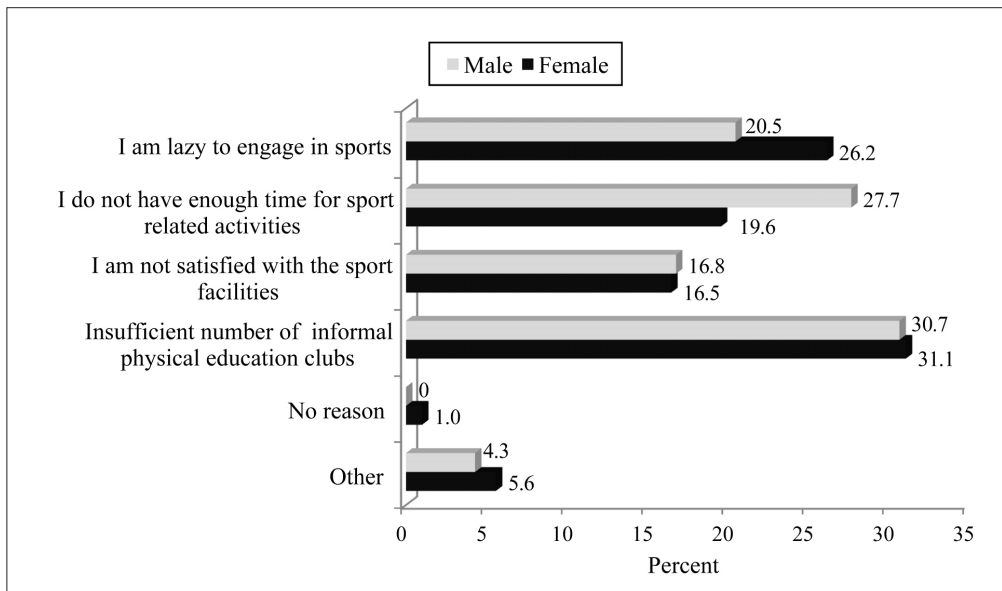


Figure 3. Main reasons for student inactivity

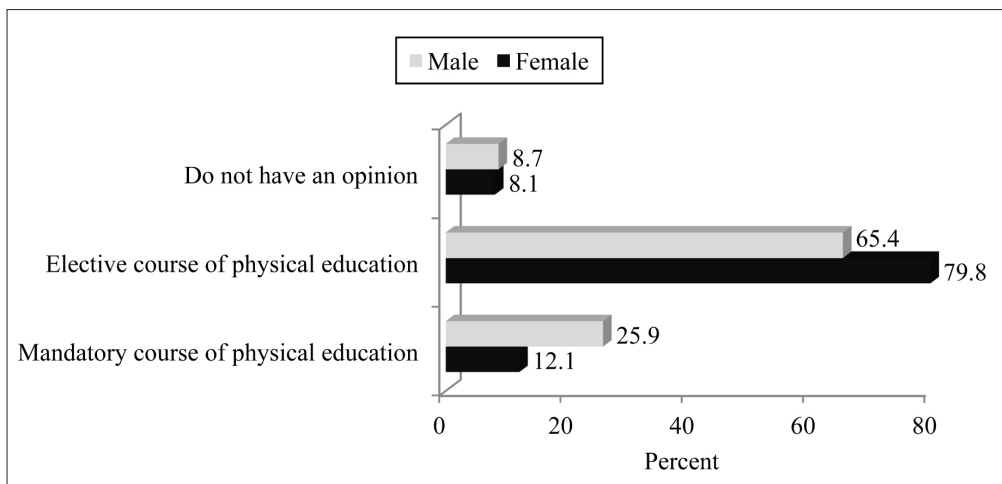


Figure 4. Students' opinions related to the status of physical education classes

Figure 5. Students' knowledge about physical activity

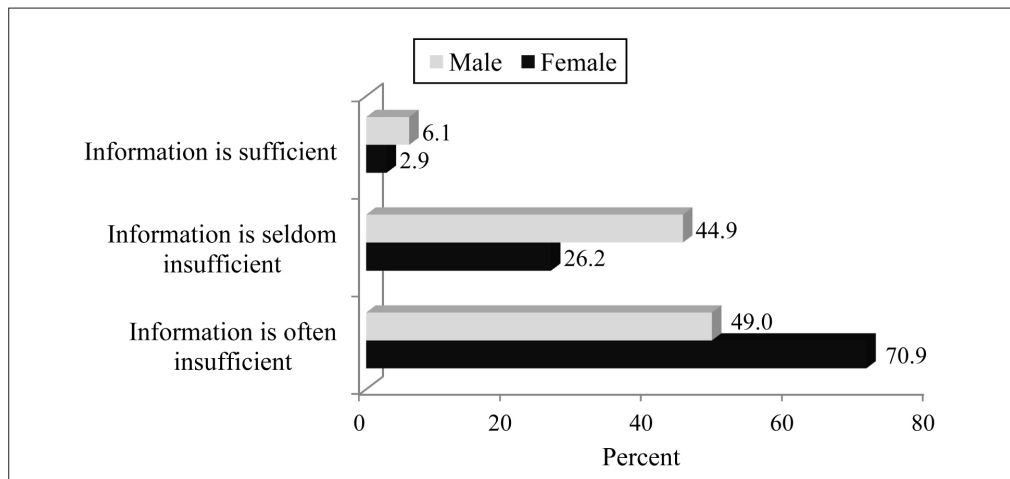
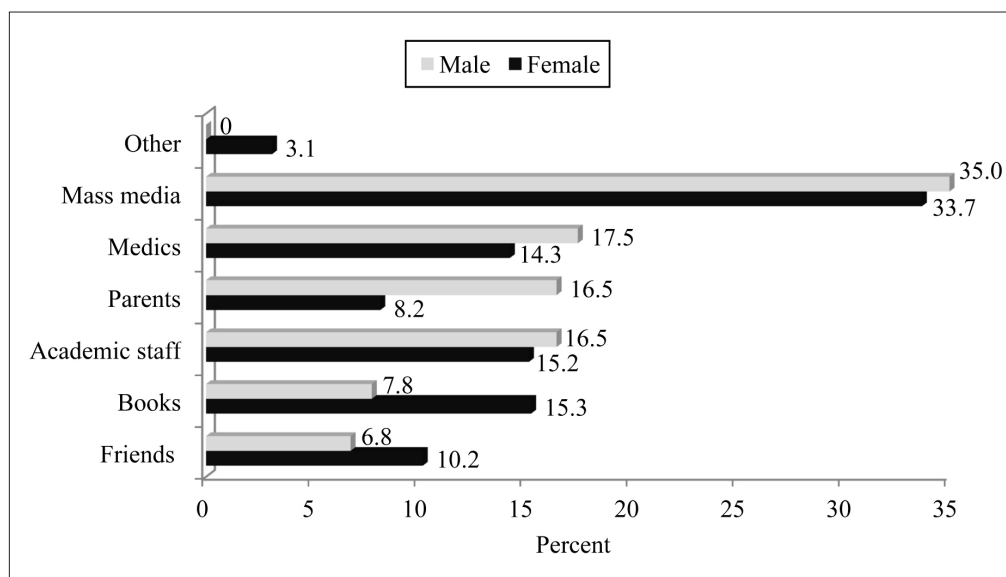


Figure 6. Sources of information providing knowledge about physical activity to students



DISCUSSION

Scientific research confirms that sport-related activities greatly influence not only the improvement of physical health (Grinienė, 2006), but also the development of psychosocial health (Nieman, 2002; Vainienė, Kardelis, 2008), therefore, the significance of the increase in physical activity at universities does not decline; however, attitudes of academic youth towards sport-related activities become less motivated, which means that attitudes of students towards active physical engagement is poor (Proškuvienė et al., 1999; Poteliūnienė, 2005; Dadelo et al., 2008). In their research S. Dadelo et al. (2008) have concluded that almost half of men and slightly more than half of women were not sure whether they were willing to be physically active

throughout the entire period of their studies. A similar situation was observed among students of Klaipėda University. It was observed that about one third of students (males and females) spent insufficient number of hours for physical self-improvement, whereas less than one fifth were completely disengaged in sports and exercising, even though WHO (2010) issued recommendations to young adults to daily attend sport-related activities of an average intensity for no less than 60 minutes. Results reveal that students involved in the research mentioned a lack of informal physical education clubs, lack of determination and free time as the principal reasons for their inactivity. Possibly these are the reasons why significantly more than

two thirds of Klaipėda university students (males and females) completely disapprove of compulsory physical education classes. A similar situation was observed among students of other universities. The vast majority (92.0% of females and 91.0% of males) of students at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University also expressed their wish of having physical education courses as electives, which reveals a tendentious increase in physical inactivity among students.

Even though it is believed that academic community is interested in motivating the development of students' spiritual and physical potential, research revealed that very little was done in teaching students to exercise individually by providing theoretical knowledge and developing special skills. Such knowledge should assist in comprehending educational, activating and health enhancing functions of a sport (Blauzdys, Vilkas, 2007). Results revealed that only a very small percentage of academics provided information about physical activity, therefore a majority of students, i. e. almost one third of males and females, receive the necessary information from the mass media most of the time.

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Even 70.9% of females and 49.0% of males expressed a lack of information related to physical activity. One third of academic youth spend insufficient number of hours for physical self-improvement, whereas less than one fifth of students are completely inactive. The main reason conditioning students' disengagement is a lack of informal physical education clubs, lack of willpower and free time. It is likely that due to such reasons, significantly more than two thirds of males and females completely disapprove of compulsory physical education classes. It has been revealed that academic community neglects proper development of students' attitudes towards physical activity by not giving students sufficient information. Drawing on the obtained results of the conducted research and applying methodological research materials would create better conditions to develop physical activity and especially physical self-improvement for Klaipėda university students, ensuring more subject related and methodological knowledge.

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KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETO NESPORTUOJANČIŲ STUDENTŲ POŽIŪRIS Į FIZINĮ AKTYVUMĄ

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Klaipėdos universitetas, Klaipėda, Lietuva

SANTRAUKA

Tyrimo pagrindimas ir hipotezė. Studentams įstojus į aukštąsias mokyklas, pasikeičia jų gyvenimo būdas, dienvakė, didėja protinės veiklos krūvis, sumažėja judamoji veikla. Išlaikyti gerą sveikatos lygį, reikiama fizinį išsivystymą, parengtumą ir funkcinį pajėgumą darosi sudėtinga (Daledo ir kt., 2008). Tyrimais įrodyta, kad Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų studentų motyvacija sportuoti, savarankiškai mankštintis sumažėjo. Apie 40,0% aukštųjų mokyklų studentų neturi pagrindo fizinei saviugdai ir fiziniams pratimams beveik neskiria laiko (Poteliūnienė ir kt., 2005). Daugumos studentų požiūris į aktyvią fizinę veiklą neigiamas – apie 92,0% merginų ir 91,0% vaikinių nenori privalomų sportinės veiklos pratybų ir daugiau nei pusė merginų (51,0%) bei šiek tiek mažiau vaikinių (44,0%) abejoja, ar nori būti fiziškai aktyvūs visą studijų laikotarpį (Dadelo, Tamošauskas, 2008). Kyla klausimas, kokia gi situacija tarp Klaipėdos universiteto studentų? Ji nėra atskleista. Neaptikta ir Klaipėdos universiteto studentų požiūrio į fizinį aktyvumą tyrimų. *Hipotezė* – Klaipėdos universiteto merginos sportuoja mažiau nei vaikinai.

Tikslas – išsiaiškinti Klaipėdos universiteto nesportuojančių studentų požiūrį į fizinį aktyvumą.

Metodai. Kiekybinio tyrimo metu pasitelkiant anketinės apklausos metodą atlikta apklausa, kuri vyko 2011 metų spalio mėnesį. Tyrimo tikimybinę atsitiktinę imtį sudarė 203 (104 vaikinai ir 99 merginos) I kurso nuolatinišė studijose besimokantys nesportuojantys studentai, kurių daugumos amžius (97,5%) 19–21 m.

Rezultatai. 70,9% merginų ir 49,0% vaikinių trūksta žinių apie fizinį aktyvumą. Trečdalis akademinio jaunimo fizinei saviugdai skiria nepakankamai laiko, o mažiau nei penktadalis visiškai nesimankština ir nesportuoja. 30,7% vaikinių ir 30,7% merginų pagrindine nespirtavimo priežastimi laiko nemokamų neformaliojo fizinio ugdymo būrelių trūkumą. Gal dėl to gerokai daugiau nei du trečdaliai vaikinių ir merginų visiškai nenori privalomų kūno kultūros pratybų.

Aptarimas ir išvados. Daugumos Klaipėdos universiteto studentų požiūris į fizinį aktyvumą – menkas. Paaikškėjo, kad akademinė bendruomenė, nesuteikdama pakankamai žinių, menkai formuoja studentų požiūrį į fizinį aktyvumą. Taigi rezultatai parodė didelę šių studentų žinių stoką. Naudojant tyrimo rezultatų duomenis ir taikant mokslinę metodinę medžiagą, bus sudaromos geros sąlygos plėtoti Klaipėdos universiteto studentų fizinį aktyvumą, ypač jų fizinę saviugdą, ir teikti daugiau dalykinių ir metodinių žinių.

Raktažodžiai: fizinis aktyvumas, požiūris, fizinė saviugda.

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