
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE SPORT ACTIVITY OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN DOING SPORT

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Abstract: The impact of Covid-19 and damages on social-economic life will last for many year ahead. Extremely affected by the pandemic proved to be the area of sport – for the first time in the 124-years history of modern Olympic Games same have been disallowed, , without the world being in war. The measurement of losses is not limited to financial side only. The aim of the present article is to establish the impact of pandemic and dissemination of Covid-19, on the health status of separate individuals, possibilities for practicing sport with children and the effect from the strict quarantine measures, on the sport community and the society as a whole. Participants in the investigation have been parents of children doing sport, inquiring 656 adult persons in the period 15-30 April, 2020. Parents have filled in an inquiry card containing 25 main and 7 demographic questions. For processing of the results we have used SPSS, version 26. We have measured quantitative and qualitative indications. The exceptional situation has influenced rather negatively the separate individuals and their families, and the most serious influence in a negative aspect being on their physical condition. 56% of the individuals under inquiry had no possibilities for regular sport trainings, and almost 88% of them attach it to the imposed prohibitions during the quarantine. Over 70% of parents deem that on-line education could not be applicable in future, at raising the prohibitions, but 30% of them are of the opinion that video materials and on-line education could be used in future. The extraordinary situation has influenced rather negatively on the separate individuals and their families, and the most serious influence in a negative aspect being on their physical condition. In their bigger part the individuals under inquiry deem that the situation with Covid-19, will reflect negatively on the sport clubs and their activity in future.

Keywords: Corona virus, sport, effects, health status, children doing sport

1. INTRODUCTION

With conviction we could state that the year 2020, was the year of Covid-19, and its impact on all areas of our social life. The investigations regarding the damages on the social-economic life will continue for many years ahead, and would barely present a full picture of the size and impact of virus on each of us. In Bulgaria, the figures connected to the dissemination of virus, show the following situation as of January 31, 2021 – totally diagnosed cases with corona virus infection - 218 618 persons, victims of Covid-19 are 9028 persons (Government, 2021). Extremely affected by the pandemic proved to be the area of sport – for the first time in the 124-year history of modern Olympic Games, they have been disallowed, without the world being in war. All competitions under the aegis of UEFA have been terminated or disallowed, the same has happened in the world of tennis, Formula 1 and etc. The measurement of losses is not limited to the financial side only. Physical activity and sport activities at correctly organized, methodic and informational support have a positive effect on the process of socialization of individual, in the context of assimilation of social experience of human being, through entering in the social environment, creating of social relations and active reproduction of the system of social links and interrelations of the individual (Карпов, 2004). Of course, the professional sport is an enormous business, but sport has a very important role on the health, psyche and acquiring of important social skills and habits (Eime et al., 2013), especially among the growing-ups. In this connection from early childhood, children are encouraged to participate in various sport activities (Allender et al., 2006), in schools and sport clubs, that exerts favourable influence on their physical, psychic and social health. Young people acquire a number of skills with sport practicing in the University (Касабова, 2011), increase their own sport qualification, and as a consequence they improve the results in competitions (Иванов, 2014). Participation at systematic sport occupations and organized sport competitions build a number of volitional qualities in the practicing ones. Sport equalizes young people independently of their birth, sex, religion, social status (Янчева, 2019) and develops tolerance in children, that is connected with tolerance and respect of differences independently of their character – social, cultural, sexual and religious (Lundberg, 2017). One of factors of the successful building of an adequate readiness for professional realization is the physical capacity for work (Атанасов, 2018). Of course, the evidences regarding the advantages from the active way of life and sport trainings are confirmed by (Tremblay et al., 2016) and (Organization., 2019).

The announced picture in the period March 2019 – June 2019 in Bulgaria has led to limiting the educational studies and their substitution by on-line education, as well as termination of all kinds of sport activities on all levels – from amateurs to professionals. In this period, an enormous part of sport clubs have entirely terminated their activity, and others have offered a number of forms of on-line trainings and education. The decisions of the government and the set up command post, connected to the dissemination of the corona virus, imposed serious measures, limiting the possibilities for open-air sport and leisure. In this atmosphere the children, doing educational-training activity in the clubs, have been put in situation either to stop occupations, or to continue doing it in some form of on-line/remote education.

The aim of this article is to establish the influence of pandemic and the dissemination of Covid-19 on the health status of separate individuals, possibilities for sport with children and the effect from the severe quarantine measures on the sport community.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. PARTICIPANTS AND STUDY DESIGN

Parents of children doing sport have been participants in the investigation - 656 adults in the period 15-30 April, 2020. The investigation was carried out on-line, using the possibilities of Google Forms. Parents filled in the Inquiry card containing 25 main and 7 demographic questions. The scope of the investigation was national – the basic part of the investigated persons were from the capital, 45% of the inquired ones, 35% were residents of small and average in size town, and 14% - of a big town. Barely 7% live in a village, which in view of the aim of the investigation is normal, due to the fact that in the Bulgarian villages there are almost no possibilities for sport and education of children, especially during the recent years of depopulation trend of Bulgarian village (Tsekov, 35/2017).

2.2. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

For processing of the results we have used SPSS, version 26. We have measured quantitative and qualitative indications. We have used the following analyses – descriptive, check-up of hypothesis and investigation of links (Lehtonen, 2004). At the beginning of the survey questionnaire we asked our participants to provide consent for the usage of their data for statistical and analytical purposes. In the article we examine the opinion of the respondents. In Bulgaria there is no practice, for this type of research, to be reviewed and approved by an ethics committee, so we have not noted this in the article.

3. RESULTS

The profile of the investigated individuals participated in the inquiry includes 66% women, as asserted by (Martinova, 2015) too „The figure of the mother is considered both as important for the biological strategies of the contemporary family part and, as a base of parental responsibilities in the family. The main group of inquired persons is of the age 35-40 years, 39% from the excerpt.

Figure 1. Profile of investigated individuals 1

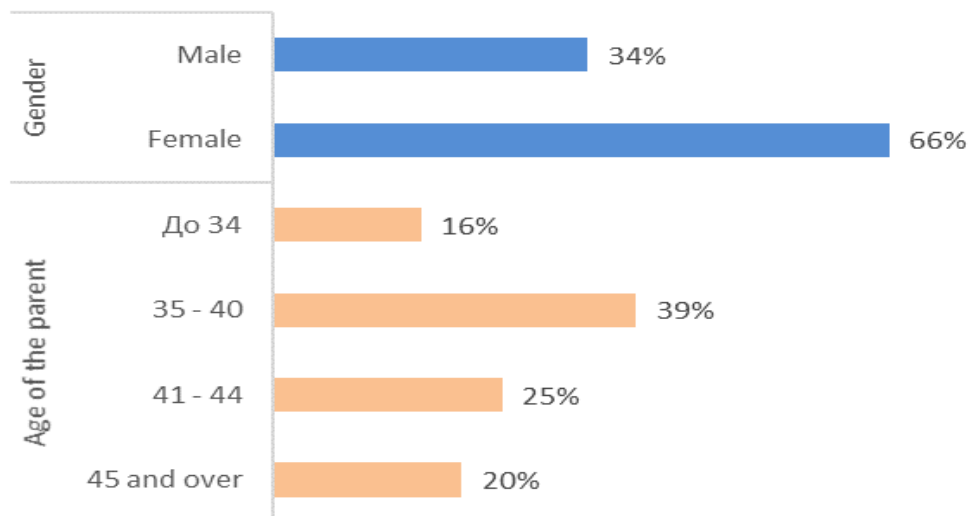


Figure 2. Profile of investigated persons 2

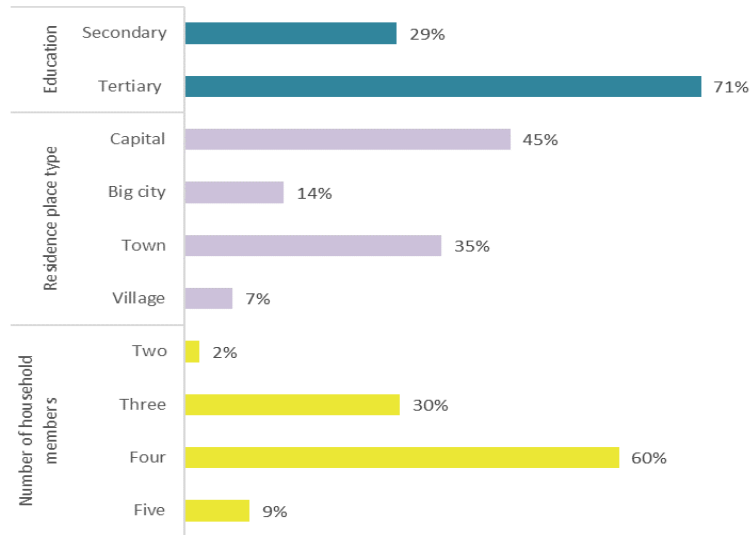
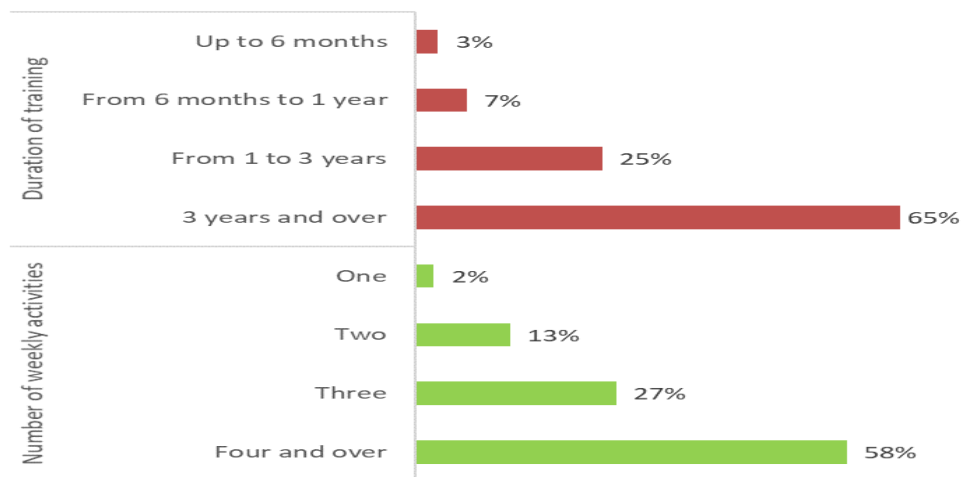


Figure 2 gives an idea of the profile of the investigated individuals. 71% of the inquired have higher education finished and almost half of all investigated ones are residents of the capital (45%). Big is the percentage of the investigated persons from small and average in size town– 35 %. Almost 2/3 of the inquired persons live in four-member families (60%), and 30% - in three-member families. 53% of the inquired persons are parents of children of age between 8-11 years. What makes impression from the profile of children is that a big part of them practice football – 61%. Except for being the most popular, football is with proved favourable effects on the organism of growing – ups (Иванов Д., 2020). According to (Krustrup P, 2018) „Football could be characterized as universal training type, with wide-specter fitness effects for the population, while football trainings twice weekly in an hour time, lead to manifested positive and simultaneous effects on the cardio-vascular, metabolic and skeletal-muscle systems“. Almost 80% of children of the inquired persons participate in educational-training football and swimming activities, significantly less are the representatives of the sports volleyball, basketball, light athletics, ski and combat sports.

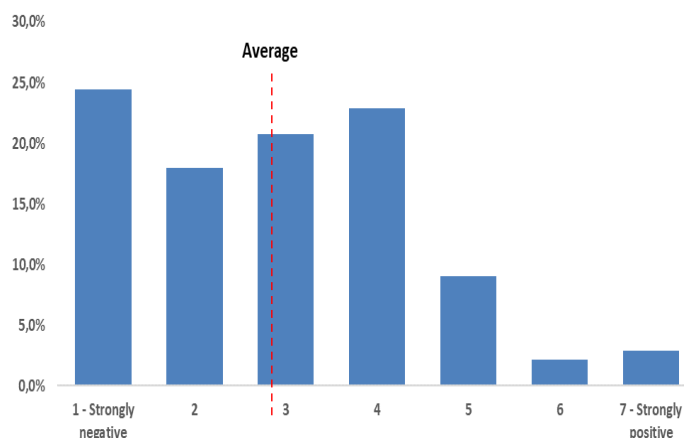
Figure 3. Profile of children



90% of children practice sport for over a year, and even 65 % of them for over three years. What makes impression is the high percentage of children practicing sport for more than three times per week - 85 % of children have three or more occupations weekly. This speaks about serious profiling demonstrating that for an enormous part of children, practicing sport is not simply for fun and motor activity, but it turns into a way of life and possibility for future realization, as professional sportsmen. (Fig. 3). The requirements of the contemporary sport, and football in particular according to (Tsvetkov, 2020) suppose „the necessity of creating of long-term training programme,

covering all sides of sport preparation – technical and tactical, physical, psychological and social, and all being integral.“ Just this assumes the increased number of trainings too, still at early age. The main results from the investigation show the impact of Covid-19 on the society, both on the separate individual and on the families. The impact is rather negative (average 2,9, Fig. 4), and over 60% of the inquired persons deem that the quarantine and the announced extraordinary situation have affected them negatively. Isolation has reflected negatively on the physical condition of the inquired persons – nearly with 60%.

Fig. 4 Influence of the extraordinary situation on the individual and family



Of course, it is logical for the influence to be the strongest on the physical form of persons under inquiry, and according to them it is due to the imposed prohibitions (88%) and the impossibility to do regular sport trainings – indoor sport centers, ban for visiting parks and sport sites and etc. Such conclusions are also made by the colleagues (Sekulic, 2020), and (Naughton, 2021) - „By 20% decreasing is observed of the days in which 30 minutes or more moderate to energetic physical activity is done. (MVPA). The change in MVPA could reflect the limits for leaving home, imposed because of the ban for leaving homes. It has been established that people with higher risk of infection and heavy course of COVID-19, are less inclined to take an action for MVPA.“

Despite the prohibitions, the inquired persons reply that their children had the possibility to do sport activities, 64% of the inquired individuals. In more than 50% of cases they have done it independently. On one side it is due to the fact that a big part of clubs have ceased their activity during the quarantine – 68%, or have offered on-line form of activities – 42%, which provokes independent work of children. More than 70% of parents deem that on-line education cannot be an alternative and to replace the normal process of sport education. 92% of the inquired parents have readiness for their children to attend sport occupations immediately after ending the period of isolation, while the percentage is lower, when attending concerns themselves – 87%. Difference could be due to on one side the fact that a part of parents are at age that is more risky of complications at eventual infecting by Covid-19. The other reason could be due to the possibilities (time, financial and logistic), that would hinder the parents for systematic occupations immediately after ending the quarantine period.

Considering the data at the two-dimensional allocations, interesting trends in the replies of the inquired persons have framed.

Figure 5. Readiness for attending sport occupations – children

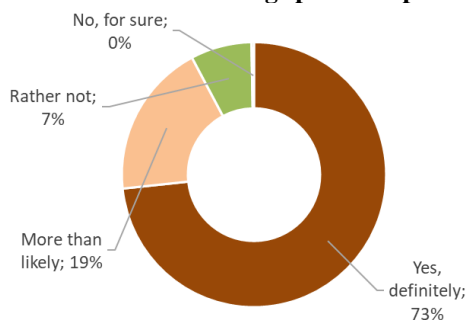
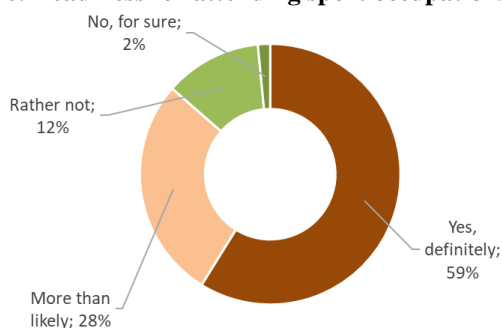


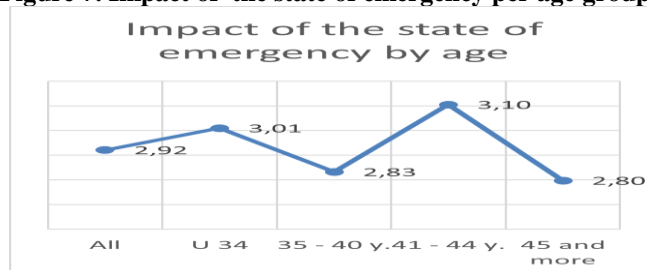
Figure 6. Readiness for attending sport occupations - parents



4. DISCUSSIONS

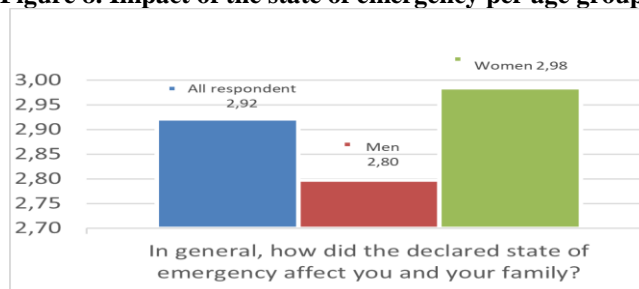
The extraordinary situation has affected most heavily the inquired individuals at the age over 45 years /Fig.7/. Maybe the result could be due to the imposed bans mostly, that affect the representatives of this age most severely as regards the physical condition, while as regards the psychic one, they demonstrate the biggest endurance /average 2,38/, and this of course we attach to their rich life experience, that maybe allows them to have more philosophic look over what is happening.

Figure 7. Impact of the state of emergency per age groups.



Women have accepted the imposed bans better than men /Fig. 8/, but with them the isolation has affected their physical condition heavily, which of course is logic, in view of the ambition of each woman to keep fit.

Figure 8. Impact of the state of emergency per age groups.

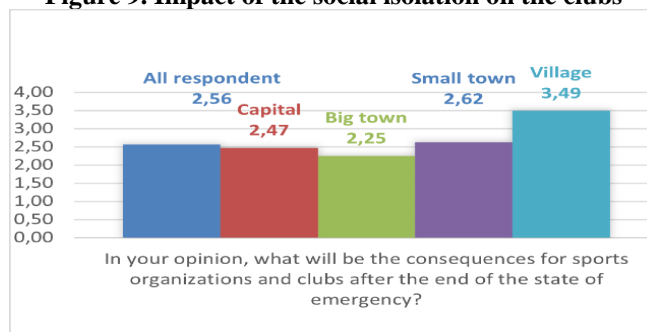


What makes impression is that the imposed quarantine has affected most heavily the representatives of the big and averagely big living places /average 2,82 and 2,81 respectively/. It is attached to the fact that in these living places the control on observing the measures could be much better, to a great extent the institutions know where the problems and conflict points could be, in order to react timely and adequately. It supposes strict observing of measures and of course discomfort for people. The persons under inquiry from the capital and villages accept easier the imposed measures by the emergency state – on one side, the capital residents could barely have changed significantly their way of life, to a great extent all work /even on-line/, and on the other side the control in villages is reduced significantly, they are also sparsely populated, which helps for almost no change in the way of life of their residents. How does the residence affect the possibilities for sport activities during the quarantine? Results from the replies of the inquired persons are similar – about and over 55% of the inquired persons in towns, or more than the half of the investigated ones had no possibility for regular sport occupations. Quarantine in villages is radically different, about 70% of the inquired persons claim that they have practiced regularly their sport activities. We find

correlation between the age of the inquired persons and possibilities for doing sport activities – the younger, the more possibilities for them and the sport they would like to practice /34 ≤ more time and possibilities for sport /. The most practiced sport by children is football, what makes impression especially in small living places is that it is a main, even the only one possible for practicing sport by the youths. The profile of parents has an impact on the choice of sport for children, younger parents having younger children choose football as a sport for their children to practice – about 70% of the inquired individuals up to 40 years of age. Football is extremely popular, easy for practicing and bears high emotion and satisfaction in children, making it a desired choice still at early childhood. Almost 2/3 of the inquired persons claim that their children practice sport three or more times weekly. In big towns and capital the possibilities for sport are greater, in more suitable time range and at better material base, which determines the higher percentage too (76,4% and 65,2% respectively) of training children more than three times weekly. Results in small living places and villages are respectively 48,1% and 20,9%, and the figures confirm our supposition that the number of trainings is determined by the possibilities for sport and available material base. Investigation of colleagues from the NSA (Димитров, 2014), confirm this fact – „basing the summarized results by the complex methods, we find a direct link with the condition of the material base. The hall and sport fields offer mainly possibilities for practicing sports, preferred by boys as football and basketball.“ It is interesting, how the sport clubs have coped in the period of quarantine, according to the inquired persons. Almost 70% of clubs have practiced their traditional activity in the period of isolation. There are differences in the replies of the inquired individuals from the capital and big towns and those from the small towns and villages. Percentage of the clubs in the capital and big towns with ceased activity is lower than the small living places. It can be attached to several facts – clubs in big towns have offered more alternatives variants for sport, some of them have offered individual education and on-line education /respectively 23% of the clubs in the capital and 18% in big towns against 7% in villages and small towns/. Similar trend is noticed in the replies to the question „Has your club offered variants for alternative way of sport?“ – in small living places nearly 40% of the inquired persons reply that clubs have not offered any variants for alternative sport education. In the capital and big towns this percentage is only about 20%. The higher percentage of the inquired persons (about 60%) deem that the offered alternative variants for sport have worked well in the period of quarantine and have reflected rather positively on the condition of children (average 3,86). The offered on-line variants for sport education meet the approval of the inquired persons with average value of 4,49 per the seven-point scale. Of course, the greater part of the inquired individuals deems that there is no way for the on-line education to substitute the traditional sport education. It is noticed that about 4% of the inquired persons /residents of the capital and under 34 years/ but yet they deem that sport education could be realized on-line. The residents of the capital and people of younger age accept the possibility to realize on-line sport education, although in limited percentage of the inquired persons.

The capital residents are more cautious as regards the possibilities to restart the trainings immediately after the end of the emergency situation – 52,2% of the inquired capital residents are convinced that will start practicing their favourite sport occupations without delay, and also 65,5% of them would allow the children to do sport immediately after the end of the emergency situation. In the remaining living places the picture shows that the inquired persons are less worried, by Covid-19 infection – about 70% of the inquired parents with readiness would restart their sport activities again, and over 80% would allow their children to participate in organized educational-training process. On Fig. 9 we see the opinion of the inquired persons regarding the impact of the emergency situation on the activity of sport clubs. The inquired individuals deem that the period of quarantine will reflect extremely negatively on the sport clubs (average 2,56). We again observe a clear trend for forming of opinions in relation to the residence – capital residents and big towns deem that Covid-19 crisis will have an extremely negative impact on the clubs, while the residents of small living places are of the opinion that the crisis will have a negative impact, but not that severely on the sport organizations.

Figure 9. Impact of the social isolation on the clubs



5. CONCLUSIONS

What makes impression is that over 60% of the inquired persons are parents of children, who are doing organized football sport. The emergency situation has rather negative impact on the separate individuals and their families most seriously being on their physical condition. 56% of the inquired persons had no possibilities for regular sport activities, and nearly 88% of them attach it to the imposed bans during the quarantine.

What makes impression is the high percentage of clubs that have ceased activity during the extraordinary situation – 68%. But this could be attached to the imposed bans, and the fact that over 70% of the clubs have offered alternative variants for sport-training activity. Parents deem that the efforts done by the clubs are applicable in their greater part and are rather satisfied by the on-line education offered by them.

Over 70% of parents deem that on-line education would not be applicable in future, with raising the bans, but over 30% of them are of the opinion that video materials and on-line education could be used for future – especially during flu vacations, and as a part of on-line challenges, for stimulating home work.

A big part of parents will let their children train in the clubs immediately after the end of the quarantine imposed – about 93%. What makes impression is that parents are not so convinced for themselves, that they would attend organized sport activities, when it is possible – convinced in it are 59% of the inquired persons.

In their bigger part the inquired persons deem that the situation with Covid-19, will have a negative impact on the sport clubs and their activity in future, which is a signal for all sport clubs and organizations for forming up of a strategy and restructure of activities, in view of prompt coming out of the situation.

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