

# The Main Motivational Factors for Doing Aqua Fitness of Slovak Women

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**T**his article represents results of a study done with group of Slovak women. The purpose was to specify the main motivational factors in behavior that lead to start with aqua fitness, to compare indicators of quality and quantity, how do the beliefs and attitudes of initiating and maintaining differ between two groups of women according to the age and facility. And evaluate contribution of aqua fitness on the life quality and overall health and well being of study group as well as evaluate the quality of the classes by knowing women's opinion finally. In accordance with the results the study has shown that the main motivation for initiating and maintaining aqua fitness are: improving/maintaining of physical fitness, stress and fatigue elimination, joint mobility and flexibility, joints and spine, back pain release, weight loss, firm body and the good state of overall well – being.

The age difference and the differences between both facilities (water depth, sound system level, settings etc.) were shown as no issue regarding the motivation, beliefs and attitudes in both groups.

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*Keywords:* aqua fitness, motivational factors, wellbeing, life quality

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## Introduction

Quality of our wellbeing or wellness in general depends on fulfillment of social needs, cultural needs, the quality of our attitudes and beliefs, and our efforts and motivation to improve all these components getting them in balance. Many different motivational indicators and reasons exist for the desire to make our life better.

Trying to slow down the process of involuntary, physical and functional wear is very frequently discussed topic nowadays and it is possible by achieving a significant impact with appropriate mental and physical activity along with healthy and balanced nutrition (Cechovska et al., 2003; Labudova, Durechova, 2005). Everyone tries to live as long as possible. The quality of such long life is a very impor-

tant issue. The consequence of our lifestyle full of stress is low physical and mental performance, and poor health with higher incidence of diseases. Except of all mentioned above Macejkova (2008), Ruzbarsky and Turek (2006) say training in water environment improves level of physical fitness, mentality and personality of human being. Women very often feel the need and they deserve to recover and regenerate mental and physical powers after long day at work and after taking care for house and needs of all family members (Gaines, 1993; Kopansky, 1993).

Aqua fitness significantly helps to reduce the risk of life threatening diseases, improves mobility and overall functional ability of musculoskeletal system, as well as reduces pain (Sykorova, Pritz, 2007). Finally, aquatic programs increase metabolism, help to maintain long-term optimal weight, improve neuropsychiatric problems, sleep quality, and help eliminate depression and coping with chronic pain. Physical activities in the water environment have specific features in comparison to physical activities on land (Sova, 1991; AEA, 2006; Dargatz, Kochova, 2003; Rodriguez, Adami, 2005). We cannot forget the benefits of regular exercises as well as healthy nutrition and their importance in the prevention of life threatening diseases (Chewning et al., 2009). Water exercise is very beneficial to many chronic conditions. The water provides a stimulating environment for a state of overall well – being (Novotna et al., 2006). This happens only when all environmental, hygienic and safety conditions and principles are kept to the terms (Baran, 2006).

## **Aim**

The purpose of the study was to determine what the main motivational factors for doing aqua fitness in Slovak women are. Next important thing was to compare indicators of quality and quantity of the beliefs and attitudes and how do they differ between the two observed groups. The objective was to specify the behavior that motivates women to initiate and maintain regular water exercise, evaluate contribution of aqua fitness on the life quality and overall well being of the study group, as well as evaluate the quality of the classes by knowing the women's opinion.

## **Methods**

The representative sample was actually consisted of two groups assessed by: age, level of experience (beginners and advanced) and location of the aquatic centre. The women were divided by age into four groups (15-30, 31-45, 46-60 and 60 and elder). The subjects participating in our research were composed of 37 women from the city of Bratislava who do aqua fitness on a regular basis, generally twice a week. Women took part in lessons in two different places and

pools; one pool was located at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports (n 19) and the other one was located in a fitness centre (n 18).

A survey was used as the main method for collecting and examining the data. The questionnaire contained 16 questions. The general questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 were asking about the sex, age, family status, active or passive position at work (sitting or standing), about the intensity and frequency of doing any kind of sports activity, aqua fitness per week and health problems including. For the evaluation of quality we concentrated on motivational factors. The questions 9 (What made you to take part in aqua fitness lessons?), 10 (What was your main goal?), 13 (Is your main goal of taking part in aqua fitness still the same or has it changed anyhow?), and 14 (What are the benefits of aqua fitness for you personally?) are most representative for this study, because they focus on reasons, goals, and benefits, what in other words means motivation. Quantity was set by the age, the period of taking part in lessons (Q 12), and by the place where the lessons were held. Except of personal background, and the swimming skills (Q16: What are your swimming skills?) we gained data and information regarding their opinion and judgments about the content of the lessons (Q15: Is there anything you would like to change or add on the aqua fitness lessons?) helping indicate the main reasons – motivational factors for doing and maintaining the aqua fitness.

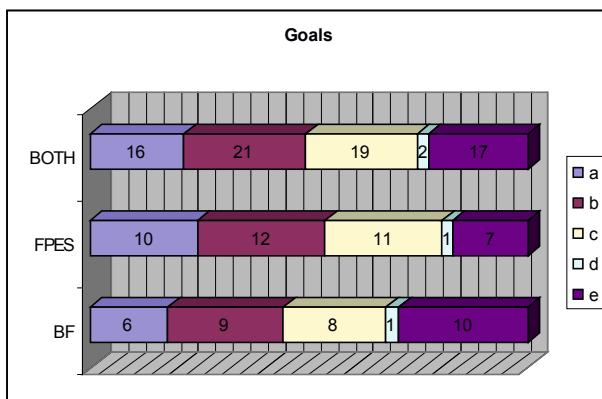
## **Results**

Discovering the causes allows us to specify the main motivation indicators of Slovak women. Following the results, we were able to see the main motivational factors. As an example of the results of this study we show and comment on illustrating the goals, benefits and changing of the goals (figures 1, 2, 3).

The largest age group was represented by women at the age between 46 and 60 years of age. The group from the FPES was slightly elder and more experienced in water exercises.

Women from both groups have the same or very similar reasons and goals for initiating and maintaining water exercise. The main goals of their participation as the figure 1 indicates, were maintaining or improving of personal physical fitness, a desire to do something for oneself (FPES b, c) and maintaining or improving of personal physical fitness and stress reduction (BF b, e). Women from both groups reported feeling less tired and much more fulfilled at emotional level after the aquatic lessons. After analyzing our results support results of (Nemcek and Labudova, 2009; Kasa, 2006) studies regarding the benefits of regular physical activity for quality of life.

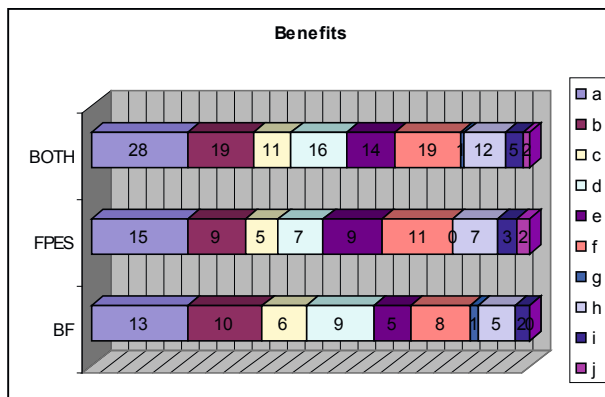
Figure 1



Legend: Question 10 - *What was your main goal?* a) improving of health status, pain release and weight loss, b) improving/maintaining of physical fitness, c) to do something for oneself, d) meeting new friends, e) stress and fatigue elimination

Women reported mostly the same benefits of taking part in our aquatic lessons as shown in figure 2. There were reported many different benefits, for instance better physical fitness, aerobic endurance, weight loss and joint mobility and flexibility in general mostly (FPES a, f and BF a, b).

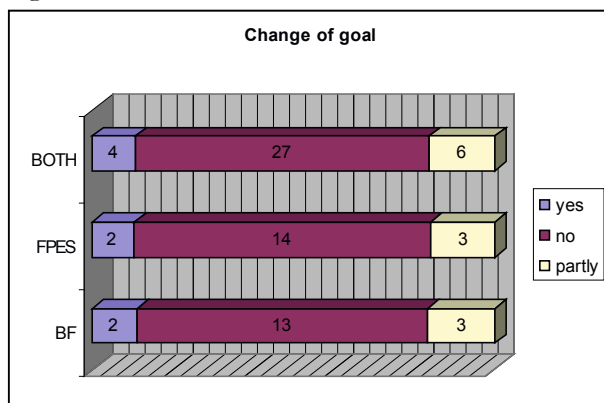
Figure 2



Legend: Question 14 - *What are the benefits of aqua fitness for you personally?* a) better physical fitness (aerobic endurance), b) better joint mobility and flexibility, c) muscular strength, d) joint and back pain release, e) better health status in general, f) weight loss, firm body, g) stress reduction and lower fear from water and depth, h) psychical wellbeing, i) better sleep, j) meeting new friends

The majority of the women spend their time at work in a sitting or passive position and responded that they were able to swim by using at least three swimming styles. The biggest benefits for them were improving of physical fitness, better flexibility, pain release, and better health state and weight loss (a, b, d, f).

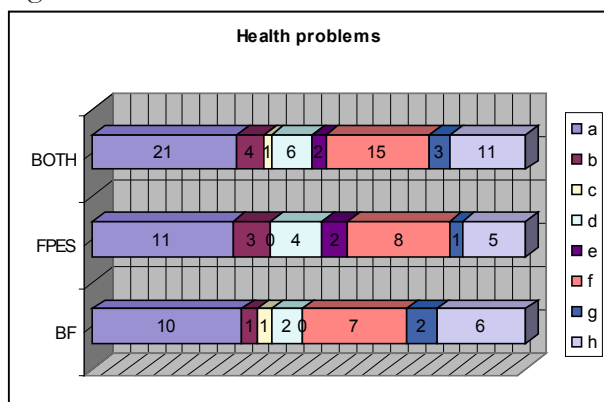
Figure 3



Legend: Question 13 - *Is your main goal of taking part in aqua fitness still the same or has it changed anyhow?*

According to desired goals and achieved benefits only four women in general reported a change in their goals during taking part in aqua fitness lessons. The majority of the women have got still the same goals or the goals have changed partly and slightly but not significantly.

Figure 4



Legend: Question 11 - *What kind of health problems have you got, if any?* a) joint and back pain, b) diabetes, c) high blood pressure, d) high cholesterol, e) osteoporosis, f) overweight, g) varicose veins, h) none, i) asthma

Figure 4 shows how the situation was in accordance with the health status of both women groups. Majority of women from both groups reported joint and spine or back pain and problems with overweight too (a, f). None of the requested women reported any kind of asthmatic problems.

## Conclusion

Women from our study spend the time at work in sitting position mostly. They seem to be very active and motivated regardless of age. In addition to water exercise, they usually take part in many different physical activities several times per week too.

Women from the FPES pool are slightly elder than women from the BF fitness center. The age difference and the differences between both facilities (water depth, sound system level, settings etc.) were shown as no issue regarding the motivation, beliefs and attitudes in both groups. Women in both groups seem to have the same or very similar reasons and goals for doing water exercises. Tendency to initiate exercise is primarily determined by the beliefs and attitudes and maintaining is mostly determined by benefits. Women from both groups reported mostly and primarily the same benefits for taking part in our aqua fitness lessons. The majority which has taken part in aqua fitness program for more than one year and 12 women have been involved for more than two years. Rather big part of the group is experienced in water exercises and majority has reported to be skilled in three swim styles at least. We are very happy and glad to know that all of them reported to be very satisfied with the content of the lessons and the training quality and that they want to continue in water exercises and aqua fitness activities.

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