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Gender differences on the grounds of practicing fitness

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the differences between men and women regarding their reasons for practicing fitness. *Methods*: The research was conducted at a sports club in Reşita, in April 2018, on 100 respondents, 71 of them were men and 29 were women. As research methods, we used the survey method - the questionnaire, the observation method, the statistical-mathematical method and the graphic representation method. *Results:* The results of the survey show that men and women practice fitness to combat sedentariness, but differently: mainly, men are looking to develop muscle mass and for women, the main aim is to lose weight by diminishing body fat.

Keywords: *fitness, body-building, life quality*

Rezumat

Scop: Scopul acestei cercetări este de a identifica şi analiza diferenţele dintre bărbaţi şi femei în privinţa motivelor pentru care practică fitness-ul. *Metode:* Cercetarea s-a desfăşurat la un club sportiv din Reşiţa în luna aprilie a anului 2018 pe 100 de respondenţi, dintre aceştia 71 sunt bărbaţi şi 29 sunt femei. Ca şi metode de cercetare am folosit metoda anchetei – chestionarul, metoda observaţiei, metoda statistico-matematică şi metoda reprezentării grafice. *Rezultate:* Rezultatele anchetei ne indică faptul că bărbaţii urmăresc, în principal, dezvoltarea unei mase muscular iar femeile urmăresc slăbirea, diminuarea ţesutului adipos din organism.

Cuvinte cheie*: fitness, culturism, calitatea vieţii*

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Introduction

Physical fitness or physical condition includes two interconnected concepts: general fitness (a state of health and well-being), and specific fitness (a task-oriented definition based on the individual's ability to perform specific sporting procedures or other activities). Physical fitness is usually accomplished with proper nutrition, physical exercise, and sufficient rest [12]. In the present context, physical fitness is defined as "the body's ability to function effectively and efficiently in work and leisure activities, to be healthy, to withstand hypokinetic disease, and to respond to emergency situations" [12].

In today's society, it is worth noticing the fact that the interest in physical activity has fallen due to the rapid development of technology and the unprecedented advancement of industry. All these result in negative living standards for people, who are becoming more trapped in productive activity and often forget about their health, emphasizing here the importance of fitness. However, despite overweight and obesity, many people realize that fitness is a solution. And not just for those who have difficulty with weight management, but for all categories of people willing to reserve one hour a day for training, receiving instead a healthy portion of energy, vitality and health.

Fitness is a continuous state of health where all body systems are determined to resist physical stress and are capable of maintaining an optimal level without injuries. A person who has a good physical condition has a well-defined, flexible body and strong muscular structure; an efficient heart and healthy lungs, and the ratio between fat mass and muscles is balanced. Being in shape is just a form of existence. The activities chosen for practicing in order to gain and maintain the physical condition depend on each individual, separately.

Physical fitness contributes to mental fitness. Being in shape can provide a holistic, positive perspective on life [1]. The American Physiotherapy Association defines fitness by 6 elements: aerobic capacity, body structure, body composition, body balance, muscle flexibility, muscle strength.

By practicing fitness, we can help improving the quality of life. The quality of life is given by the perceptions of individuals about their social situations, in the context of the cultural value systems they live in, and depending on their own needs, standards and aspirations. By *quality of life in the field of medicine* we understand physical, mental and social well-being, as well as the ability of patients to carry out their usual tasks in their everyday life. A user-defined definition is proposed by Revicki & Kaplan (1993): "Quality of life reflects preferences for certain health conditions that improve morbidity and mortality and is expressed by a single weighted index - years of standardized life depending on the quality of life "[9].

The interest shown in the medical world for patients' quality of life issues is demonstrated by the number of articles on quality of life published in prestigious journals and presented in the PUBMED database of the National Library of Medicine in the US.

One can observe a steady and spectacular growth of articles dedicated to the study of various aspects of the patients' quality of life, from one article, between 1960 and 1965 to 30,550 articles, between 2000 and 2005 and from 1 479, in 1990 to 8 160 in 2004 [13].

The quality of life determines: the extent to which our own hopes and ambitions are achieved in everyday life, the perception of the person's position in life, in the cultural and axiological context in which he/she lives and in relation to his or her goals, aspirations, standards and preoccupations, the assessment of his or her own health, by reference to an ideal model, things that are considered important in people's lives [13].

Before stating the role and importance of fitness in the lives of practitioners, we need to define sedentariness and see what role it has for the sedentary population.

In the explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language, sedentariness is defined as follows: "1) the state of a sedentary population. 2) lack of movement; sedentary life "[11]. Sedentariness refers to being sedentary, lacking activity. Sedentariness is a risk factor that leads to the emergence of many medical affections. Modern life encourages sedentary life by encouraging a comfortable life without too much physical stress. The sedentary lifestyle is a way of life in which a person does not engage in sufficient physical activity that would be part of a healthy lifestyle. It is characterized by extended periods of rest, whether

it's watching TV shows, computer use or anything else.

People who have a sedentary lifestyle do not give much importance to physical activity. Encouraging any kind of physical activity can bring very important health benefits compared to the sedentary lifestyle [1].

Fitness has many means, including body-building, which is practiced by both men and women. Body-building, as a physical modeling of the body, is the result of human society evolution and, in particular, a result emerging from the structure of professions that are increasingly static. The most important aspect of practicing weight training is that it allows analytical processing of each muscle group [4]. Body building gives the individual the opportunity to develop basic and combined motor skills and the formation of a harmonious body in time, from an aesthetic point of view.

The purpose of this research is to identify fitness practitioners, their goals, aspirations and needs. It also aims to define body-building as a method of practicing fitness, identifying the desire among practitioners to have an aesthetic and well-developed body, as well as the differences in the aesthetic view of both women and men included in the research.

Research hypothesis

Men and women practice fitness differently in order to combat sedentariness.

Material and Methods

Place, subjects and time of research

The survey was conducted at a sports club in Resita, in April 2018, on 100 subjects, from which 71 are men and 29 are women. The men who participated in the survey are, on average, 24.6 years old, have an average weight of 79.2 kg and an average height of 1.77 m. Women are, on average, 31.2 years old, and have an average weight of 60.1 kg and an average height of 1.63 m.

Research methods used

The questionnaire survey method was used in this research. Subjects had to fill in two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was formulated by me, asking questions about the subject's age, gender, weight, height, graduated studies, marital status, number of children, occupation. Information was obtained on the frequency of subjects going to a fitness center or gym, as well as the purposes for which they practice fitness.

The second questionnaire allows us to evaluate the type and level of physical activity and is called "IPAQ - International physical activity questionnaire" [2]. This questionnaire has several sections that refer to: physical activity at work; physical activity in transport; household, housekeeping and family care; recreation, sports and leisure and time spent sitting.

Another method used is that of observation. It is widely used for the direct research of phenomena, emphasizing the effectiveness of programs, methods, means and new forms of organization used in the educational process [5]. Having spent a lot of time in the sports club's fitness center, where we conducted the survey, I noticed many aspects on how different are the approaches to practicing fitness by men and women. Men are especially concerned by the development of muscle mass and strength, while women want to lose weight and reinforce the muscles. Men's muscle groups differ from those targeted by women, thus men focus on the arms, pectorals and women on the abdomen, buttocks, thighs.

Results

1. Questionnaire no. 1

The survey conducted in April 2018 included 100 respondents, 71 men and 29 women. The average age of men was 24.6 years, while the average age of women was 31.2 years old; the average weight for men was 79.2 Kg and for women 60.1 Kg; the average height for men was 1.77 m and for women 1.63 m.

The answers to question 5, indicated that males have attended the following levels of education: around 7% gymnasium, 51% high school, 1% post-secondary education, 41% university. Similarly, women's levels of education were: around 7% gymnasium, 21% high school, 7% post-secondary education, 55% university, 7% post-graduate. We can see that the predominant educational stage reached by males is high school, i.e. 51%, while women's predominant educational stage is higher education - 55%.

The answers to question 6, on civil status, were yes, in 15% of men and no in 85%; while 41% of women responded yes and 59% no. We can see that the

predominant civil status in men is unmarried, i.e.85%, and the prevailing civil status in women is also unmarried, i.e.59%.

The answers to question 7, "Do you have children?", were yes in 14% of men and no in 86%; and 31% of women responded yes and 69% no. We can see that the NO answer to the question about children predominates in men, i.e. 86%, but also in women, i.e. 69%.

To question 8, on occupation, men's answers were: 38% pupils, 23% students, 4% workers, 4% middle school graduates, 23% university graduates and 8% unemployed; and women's answers were: 17% pupils, 10% students, 7% workers, 17% middle school graduates, 45% university graduates, and 4% unemployed. We can see that the predominant occupation in males is student - 38%, and the predominant occupation in women is higher education, i.e. 45% (Figure 1, 2).

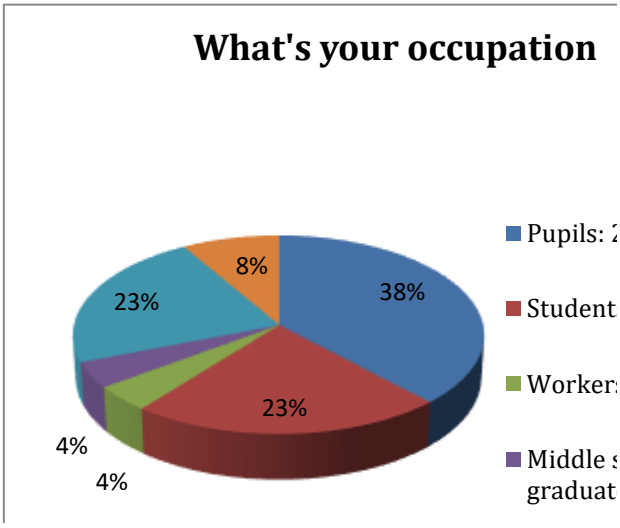

Figure 1. Men's answers to question no.8

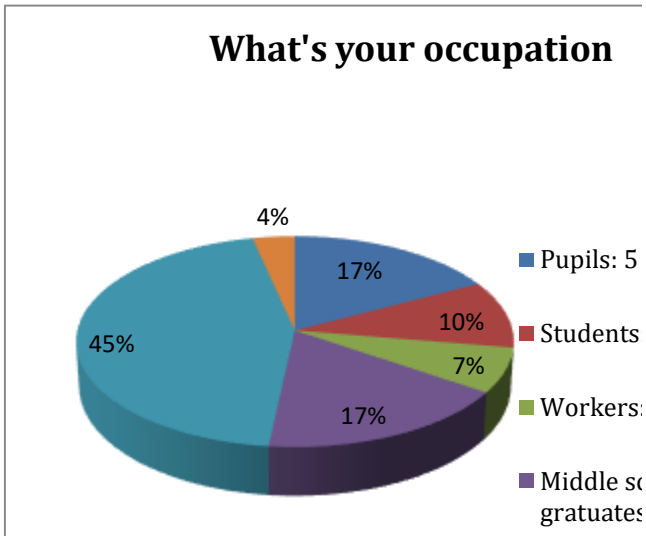

Figure 2. Women's answers to question no. 8

To question 9 of the 1st questionnaire, namely "Did you practice sports in childhood / adolescence?" 10% of men responded no and 90% yes; and 48% of women responded yes and 52% no. We can see that men predominantly responded yes, i.e. 90%, while women's predominant answer was yes, but only in the percentage of 52%.

To question 10 of the 1st questionnaire, "How many times a week do you practice fitness?", 3% of men responded once, 6% twice, 7% three times, 18% four times, 45% five times, and 21% six times. 14% of women responded once, 7% twice, 14% three times, 21% four times, 27% five times, and 17% six times. We can see that in male respondents, answer no. 5 is predominant with 45%, and in women answer no. 5 also prevails, but in only 27% of the cases.

To question 11 of the questionnaire 1, "For how long have you practiced fitness?", 36% of men responded 6 months, 18% 1 year, 7% 2 years, and 39% over 2 years; and 43% of women answered 6 months, 22% one year, 21% one year, and 14% over 2 years. We can observe that in male respondents the answer - over 2 years (39%) predominates, followed by the 6 months answer (36%); in women the 6 months answer predominates in a proportion of 43%. Thus, it can be noticed that most male respondents practice fitness for longer time than most female respondents.

To question 12 of the 1st questionnaire on fitness goals, men responded as following: about 18%

slimming, 16% toning, 48% developing muscle mass, 1% strength development, 1% muscle strength development, 13% maintaining an optimal physical condition, and 3% socialization (Figure 3). Women declared in a proportion of 54% slimming, 38% toning, and 8% maintaining an optimal physical condition (Figure 4). We can observe that about 48 % of men, almost half of the respondents, put a high premium on the development of muscle mass, while women's most important goal, i.e. for about 54%, is slimming. Thus, we notice a major difference between the top-level objectives of male and female respondents.

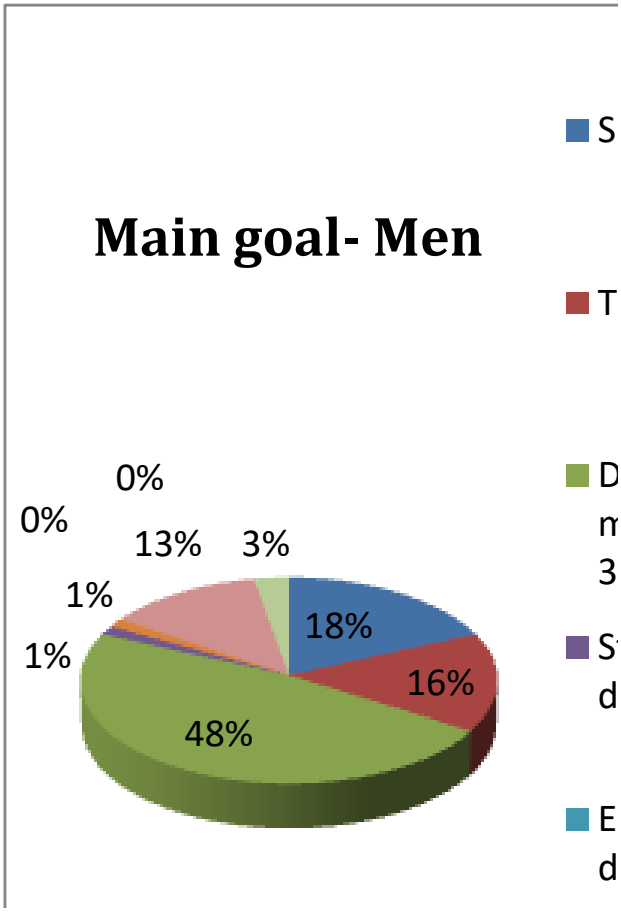

Figure 3. Men's answers regarding the objectives of practicing fitness

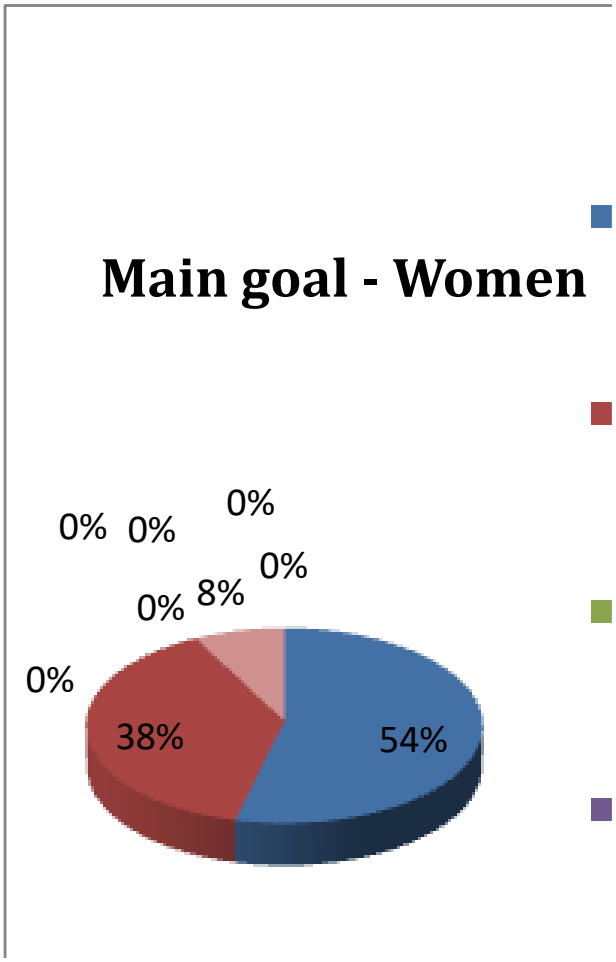

Figure 4. Women's answers regarding the objectives of practicing fitness

To question 13 of the 1st questionnaire, on fitness practicing under the supervision of a personal trainer, men responded in a proportion of 9% yes and 91% no; and women in a proportion of 32% yes and 68% no. We can observe that in men the answer no predominates, i.e. 91%, and in women the answer NO also predominates, but only in a proportion of 68%. Thus, we can see that most of the male and female respondents do not practice fitness under supervision of a personal trainer, but in women the percentage of the NO answer is lower.
To question 14 of the 1st questionnaire, concerning the remodeling of the body parts, the men placed on the1stplace, thighs in 5% of the answers, arms 21%, abdomen 13%, chest 13%, full body 48%; and women placed first thighs in 15% of the answers, arms 4%, buttocks 8%, abdomen 42% , and full body 31%. We can see that men put first the full body,i.e. 48% closely followed by the arms, i.e. 21%;

while women placed on the first place the abdomen, i.e. 42%, closely followed by the full body, i.e. 31%. Thus, we notice a difference in the parts of the body that male and female respondents wish =to remodel first.

To question 15 of the 1st questionnaire, entitled "Do you like practicing fitness?" 97% of men responded yes and 3% no; and 94% of women said yes and 6% no. We observed similar responses regarding the practice of fitness.

2. The IPAQ questionnaire

2.1. Physical activity at work

To question 1, namely "Do you currently have a job or do you work without being paid outside your home?" 38% of men responded yes and 62% no; and 69% of women said yes and 31% no. Thus we observe that most of men responded by no, and the majority of women by yes.

To question 2 of the questionnaire, on the number of days spent at work doing rigorous physical activity, 14 male respondents answered no, and 11 responded they do, on average, 4 days and 23 women answered no, and 6, on average, 4.5 days. Thus, we notice that women do physical activity for 0.5 days more than men.

To question 3 of the 2nd questionnaire, on how many hours and minutes they spend doing rigorous physical activity at work, 11 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 57 minutes; and 6 women responded, on average, 1 h 50". Thus we observe a similarity between male and female respondents in terms of hours and minutes spent doing rigorous physical activity at work.

To question 4 of the 2nd questionnaire, on the number of days spent at work doing moderate physical activity, 14 male respondents answered no, and 11 responded, on average, 4.3 days, while 21 women answered no, and 8 reported, on average, 3.1 days. Thus we notice that men's answers to question 4 count 1.2 more days than women.

To question 5 of the 2nd questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend doing moderate physical activity at work, 11 male respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 33 "; and 8 women responded, on average, 1 hour 09 ". Thus we notice that, according to the answers provided, men's moderate physical activity is 24 "longer than in women.

To question 6 of the 2nd questionnaire, on the number of days spent at work walking, 14 male respondents answered no, and 11 answered that the average is of 5.3 days, and 21 women answered no, while 8 said that the average is 5.1 days. Thus, we observe a similarity between male and female respondents in terms of number of days spent at work walking.

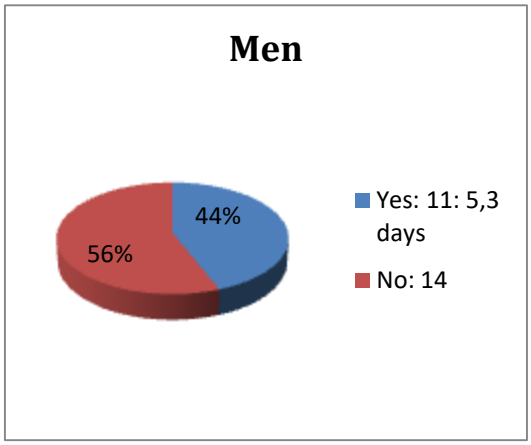

Figure 5. Men's answers to question no. 6

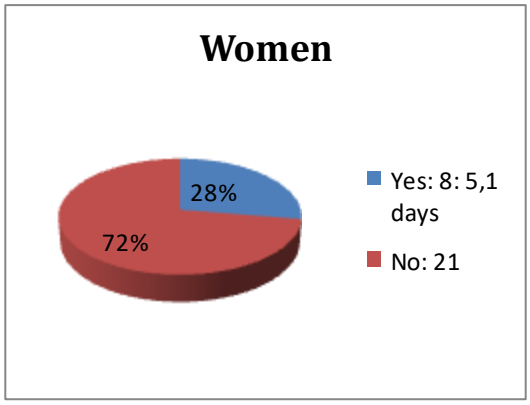

Figure 6. Women's answers to question no. 6

To question 7 of the 2nd questionnaire, on how many hours and minutes they spend walking at the workplace, 11 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 16 "; and 8 women reported, on average, 1 h 51 ". Thus, we notice that women spend walking at the workplace 35 " more than men.

2.2. Physical activity in transport

To question 8 of the 2nd questionnaire, concerning the number of days spent traveling in a motor vehicle, 12 male respondents answered no, and 50 responded, on average, 5 days; 7 women answered

no, and 22, on average, 4.4 days. Thus we notice that men spend traveling in a motor vehicle 0.6 days more than women.

To question 9 of the 2nd questionnaire, on how many hours and minutes they spend traveling in a motor vehicle, 50 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 12 "; and 22 women reported, on average 47 ". Thus we notice that men spend traveling in a motor vehicle 25 "more than women.

To question 10 of the 2nd questionnaire, on the number of days spent using the bicycle to travel from one place to another, 41 male respondents answered no, and 21 answered, on average, 3.7 days, while 26 women answered no, and 3, on average, 2.3 days. Thus, we notice that men use the bicycle to travel from one place to another 1.4 days more than women.

To question 11 of the 2nd questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend using the bicycle to travel from one place to another, 41 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 37 "; and 22 women reported, on average, 43 ". Thus we notice that men use the bicycle to travel from one place to another 54 " more than women.

To question 12 of the 2nd questionnaire, on the number of days spent walking from one place to another, 17 male respondents answered no, and 45 answered, on average, 5.7 days, while 5 women answered no, and 24 reported, on average, 5.1 days. Thus, we notice that men spend walking from one place to another 0.6 days more than the women.

To question 13 of the 2nd questionnaire, on how many hours and minutes they spend walking from one place to another, 45 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 16 "; and 24 women reported, on average, 2 h 30 ". Thus, we notice that women spend walking from one place to another 1 h and 14 " more than men.

2.3. House holding, housekeeping and family care

To question 14 of the questionnaire, referring to the number of days spent doing rigorous physical activity in the garden or yard, 41 respondents answered no, and 21 answered, on average, 2.8 days, and 26 women answered no, and 3, on average, 3.6 days. Thus, we notice that women spend doing rigorous physical activity in the garden or yard 0.8 days more than men.

To question 15 of the questionnaire, relating to how many hours and minutes they spent doing rigorous physical activities in the garden or yard, 21 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 37 "; and 3 women reported, on average, 1 h 23 ". Thus we notice that men spend doing rigorous physical activity in the garden or yard 14 "more than women.

To question 16 of the questionnaire, referring to the number of days spent performing moderate physical activities in the garden or in the yard, 42 male respondents answered no, and 18 responded, on average, 3.4 dayş; 19 women answered no, and 10, on average, 3 days. Thus we notice that men spend performing moderate physical activities in the garden or in the yard 0.4 days more than women.

To question 17 of the questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spent doing moderate physical activity in the garden or yard, 18 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 02 "; and 10 women reported, on average, 1 h 17 ". Thus, we notice that women spend doing moderate physical activities in the garden or in the yard 15 " more than men.

To question 18 of the 2nd questionnaire, on the number of days spent performing moderate physical activities inside the house, 30 male respondents answered no, and 30 responded, on average, 2.8 days; 7 women answered no, and 22 reported, on average, 3.2 days. Thus, we notice that women spend performing moderate physical activities inside the house 0.4 days more than men.

To question 19 of the questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend doing moderate physical activity inside the house, 30 respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 10 "; and 22 women reported, on average, 1 h 49 ". Thus, we notice that women spend doing moderate physical activity inside the house 39 " more than men.

2.4. Recreation, sports and leisure time

To question 20 of the questionnaire, referring to the number of days spent walking in free time, 12 male respondents answered no, and 48 responded, on average, 5 days, while 6 women answered no, and 23, on average, 3.7 days. Thus, we notice that men

spend walking in free time 1.3 days more than women.

To question 21 of the questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend walking in free time, 48 male respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 11 "; and 23 women reported, on average, 1 h 26 ". Thus, we notice that women spend walking in free time 15 " more than men.

To question 22 of the questionnaire, on the number of days spent doing vigorous physical activity in free time, 16 male respondents answered no, and 44 responded, on average, 4.2 days; 8 women answered no, and 21 reported, on average, 4.2 days. Thus, we observe that men answered question 22 the same as women.

To question 23 of the questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend doing vigorous physical activities in free time, 44 male respondents answered, on average, 1h and 47"; and 21 women reported, on average, 1 h 21". Thus, we notice that men spend doing vigorous physical activities in free time 26" more than women.

To question 24 of the questionnaire, referring to the number of days spent doing moderate physical activity in free time, 33 male respondents answered no, and 27 responded, on average, 3.4 days; 13 women answered no, and 16 reported, on average, 2.9 days. Thus, we notice that men spend doing moderate physical activity in free time 0.5 days more than women.

To question 25 of the questionnaire, referring to how many hours and minutes they spend doing moderate physical activities in free time, 27 male respondents answered, on average, 1 hour and 19 "; 16 women reported, on average, 1 h 07 ". Thus, we notice that men spend doing moderate physical activity in free time 12 " more than women.

2.5. Time spent sitting

To question 26 of the questionnaire, referring to the hours and minutes spent sitting during a weekday, 60 respondents answered, on average, 4 hours and 09"; and 29 women reported, on average, 5 hours 18 ". Thus, we notice that women spend sitting during a weekday 1 h and 9 " more than men.

To question 27 of the questionnaire, relating to the hours and minutes spent sitting in a weekend day, 60 respondents answered, on average, 4 hours and 30 "; and 29 women reported, on average, 4 h 20 ". Thus, we notice that men spend sitting in a weekend day 10 " more than women.

Discussions

The main purpose of this paper was to identify fitness practitioners, their goals, aspirations and needs, and to formulate a definition of body building as fitness practice. It also aimed to identify the willingness of the research participants to have a well-developed and aesthetic body, but also to capture the gender differences with regard to their aesthetic vision.

The research hypothesis that *"Men and women practice fitness in order to combat sedentariness in a different way"* was supported by the results, leading to the achievement of the aforementioned objective.

The results are consistent with those obtained by Furnham, Badmin and Sneade, who concluded, based on a study with 235 participants, that male subjects practice muscle fitness and aim at weight gain by this method, while female subjects want to lose weight [6].

McDonald and Thompson also suggested that women are more prone than men to practice fitness in order to lose weight, but also to increase their attractiveness [7].

Tiggermann, Williamson had similar results in a study with 252 participants, noting that women's reasons for practicing fitness are linked to the desire for controlling or reducing weight, and men focus on increasing their muscle mass [9].

Our results coincide with those obtained by Prichard, Tiggermann who investigated women's motivations to practice fitness by conducting a study involving 571 participants aged 18 to 71, and concluded that they practiced fitness to increase their attractiveness by reducing body weight and improving toning. Moreover, in females, the participation in fitness centers was negatively associated with body esteem and positively associated with disorders in eating behavior [8].

The results also coincide with those obtained by Craft, Carroll. They concluded that female participants (N = 108) said they practiced fitness for slimming and men (N = 72) for relaxation [3].

A possible explanation for the result obtained can be given by the fact that physical aspect is a factor influencing the image and self-esteem of subjects, each of them having different ideals. Satisfaction in

relation to one's own body contributes to raising self-esteem or maintaining it at an optimal level for both women and men, so both categories are interested in the aesthetic aspect by ameliorating the negative effects of sedentariness. However, the motivation is different between genders, as each uses its own dictates as to what is attractiveness and what is desirable from a social point of view and in accordance with one's ideal image.

Conclusions

After analyzing the data, we came to the following research conclusions:

Individuals practice fitness as a way of combating sedentariness differently: men primarily seek to develop muscle mass and women primarily aim at losing weight.

The large majority said that they practice fitness for pleasure, as a method of preventing sedentariness.

Analyzing the reasons for choosing fitness, we noticed that men have as priorities the development of muscle mass, whereas women's main goal is slimming; both men and women practice fitness primarily for the aesthetic appearance, but the goals are different.

Based on the responses received, it was found that men and women want to remodel different parts of the body by practicing fitness; men focus on the whole body, closely followed by the arms, while women focus on the abdomen, closely followed by the whole body.

Men practice fitness longer than women, most of the questioned men responded that they have been practicing fitness for over 2 years, and most women responded they have been practicing fitness for only 6 months. Men also have more physical activity than women at work; men responded in a proportion of 44% that they do vigorous physical activity at the workplace, while only 21% of the women do vigorous physical activity at work; in terms of moderate physical activity, 44% of men responded they do moderate physical activity at the workplace, while only 28% of the women do moderate physical activity at work.

From the responses received, it appears that men use the bicycle as a means of travel, more than women; 66% of men responded that they use the bicycle to move from one place to another, whereas only 10% of women responded that they use the bicycle as a means of travel. Instead, women do physical activity inside the house, more than men; 76% of women responded that they perform moderate physical activity inside the house, while only 50% of men do physical activity inside the house.

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