National Health Enhancing Physical Activity Programme from 2007 to 2012

Summary of the National Health Enhancing Physical Activity Programme from 2007 to 2012, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on 7 March 2007
PREFACE

Spending leisure time actively is of great importance for everyone wishing to maintain and promote health. Walking, bicycle riding and dancing are just a few of the physical activities that significantly contribute to well-being, work energy and reinforcing mental and physical health. We live in an age that is much less conducive to physical activity than it used to be. The use of cars, escalators, doorstep delivery, watching television to excess and the use of computer technology have all made us very passive, and this has an effect on our health and how we feel.

Consequently, in recent times, we are frequently faced with problems of overnutrition and obesity, which contribute to an increasing number of new cases of chronic disease, necessitating increased expenditure from the healthcare budget and undermining the economy. Specifically, the increase in overnutrition and obesity is closely associated with unhealthy dietary habits and lack of physical activity. This results in an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and many other diseases of the musculoskeletal system.

Given the increase in the incidence of chronic diseases – a burning issue – the Ministry of Health has recently devoted considerable effort to developing national programmes and strategies in this area.

In 2005, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the Resolution on the National Nutrition Policy Programme 2005–2010, which is already being successfully implemented with the help of the many stakeholders involved. The second strategic document is the one presented here: the Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Promoting Physical Activity to Enhance National Health for the period 2007–2012 (HEPA National Programme), which was adopted by the Government on 7 March 2007. Both documents address same objective, i.e. reversing the trend of increasing incidence of chronic disease and improving quality of life through healthy and balanced dietary habits and regular daily physical activity in all age groups of the Slovenian population.

Lastly, I would like to invite all of you, who consider yourselves significant partners in the implementation of the national programme, to join forces with us and take part. We must keep in mind that it is only good cooperation that will yield favourable results.

Last but not least, let me express the wish that all Slovenian citizens will take to physical activity on a daily basis without considering it a burden and a source of inconvenience in their life, since it is good health that will permit us to achieve better results and better quality of life in all the stages of our lives.

Zofija Mazej Kukovič
Minister of Health

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INTRODUCTION

Health plays an important role in ensuring a high quality of life and is one of the basic conditions for the development of any society. There is no area of social life that is not influenced by health. Health is primarily every individual's own responsibility while the state, in cooperation with various professional organisations and sciences, has the power and responsibility to create the conditions that allow people to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Apart from ensuring health care, the state looks after health by developing, adopting and implementing health promotion policies, strategies and programmes. The strategy of protection and promotion of health by physical activity, sport and recreation falls within these responsibilities as well.

Insufficient physical activity is one of the most important factors of unhealthy lifestyle, in addition to unhealthy diets, smoking, illicit drugs, stress, and alcohol consumption. It has been proven scientifically that the above stated factors of unhealthy lifestyle are the leading causes in the processes of development, progression, and complications related to major chronic non-communicable diseases (CND): cardiovascular and diabetic diseases, some types of cancer, some chronic lung diseases, obesity, osteoporosis, and other types of musculoskeletal diseases. Insufficient physical activity and unhealthy dietary habits are closely related to the development and persistence of known physiological risk factors in relation to CNDs such as high blood pressure and pathologically changed levels of blood fats (especially higher cholesterol and blood sugar levels). At least five of the seven major risk factors for CND (high blood pressure, a high level of blood cholesterol and body mass index, insufficient intake of vegetables and fruit, excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking) are closely linked to the lack of physical activity and unhealthy nutrition.

A very important health maintaining and enhancing determinant is the ratio between energy intake and energy output, or in short, between food consumption and physical activity. A healthy diet and regular physical activity have an impact on health both individually and synergistically. Regardless of the fact that the two produce an aggregate effect - something that becomes very obvious when reducing overweight and obesity problems - physical activity can have positive effects on health independently of dietary habits. It is well known that intense exercise is not required in order to maintain health; contemporary scientific findings demonstrate that the risk of the development and progress of cardiovascular diseases and the related physiological risk factors can be significantly reduced by half an hour of moderate physical activity during the majority of weekdays. In this regard, it is essential that physical activity is present throughout a lifetime in order to keep physical, mental and social wellbeing from childhood until old age. By preserving muscular strength, mobility and balance in older population, functional abilities are maintained, injuries prevented, and possibilities of active ageing significantly increased, while the economic burden of illness for the state is considerably decreased.

In the developed world, the greatest part of available resources is used for the treatment of CNDs and their resulting complications. In the majority of such cases, the economic burden exceeds the available health insurance coverage so that, today already, a relatively significant proportion of the total cost of treatment must be covered by patients and/or their families. Indirect morbidity costs, in the sense of lost workdays or lessened productivity, are equal or even exceed direct treatment costs or mortality costs, the latter held particularly true for the diseases of the circulatory system and for diabetes. It is therefore rather urgent to undertake various measures for restraining or reducing the total cost of health services.
and the demand for them, and in this regard, the importance of maintaining and improving health and functional abilities of the ageing population is growing, at least in the developed world.

A healthy lifestyle allows just that, it preserves and enhances health and the quality of life of each individual, in addition to reducing the costs of prevention and treatment of chronic non-communicable diseases, of disability, and of precipitated mortality. The negative effects of individual elements of unhealthy lifestyle complement each other so that several risk factors often concur with the same individual. It is therefore sensible and necessary that policies are developed and effective strategies for the reduction of major risk factors are implemented in parallel - along with the endeavours to reduce the use of alcohol and tobacco in addition to the promotion and provision of healthy diets and regular, moderate health enhancing physical activity, all of which are contained in this document.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG SLOVENIAN CITIZENS

Data on physical activity of the adult Slovene population, obtained on the basis of different observation points, are quite varied. The research study „Health-related Lifestyle” (2001), which studied all physical activity, i.e. in free time, in the household and at work, reveals that at least 20 % of the adult Slovene population in the age bracket of 25-64 years, are not active enough to ensure the basic protection of health.

Slovenia has to date participated in the international study “Health-related behaviour in school-aged children” in the years 2002 and 2006. The results of that study reveal the disturbing fact that children and adolescents in Slovenia are becoming ever less physically active. In 2006, the proportional number of people who were physically active for one hour daily at least five days per week was less than in 2002 (the percentage of people physically active on most days of the week was 39.6 % in 2006 as against 44.6 % in 2002). In keeping with expectations, boys were physically more active than girls since, in 2006, on average 45.9 % of boys were active on most days of the week, compared to 33.3 % of girls.

Crosscut studies, carried out in Ljubljana within the WHO CINDI programme during 1990/91, 1996/97 and 2002/03, with the latter two carried out also in two other demonstration regions of Slovenia (Pomurje, Severna Primorska), revealed that in terms of free-time activity only about one third of adults are physically active enough to protect their health. In the period 1990-1997, the proportion of persons who can be considered marginally physically active fell to 40 %, primarily as a result of an increase in the proportion of those who are physically completely inactive which increased from 15 % to 25 %.

The most recent CINDI Slovenia research study (2002/03), focusing on adults (in the age group 25-65), was also a part of a wider national Targeted Research Project (TRP) “Physical exercise/sport activity for health” and was supported by the ministry responsible for health and the ministry responsible for science. The TRP study defined the categories in terms of the regularity and frequency of physical activity in a slightly different manner than previous research studies due to the fact that it took into consideration some current findings on the role and importance of moderate, although regular, free-time physical activity (e.g. fast walking). It was discovered that among adult Slovene population, 32.4 % of those in the age group 25-64 years are sufficiently physically active to protect their health (5 and several times a week at least 30 minutes of walking or moderate to intense physical activity). On the other side of the spectrum, 16.8 % of adult Slovenes are not physically active at all. Minimally physically active are 35.5 % of them; marginally active, from the health protection point of view, are 15.3 % of adults. When comparing the results by the studied categories of physical activity in the region of Ljubljana (its population was involved in the CINDI Ljubljana research in 1990/91 and 1996/97), it becomes evident that the circumstances in the area of adult physical activities have changed for the better during the last six years.

A slightly worse picture was obtained on the basis of a study on sport and recreation activities (2000) which demonstrated that in our country almost 60 % of adult population are sport- and recreation-wise inactive, slightly less than a quarter are occasionally active, and considerably more than a fifth are regularly, at least twice weekly, active. A longitudinal analysis of physical activity of the adult population of Slovenia until 2000 showed a gradual decrease in sport and recreation activities proportionally to an increase in age, and furthermore, it revealed that more women than men are inactive in the population (i.e. 63.2 % and 44.1 %). In this respect the results, obtained by the above stated TRP (2002/2003), are...
more encouraging from the point of view of public health in Slovenia. They show that actually as much as 47.3 %, and occasionally additional 42.3 %, of the Slovene adult population participate in at least one type of physical activity. Furthermore, it became evident that an important improvement with regards to the annulment of gender differences has also occurred. It must be emphasised that the greatest number of regularly as well as occasionally active persons are found in the category of non-organised activities meaning that they make arrangements for their physical activity on their own. The proportion of the population participating in various forms of organised physical activities (in sport clubs, societies, either under private ownership or within a work organisation) is relatively small.

1 ZALETELJ-KRAGELJ, L., FRAS, Z., MAUČEC-ZAKOTNIK, J., Risk behaviour related to health and some health conditions of the adult population of Slovenia, Healthy lifestyle, CINDI Slovenia, Faculty of Medicine, Ljubljana, 2004.


HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH OF SLOVENIAN PEOPLE

According to data published in a national study CINDI carried out in 2001, only 22.9% of the population in the Republic of Slovenia consumes healthy or mostly healthy food. We are also smoking and consuming too much alcohol.

Unhealthy nutrition and lack of physical activity are factors of an unhealthy lifestyle, to which smoking and consumption of alcohol also contribute. It has been proven that factors of an unhealthy lifestyle are among key factors in the process of emergence, progression and the appearance of complications of the most important chronic noncommunicable diseases: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, certain types of cancer, some chronic pulmonary diseases, obesity and osteoporosis, and other diseases of the musculo-skeletal system. Unhealthy nutrition and insufficient physical activity are closely connected with the appearance and continuance of known physiological risk factors in connection with chronic noncommunicable diseases, such as elevated blood pressure and increased cholesterol and glucose blood levels.

Of seven key risk factors for chronic noncommunicable diseases (increased blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol, elevated body mass index, reduced intake of vegetables and fruit, lack of physical activity, alcohol, smoking), five are closely connected with nutrition.

The state of health related to unhealthy nutrition and lack of physical activity and a generally unhealthy lifestyle of Slovenians is the following:

- Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of mortality among the population of Slovenia, covering 50% of cases.
- Cancer is the cause of mortality among Slovenians in 26% of cases. Between 1990 and 2001, the cancer morbidity rate increased by 25% among Slovenian men and by 30% among women, and the mortality rate by 10% among men and 9% among women.
- As in other western countries, obesity is on the rise in Slovenia, with 54.6% of the population overnourished and 15% overweight.
- The incidence of diabetes has been estimated at 4.3% of the adult population. An increased glucose blood level affects 4% - 6% of Slovenians.
- Every year, 5800 patients suffering from osteoporosis are treated in Slovenia. There are three times more women than men.
- Sixty percent of Slovenian adults have a high cholesterol blood level.
- The share of those diagnosed with raised blood pressure statistically increased from 39.1% to 48.8% between 1996/97 and 1990/91.

The research project Prevalence of overweight and obesity in five-year-old children and fifteen- or sixteen-year-old adolescents in Slovenia (Avbelj M. et al., 2005), which was carried out on the basis of data collected between 2003 and 2005, has shown that there is also a trend of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents. The research included 4685 randomly selected five-year-olds and 2474 randomly selected secondary school pupils aged fifteen to sixteen. It was found that the prevalence of overweight among five-year-old children is 18.4% in boys and 20.9% in girls, and that 9% of boys and
7.9% of girls are obese. Among adolescents 17.1% of boys and 15.4% of girls are overweight, while 6.2% of boys and 3.8% of girls are obese. The prevalence of obesity is comparable to that in other countries of Europe.

KEY PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION IN SLOVENIA

The key problems, which are in close connection with the low physical activity level, are the following:

- too high a proportion of physically inactive population in all age groups;
- longer time spent by the population of all age groups in front of the television or a computer;
- too low a proportion of population that for the purpose of transport in their every-day routines walk and/or ride a bicycle;
- an insufficient awareness of the population of the importance of regular health enhancing physical activity in all periods of life.
- lacking infrastructure for safe performance of physical activity;
- shortage of attractive health enhancing physical activity programs.

The results show that due to unhealthy nutrition, which endangers the health of the population in general, the following population subgroups are at higher risk than average:

men:
- at an age from 25-49 years,
- of lower education level (with maximum completed 2-3-year vocational school),
- actively employed,
- from the lower social class,
- rural residents, and
- residents of the eastern Slovene health region.

Due to insufficient physical activity (the study accounted for all types of physical activities, even those at work), which endangers health, the following population subgroups are at higher risk than average:

women:
- age group 25-49 years;
- with completed at least four-year secondary school education or grammar school,
- actively employed,
- from the lower social class on the one hand and the middle and upper-middle class on the other;
- residents of cities and suburbs;
- residents of western and central parts of Slovenia.
THE MISSION, BASIC AIMS AND GOALS OF THE HEPA NATIONAL PROGRAMME

The strategies of the HEPA National Programme are exercised through the planning and implementation of national measures and activities in cooperation with various publics and organisations of the civil society. All of them enhance and improve the quality and healthy nutrition and regular physical activity of the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, and consequently, protect and strengthen their health and quality of life.

The basic goal of the HEPA National Programme is to encourage all forms of regular physical activity and exercise aiming to enhance health and to be maintained throughout the entire lifetime.

A healthy diet and recommended forms and scope of physical activity produce a synergic health effects and greatly contribute to the prevention of disease, early mortality and disability, and to a greater quality of life of the Slovene population.

Goals of the HEPA National Programme

The concrete objectives of the HEPA National Programme by target groups of the population of the Republic of Slovenia are:

Children and adolescents (up to 18):
- increasing the share of children and adolescents doing physical activity for at least one hour every day by 30 %,
- increasing the share of children and adolescents who normally walk or cycle to school and in their everyday routine by 20 %,
- reducing the share of children and adolescents who in their free time spend more than four hours a day sitting in front of the television or computer by 30 %,
- reducing the share of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents by 10 %.

Adults (aged 18 to 65):
- reducing the share of physically completely inactive adults by 30 %,
- increasing the share of adults who in line with expert recommendations take regular and sufficient physical exercise to protect and strengthen health by 20 %,
- increasing the share of adults who normally walk or cycle to work and in their everyday routine by 20 %,
- reducing the share of adults who in their free time spend more than four hours a day sitting in front of the television or computer by 30 %,
Over-65s:

- reducing the share of physically completely inactive over-65s by 20 %,
- increasing the share of over-65s who in line with expert recommendations take regular and sufficient physical exercise to protect and strengthen health by 20 %,
- reducing the share of over-65s who in their free time spend more than four hours a day sitting in front of the television or computer by 20 %,

Pregnant women:

- increasing the share of participation of pregnant women in physical activity programmes by 40 %.

Families\(^5\)

- achievement of the strategic objectives for families takes into account the objectives defining the population of children and adolescents, the adult population and the population of over-65s.

Disabled persons

- Ensuring equal opportunities for health enhancing physical activity for persons with special needs or for all disabled persons in accordance with the measures contained in the Action Programme for Disabled Persons from 2007 to 2013.

Employees in the workplace:

- establishing and implementing a strategy of physical activity for employees in 10 % of large and medium-sized enterprises and public institutions,
- establishing physical activity programmes at work for 20 % of employees in the public administration, special programmes to inform all small enterprises of the health benefits of regular physical activity at work.

In accordance with the objectives of the Government of the Slovenia the necessary funds, which are basis for the implementation of measures, tasks and activities within the action plans of the HEPA National Programme, are provided.

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\(^5\) Article 2 of the Marriage and Family Relations Act (OJ RS, No 16/2004 and 69/2004) defines the family as a life community of parents and children, which for the benefit of the children enjoys special protection, but for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in the sphere of Health Enhancing Physical Activity from 2007 to 2012, we expand this definition to cover the population of children and adolescents, the adult population and the population of over-65s.
Principles in the HEPA National Programme

In planning and implementing the strategies of the HEPA National Programme, the following principles should be taken into consideration:

• honouring the right to a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity;
• respecting ethical principles – shared social, moral and environmental responsibility of all tenderers, providers and users of organised and unorganised health enhancing physical activity;
• sharing responsibility and representing proportionally all policies of the line ministries in the implementation of a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity strategies, and adhering to the establishment and implementation of health enhancing measures within the framework of health preserving and enhancing policies;
• taking into consideration the achievements of science and the developments of various professions;
• supporting clinical and epidemiological research in the areas of healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity;
• asserting a special concern of the society for a healthy lifestyle and regular physical activity of the groups of population whose health is at risk;
• exercising the rights of consumers and their protection;
• involving in a proactive manner the interested professional and lay publics and NGOs;
• taking into account the financial capabilities of the state.

Intersectoral Cooperation

In order to develop effective strategies for the promotion and enhancement of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity, it is necessary to establish coordinated operation of various government ministries.

The planning and implementation of the strategies for health enhancing physical activities is implemented with regards to various policies, such as:

• health policy,
• transport policy,
• economic policy,
• social,
• regional and cohesion policy,
• educational policy,
• research policy,
• environmental protection and other policies.

In Slovenia, a major role in the development and implementation of strategies for health enhancing physical activities is assumed by the ministry responsible for health, the ministry responsible for education and sport, the ministry responsible for transport, the ministry responsible for the environment and spatial planning, and the ministry responsible for labour, family and social affairs.
PILLARS OF THE HEPA NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Based on professional findings about synergetic effects of healthy nutrition and health enhancing physical activity, it is necessary that Slovenia’s strategies for the prevention of chronic noncommunicable diseases in both of these areas are planned and implemented jointly and in a coordinated manner. Within this framework, health enhancing physical activity is defined as any form of bodily movement that involves skeletal muscles and results in an expenditure of energy.

Three main pillars of the HEPA National Programme are:

1. Recreational sports - free time physical activities with their own specific activity, definition, goals, methods and about which each individual decides freely on the basis of his/her own desires, needs, interests, motives of pleasure and satisfaction when it is time to relax, in order to increase one’s physical abilities and to condition the body in compliance with the existing abilities and available possibilities in the environment in which an individual lives.

2. Health Enhancing Physical Activity in the Work or School Environment (Extracurricular) This is a physical activity for which an individual decides and performs it on the basis of his/her need to perform health promoting activity and his/her desire and need to exercise. In this respect, we differentiate between health enhancing physical activity:
   - at work or at school, and
   - in the work environment but apart from the work itself, or in the school environment as extracurricular activities.

3. Transport-related Health Enhancing Physical Activity These are activities for which an individual decides as a result of his/her need or wish to meet his/her transportation demands in daily life. These are mostly the activities whose goal is to accomplish daily goals of an individual (work, errands, shopping, visits and/or other obligations).
STRATEGIES OF THE HEPA NATIONAL PROGRAMME FROM 2007 TO 2012

I. The Promotion of Health Enhancing Physical Activity Field

Strategic Aims of the Field

- establish the culture of health enhancing physical activities in all population groups, especially with regards to children and adolescents of Slovenia;
- promote health enhancing physical activity for all age groups of the Slovene population and for groups with special needs while taking into consideration their current health status;
- provide accessibility and conditions for the implementation of safe, effective and pleasant health enhancing physical activity in residential, tourist and other environments.

The basic strategic aims are the foundation for setting concrete tasks for the projects of action plan preparation within the scope of the national programme, and these tasks are:

- strengthening the values, awareness and knowledge of the entire population with regard to physical activities that enhance health, irrespective of their age, gender, educational level, socio-economic status, the functioning of the locomotory system and other factors;
- implementing consistently the recommendations on health enhancing physical activities;
- ensuring competent planning, coordination and implementation of activities and projects regarding physical activities in public interest – in the field of educational, research, media and action projects, in addition to providing accessibility, quality and safe exercise, maintenance of sport facilities, etc.
- establishing links and cooperation of medical and sport professions and of science in stimulating the population to participate in regular and systematic physical activities;
- making it possible for health enhancing physical activity to become a component part of occupational policies in all groups of the civil society;
- increasing accessibility and quality of recreational activities, and providing the possibility to choose;
- providing professionally elaborated programmes of health promoting physical activities for work and living environments;
- strengthening the promotion of health enhancing physical activities in the health care system, in training and education, in work environments, and in local communities;
- strengthening the system of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the situation regarding health enhancing physical activities, and the activities regarding full quality assurance in this field in Slovenia.
Strategies for establishing and upgrading a healthy lifestyle with an emphasis on health enhancing physical activities of individual target groups

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

GOALS
- Foster the culture of health enhancing physical activity with children and adolescents
- Foster a culture of health enhancing physical activity among children and adolescents with special needs
- Motivate children and adolescents to participate in regular physical education classes and to become involved in various free time recreational activities
- Reach the goal that children and adolescents are physically active at least one hour a day

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES
- Establish and implement promotional measures for healthy dietary habits of children and adolescents, as well as parents, in the media, schools, student residence halls and local communities
- Design and implement activities for the promotion of physical activity for children and adolescents with special needs and their parents in the media, nursery schools, schools, school boarding houses and self-governing local communities
- Introduce or upgrade the subject matter of health enhancing physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in the curricula of primary schools, vocational and secondary schools, and in undergraduate studies of pedagogical and health professions
- Formulate and systematically implement continuous education in healthy nutrition and healthy lifestyle subjects for teachers and staff in kindergartens and schools

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport

TASK PERFORMERS
- Mass media
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- CINDI Slovenia
- National Education Institute of the RS
- Faculties of Education
- Faculty of Physical Education
- Both faculties of medicine
- Colleges of health studies
- Teachers of physical education and other teachers
- Health services and health education providers
- Municipalities and local communities
- Societies/clubs and associations
**ADULTS**

Promotion of Health Enhancing Physical Activity for Adult Population

**GOALS**
- Strengthen the values, information and knowledge of all inhabitants with regard to health enhancing physical activity and recreation
- Increase the proportion of the population that participates in regular physical activities or reduce the prevalence of a sedentary lifestyle
- Enforce recommendations for health enhancing physical activity

**TASKS AND ACTIVITIES**
- Develop and promote recommendations for health enhancing physical activities
- Strengthen the knowledge, skills, awareness and motivation of the population in connection with health enhancing physical activity
- Provide information on possibilities for physical activity in residential environments
- Intensify advisory activities on changing a lifestyle through healthy lifestyle workshops taking place in health education centres within the scope of national primary prevention programmes on CVDs and other chronic diseases
- Expand the implementation of health enhancing physical activity programmes based on the experience from the pilot project “Let’s living healthy” into all Slovene environments
- Prepare action programmes for individual subgroups of the adult population (according to gender, age, education and the type of living environment)

**MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE**
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport
- Ministry responsible for the environment and spatial planning
- Ministry responsible for the economy
- Ministry responsible for regional development and local self-government
- Ministry responsible for agriculture, forestry and food

**TASK PERFORMERS**
- Department for the promotion of health and a healthy lifestyle
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- CINDI Slovenia
- Health service and health education providers
- Institute for Sports of the RS
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia
- Agricultural advisory services
- Mass media
- Various sport societies/clubs and national associations
- Local communities
POPULATION AGED 65 YEARS AND ABOVE

Development, promotion, implementation and evaluation of physical activity programmes for the older population

GOALS
- Increase the ability to function and the quality of life of the population aged 65 and above
- Increase the proportion of the population aged 65 and above that are involved in physical activity programmes (individual and group programmes)
- Offer quality programmes of physical activity for individual groups of the elderly in compliance with their needs and abilities
- Train professional staff and laymen for a quality implementation of physical activity programmes for the elderly
- Reinforce values, information and knowledge in connection with health enhancing physical activity and sport recreation

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES
- Establish a national body with a professional team to develop guidelines for the preparation of physical activity programmes for the elderly and to supervise their content and implementation
- Establish educational and training facilities in the health education centres at the primary health care centres
- Implementation of the programmes for improving physical abilities of the elderly in health education centres at the primary health care centres and at the homes for the elderly for groups aged 65 and above with reduced physical abilities
- Establishment of local centres for organised physical activities including the setting up of information network
- Design and promote health enhancing physical activity recommendations
- Strengthen the knowledge, skills, awareness and motivation of the elderly population in connection with health enhancing physical activity
- Information about possibilities for physical activity in living environments

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for labour, family and social affairs
- Ministry responsible for education and sport
- Ministry responsible for the environment and spatial planning
- Ministry responsible for regional development and local self-government

TASK PERFORMERS
- Slovenian Federation of Pensioners’ Organisations and other societies and associations
- Association of Social Institutes of Slovenia
- Gerontological Society
- CINDI Slovenia
- Health care service providers
- Primary Health Care Centres
- Health Education Centres
- Homes for the Elderly
- Local communities
- Insurance agencies
- Society of Physiotherapists of Slovenia
- Colleges of health studies

**PREGNANT WOMEN**

Promotion, Development and Implementation of Health Enhancing Physical Activities for Pregnant Women – “Fit” Pregnant Women

**GOALS**
- Provide a modern and accessible programme of physical activities for pregnant women at the national level
- Influence a better outcome of pregnancy and childbirth and indirectly, via the mother, the health of the foetus
- Reduce pregnancy-related disease risk factors and consequently the cost of health and social security
- Influence a healthy lifestyle of young families

**TASKS AND ACTIVITIES**
- Promotion of physical activity during pregnancy
- Provide a uniform and accessible “Fit pregnant women” programme at the national level
- Educate and train staff to manage physical activity during pregnancy at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Prepare standards for institutions willing to organise such exercises, provide supervision of professional competence in the management and organisation of physical activities for pregnant women
- Separate the programmes of physical activity for healthy and ill pregnant women
- Include into the curricula of the school for future parents the development of habits involving health enhancing physical activities

**MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE**
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport

**TASK PERFORMERS**
- Expanded professional collegium of gynaecologists
- Expanded professional collegium of physiotherapists
- Society of Physiotherapists of Slovenia
- The Midwifery Society of Slovenia
- Both faculties of medicine
- Colleges of health studies
- Health care institutions (hospitals, primary health care and health education centres, health resorts) and providers of health care service
- The Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia

**FAMILIES**

Promotion, Development and Implementation of Physical Activity Programmes for Families

**GOALS**
- Increase the awareness and knowledge of the significance of regular physical activity for the health of individuals and families
- Improve the possibilities for family involvement in health enhancing physical activity programmes
- Promote active transportation of all family members (to work, school, recreation - walking, cycling)

**TASKS AND ACTIVITIES**
- Develop "messages of role models" and attract the participation of known persons/opinion-makers regarding the commitment to a healthy lifestyle
- Promote physical activity within the scope of professional activities of paediatricians and school and family medical services
- Upgrade the undergraduate and graduate studies of general practitioners and their staff on theoretical and practical levels regarding the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity
- Develop family programmes that are attractive and accessible in terms of their price and location
- Promote active transportation to work, school, recreation (walking, cycling)

**MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE**
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport
- Ministry responsible for the environment and spatial planning
- Ministry responsible for the economy
- The ministry responsible for regional development and local self-government

**TASK PERFORMERS**
- Both faculties of medicine
- Faculties of Education
- Faculty of Physical Education
- Colleges of health studies
- CINDI Slovenia
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- Associations/Chairs of general/family medicine, paediatrics and school medicine
- Sporting-cultural organisations and societies
- Health insurance agencies
- Local communities
- Child-care and educational institutions (nurseries, kindergartens and schools)
DISABLED PERSONS

Promotion, Development and Implementation of Physical Activity Programmes for Persons with Disabilities

GOALS
- Increase the awareness and knowledge of persons with special needs on the significance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle
- Motivate persons with special needs, and health, sport and education staff for the implementation of a modern and safe concept of physical activity in Slovenia
- Provide adequate education and training of personnel for the implementation of physical activity programmes for persons with special needs
- Offer a wider choice of quality and accessible physical activity programmes for persons with special needs

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES
- Establish a national body with a professional collegiate for the preparation and implementation of a sub-project on physical activities for persons with special needs
- Prepare and upgrade or update the programmes of health enhancing physical activity
- Prepare analysis of inclusion of persons with disabilities in various recreational and sports activities and health programmes with elements of recreation and sport run within disabled organisations
- Elaborate or supplement and update health enhancing physical activity programmes
- Promotion of regular physical activity for persons with special needs
- Coordinate and make uniform the education of personnel for the management of the teaching process in practice
- Continuous education and evaluation of personnel responsible for the management of physical activity programmes for persons with special needs
- Continuous training and evaluation of personnel responsible for the management of physical activity programmes for persons with disabilities
- Continuous informing, awareness-raising and supervision to ensure accessibility and non-discrimination in the construction and renovation of facilities
- Ensure accessibility of sports and tourist facilities

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for labour, family and social affairs
- Ministry responsible for education and sport

TASK PERFORMERS
- Disability organisations and societies
- Institutions for persons with special needs
- Association of Social Institutes of Slovenia
- Society of Physiotherapists of Slovenia
- Medical institutions (hospitals, primary health care centres, health resorts)
Promotion of education and training of professional personnel from the tourist sector in healthy lifestyles and health enhancing physical activity in tourist environments

GOALS
- Provide adequate knowledge to tourist workers and other professional workers in tourism concerning health enhancing physical activity and healthy lifestyle
- Introduce a new study programme and the occupation of "health promoter" in tourism

TASKS
- Promote or update the subject matter on the role of a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activities, including their various options, in the curricula of tourist branch schools
- Implement the programmes of continuous education on a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity for health promoters in tourism
- Prepare and introduce a new study programme and the occupation of "health promoter" in tourism

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport
- Ministry responsible for higher education and science
- Ministry responsible for the economy

TASK PERFORMERS
- Centre for Vocational Training
- CINDI Slovenia
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- Secondary schools, colleges and higher education institutions for catering and tourism
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia
- Tourist Workers Chamber
- Faculty of Physical Education

Introduction of a licensing system for advisors and providers of health enhancing physical activities

GOALS
- Providing a suitable professional level of extracurricular health activities (outside the formal school system)

TASKS
- Introduction of a licensing system for advisors and providers of health enhancing physical activities

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
TASK PERFORMERS
- Faculty of Physical Education
- CINDI Slovenia
- Faculties of education
- Colleges of health studies

Strategy for increased accessibility and quality of health enhancing physical activities

- Improved offer of quality programmes in health enhancing physical activities

GOALS
- Greater offer of quality, safe and widely accessible programmes of health enhancing physical activity aiming to instil an active lifestyle
- Provide quality infrastructure, services and other facilities in support of mass recreation activities
- Extend the offer of programmes for daily physical activity of children and adolescents
- Strengthen the network of local providers of organised physical activity (societies, clubs, etc.)

TASKS
- Develop the guidelines for new systemic or legislative solutions allowing accessible and satisfactory provision of health enhancing physical activities to all
- Develop the guidelines for the preparation of programmes for various target groups in compliance with their needs and abilities
- Develop quality standards for those institutions that will implement physical activity programmes
- Establish control over professional competence of managerial work
- Establish an information network on physical activity programmes
- Establish a register of providers of physical activity programmes
- Develop a modular/certification system of education for the providers of physical activities so they may advance their knowledge
- Provide continuous training and advanced training and testing of personnel for the management of physical activity programmes
- Implement a pilot project on a national programme for the promotion of health enhancing physical activity in model schools and kindergartens (6 primary schools, 6 kindergartens, 4 secondary schools)
- Develop and implement model cooperation between physical education teachers and general practitioners
- Develop attractive syllabi of physical education and additional programmes of health enhancing physical activity aiming to instil an active lifestyle into children and adolescents
- Introduce a national programme of health enhancing physical activities into all primary and secondary schools, and kindergartens
- Prepare a common information system for monitoring the health and physical activity status of children and adolescents
- Systemic support to local providers of organised health enhancing physical activity
- Expert coordination of provided (non) organised health enhancing physical activity

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport

TASK PERFORMERS
- Faculty of Physical Education
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- CINDI Slovenia
- Colleges of health studies
- Faculty of Education
- Both faculties of medicine
- Physical education teachers
- Institute of Sport of the RS
- National Institute of Sport of the RS
- Olympic Committee of Slovenia, and sport associations
II. Physical Activity in the Working Environment

Establish the culture of health enhancing physical activities during work and expand their programmes into working environments

Strategic goals of the field
• enhance a positive attitude of the management and workers in companies, their level of information and knowledge about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity during work in order to maintain and improve their health, well-being and increase work effectiveness;
• transfer the examples of good practice from the promotion of health at work and in the working environment projects into Slovene companies;
Health enhancing physical activity strategies in the working environment

Promotion, development and implementation of health and physical activity promotion programmes for workers

GOALS
- Develop the awareness of employees and employers on the importance of a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity for creativity and productivity
- Introduce a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity into companies (during work and outside work) and promote examples of good practice
- Decrease the number of accidents at work and the incidence of sick-leave
- Reduce work-related disability, the incidence of occupational diseases and morbidity related to work and unhealthy lifestyle

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES
- Prepare the content and the implementation plan of the health promoting programme for workers entitled “Fit for work”
- Carry out a promotion campaign “Fit for work”
- Carry out a pilot project in interested companies
- Prepare a co-financing programme for the promotion of health and health enhancing physical activities in companies
- Implement the programme “Fit for work” in interested companies
- Implement the “Move Europe” project

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for labour, family and social affairs
- Ministry responsible for the economy

TASK PERFORMERS
- Clinical Institute of Occupational Medicine, the Sports and Transport Medicine
- CINDI Slovenia
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- Regional health care institutes
- Health Education Centres
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia
- Employers’ Association of the RS
- Chamber of Craft of Slovenia
- Trade unions
III. The Field of Transport-Related Health Enhancing Physical Activity

Establish the culture of health enhancing physical activity related to transportation in all population groups and provide conditions for safe walking and cycling

Strategic goals of the field
- adapt spatial plans and develop urban areas in a way that reduces the need for car travel and shortens individual trails;
- establish conditions for urban planners and operators of public transport which allow them to combine public transport with walking and cycling;
- provide new or improved transport infrastructure which includes cycling and walking trails;
- provide adequate parking space for bicycles;
- develop appropriate public and promotional measures.
Strategies for increasing active transportation modes to enhance health

Promotion of transportation modes involving health enhancing physical activity and improvement of traffic infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists

GOALS
- Increase the proportion of active participants (pedestrians and cyclists) in traffic
- Ensure conditions for a safe, effective and pleasant traffic of pedestrians and cyclists

TASKS AND ACTIVITIES
- Adapt spatial plans and develop urban areas in a way that reduces the need for car travel and shortens individual trails
- Establish conditions for urban planners and operators of public transport which allow them to combine public transport with walking and cycling
- Provide new or improved transport infrastructure which includes cycling and walking trails
- Provide adequate parking space for bicycles
- Ensure conditions for a safe, effective and pleasant traffic of pedestrians and cyclists
- Design and promote recommendations on the importance of safe modes of transport (use of helmet, appropriate speed, choice of safe surfaces for pedestrians and safe surfaces for cyclists)
- Strengthen the knowledge, skills, awareness and motivation of different road users with regard to the importance of safe modes of transport

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for transport
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for the environment and spatial planning
- Ministry responsible for regional development and local self-government
- Ministry responsible for public administration
- Local communities

TASK PERFORMERS
- Directorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Roads
- Local communities
- Institutes for the environment
- Working organisations
- Regional health care institutes
- CINDI Slovenia
PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND HEALTH INDICATORS

GOALS
- Define indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of promotional strategies for health enhancing physical activity
- Improve the collection and upgrade internationally comparable plans for data collection
- Cost/benefit analysis of strategies and action plans for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and health enhancing physical activity

TASKS
- Determine international and country specific indicators in the Republic of Slovenia concerning health enhancing physical activity
- Improve the organisation of sectoral and inter sectoral data collection for the indicators of the implementation of strategies which promote health enhancing physical activity (Statistical Health Panel)
- Link the system of data collection on health enhancing physical activity with an internationally comparable system
- Link the system for collecting data on health enhancing physical activity with an internationally comparable system
- Establish cost/benefit analyses in the implementation of individual strategies and action plans
- Provide an information system of providers of health enhancing physical activities which is accessible to both the professional and lay public
- Organise the collection of data for the establishment and follow-up of health indicators concerning health enhancing physical activity
- Update and maintain the information system for fundamental areas of health enhancing physical activity in Slovenia

MINISTRIES RESPONSIBLE
- Ministry responsible for health
- Ministry responsible for education and sport
- Ministry responsible for higher education and science

TASK PERFORMERS
- Institute of Public Health of the RS
- CINDI Slovenia
- Faculties
- Institute for sport
- Providers of health enhancing physical activities
DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY IN THE SPHERE OF HEALTH ENHANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SLOVENIA (FROM 2000 TO 2006)

The initiative and the outline concepts for the preparation of a national strategy for the promotion of exercise for health in Slovenia was provided in the late 1990s, on the basis of certain models of good practice from other countries, by the CINDI Slovenia programme, which even then was actively involved in the European HEPA (Health Enhancing Physical Activity) network.

The first preliminary meeting for the development of the strategy took place at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Slovenia on 26 June 2000. It was attended by 18 representatives of healthcare, sport, transport, education, universities, research institutions and professional associations, and a foreign guest, Professor Pekka Oja, a well-known Finnish expert from the UKK Institute in Tampere and one of the key figures in Finland's HEPA network. At the meeting it was agreed that CINDI Slovenia should prepare proposals on how to approach the organisation and development of a national strategy in this field. These proposals were the basis of the second preliminary meeting in early December of the same year, attended by 30 representatives of the same departments. At this meeting it was agreed that further coordination and the actual elaboration of the national strategy would be taken over by the Ministry of Health. At the same time an expert meeting was organised, attended by 50 officials, professionals and researchers, for the purpose of acquainting them with research findings on the health benefits of physical/sports activities, the implementation of research findings in public health practice, and the European and national prospects of exercise for health.

In March 2001 the Ministry of Health completed the first draft of national guidelines for the strategy, including the essential findings of the meetings to date and the experiences of some other countries. The draft envisaged an integrated systematic approach and multilevel, cross-cutting and multidisciplinary (co)operation. At the end of March of the same year, a meeting was organised on the joint cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Health, at which the close cooperation of the two ministries within the context of the project was agreed.

On 27 June 2001 the Minister of Health appointed a project group for the enhancement of health through movement and sports recreation as the expert and advisory body of the Ministry of Health for the sphere of the national programme and strategy for health enhancement through exercise and sports recreation. Zlatko Fras MD was appointed to chair the working group. A group secretary was appointed by the ministry's technical services. The other members of the group were representatives of key ministries, the Faculty of Sport of the University of Ljubljana and numerous NGOs and societies. This group prepared the starting points and the structural outline of the strategy. In September 2001, at the initiative of the working group, eight project subgroups were appointed at the initiative of the working group for the preparation of the objectives of the strategy for the promotion of exercise for health among certain target population groups or environments, as follows:

- children and adolescents (leader Dr Rado Pišot),
- exercise at work (leader Dr Metoda Dodč Fikfak),
- the family (leader Danica Rotar Pavlič),
• the elderly (leader Dr Jožica Šelb),
• healthy transport means (leader Samo Kuščer),
• the health sector (leader Zlatko Fras),
• sports organisations (leader Iztok Retar) and
• people with special needs (leader Dr Herman Berčič).

The period from July 2001 to April 2002 was a period of intensive work. On the basis of the material submitted, each subgroup tackled the elaboration of its own action plan, in which, on the basis of a situation analysis, it defined objectives, key areas of work, key responsible figures, key roles in the project and the tasks of individual figures, envisaged effects and key sources of data. Following reception of the products of the working subgroups, a workshop was organised at which the individual projects were presented and discussed. At the celebration marking World Health Day on 5 April 2002, on the basis of the draft text prepared by the leaders of the project working group, the participants adopted a declaration entitled “Through Exercise to Health” in which they formulated the need for immediate action, defined key figures and adopted a number of orientations that have already been tested and recommended in this field in certain other EU Member States.

Between 18 and 21 April 2002 an international conference on the promotion of health through exercise and healthy eating was held in Radenci. At this conference the results to date and further intentions of the project working group were presented to the international and domestic professional public, while the basic orientations from the nascent national strategy were also built into the so-called Radenci Declaration. This document represents one of the first documents at the international level to highlight the necessity of the integrated treatment and promotion of health through exercise and healthy eating.

In the second half of 2002 and in 2003, the coordination and supplementing of the text proceeded gradually with representatives from the individual government departments involved. The project group also proposed the elaboration of a number of additional pilot research projects for the effective supplementing of the strategy in certain specific spheres (e.g. the state of physical activity for health in the elderly). Owing to a lack of funds, however, these were not implemented.

In the second half of 2003 and the first months of 2004 we looked for possible routes for the suitable positioning and adoption of the document at the national level. The primary wish of the planners and authors of the text of the strategy and of all those taking part in the project subgroups was of course adoption at the level of a national programme in Parliament. We were conscious of the relative lengthiness of the procedure, but we tried to coordinate ourselves in chronological terms with the adoption of the national food and nutrition policy, which was being successfully formulated in the same period. We also spent some time considering the idea of a combined document. In the end, however, as a result of differences of opinion among the government departments involved, we abandoned this idea. In the first and second cases we opted for a draft government document or resolution that in terms of effective realisation could also be sufficiently binding for all key departments.

The content and concrete solutions of the strategy were presented during their formulation and coordination at domestic and foreign expert meetings, where in general they met with a very favourable reception. In the opinion of foreign experts, the key advantages of the document are the obligation and necessity of coordinated (co)operation between several government departments, which in general is one of the greater impediments to more effective action in this sphere even in countries more developed than Slovenia.
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- Dr Metoda Dodič Fikfak, Clinical Institute for Occupational, Traffic and Sports Medicine
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