School Furniture Ergonomics in Prevention of Pupils’ Poor Sitting Posture

Ergonomija školskog namještaja u prevenciji lošeg držanja tijela učenika

ABSTRACT • Physical and psychological disorders in school-age children, as a consequence of prolonged sitting in class, denote one of the alarming issues of the today’s civilization. Scientific and professional literature pays great attention to the causes and phenomena of postural disorders caused by prolonged sitting, such as musculo-skeletal disorders and back pain (MSD/BP). This phenomenon in children is increasingly correlated with school furniture design. School furniture, especially the chair and desk, are one of the most important factors to achieve the right body posture of pupils during school education. Despite this, not much attention is paid to the ergonomic requirements in furniture design, which are a prerequisite for good health, motivation improvement and learning of students. The objective of this paper is to show the impact of unmatched school furniture on the development of health problems and poor pupils’ posture through a review of scientific literature and previous studies concerning the issue. The results include a comparison of ten papers published in the period from 2004 to 2017 in Finland, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Nigeria, Brazil, Iran, Belgium, United Kingdom and India. Various databases have been used, including Pub Med, Google Scholar, Medline, Hrčak, Dabar, Science Direct and Science Citation Index. By reviewing the previous research of the selected authors dealing with sitting posture in school, an insight was gained into the effect of inadequate body postures on pupils’ health that could be used as guidance for new school furniture design.

Key words: school furniture; pupils; poor posture; ergonomics; design; health

SAŽETAK • Tjelesni i psihički poremećaji koji se pojavljuju u djece školske dobi kao posljedica dugotrajnog sjedenja na nastavi jedan su od alarmantnih problema današnje civilizacije. Znanstvena i stručna literatura veliku pozornost pridaju uzrokovima i pojavama poremećaja držanja tijekom sjedenja, poput mišićno-koštanih smetnji i bolova u leđima (engl. MSD/BP). Ta se pojava u učenika sve više povezuje i s oblikovanjem školskog namještaja. Ergonomski oblikovan školski namještaj, poglavito stolice i stolovi, jedan su od važnih preduvjeta ispravnog držanja tijela učenika tijekom školske nastave. Usprkos tome, pri oblikovanju namještaja nedovoljno se uzimaju u obzir ergonomski zahtjevi kao uvjet dobrog zdravlja i unapređenja učeničke motivacije i uspjeha učenja. Cilj rada jest pokazati utjecaj neodgovarajućega školskog namještaja na pojavu zdravstvenih tegoba i lošeg držanja učenika, i to na temelju pregleda znanstvene literature i dosadašnjih istraživanja te problematike. Rezultati obuhvaćaju usporedbu deset objavljenih članaka u razdoblju 2004. – 2017., a ta su istraživanja provedena u Finskoj, Grčkoj, Italiji, Švedskoj, Švicarskoj, Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu, Indiji i drugim zemljama.

Key words: školsko namještaj; dječja doba; loše držanje tijela; ergonomija; dizajn; zdravlje

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In the last thirty years, the poor posture of pupils during school lessons has become one of the most important research issues for many scientists. Classroom furniture affects children’s postures, comfort, health, and ability to learn. Research indicates that many school children sit in furniture that does not fit them properly. Further, school children, who sit in awkward postures for a long period of time, are prone to experiencing back and neck discomfort and other musculoskeletal symptoms that may worsen with time and even progress into adulthood (Hedge and Lueder, 2007). The causes of development of poor posture that lead to numerous health problems are more and more researched. It has been proved that postural deviations are becoming more frequent with children of school age and that they are triggered by various aspects of modern lifestyle (Gh et al., 2012; Latalski et al., 2013; Quka et al., 2015). School furniture (here mainly school desks and chairs are taken into consideration), which should enable the pupils to work during classes, presents an important issue from the point of design. Optimal school furniture design means an interaction of a number of various factors including pedagogy, medicine, industrial design, architecture, economics, ecology, technical standards, ergonomic, construction and production (Domljan et al., 2002). In most of the so-called “traditional” schools, pupils spend 92% of time in classrooms in static sitting, 3% in dynamic sitting, only 3% in active sitting or walking and 2% in standing (Domljan et al., 2010a). Due to spending a lot of hours sitting in classroom and learning at home, especially in front of computers and other IT devices, motoric abilities of pupils are decreased and due to incorrect sitting posture, their backbone becomes curved (Herga and Fošnarič, 2017). The correct use of ergonomics and functional dimensions is indispensable for maintaining good health, improving academic accomplishments, learning and being motivated (Odunaiya et al., 2014).

Although it is very important to modify school desk and chair dimensions according to pupils’ bodies, in most schools the school furniture designed by the manufacturers often does not follow neither standards nor anthropometric dimensions of different age groups (Domljan et al., 2008). As a result, the chairs and desks become uncomfortable for pupils who take improper posture during lessons. For a long time, it has been recommended to primary schools to provide tables and chairs that pupils can easily adjust, move or carry (Bažutović, 1983). The school furniture, that can be easily moved and carried, can help in improving education and health quality of pupils (Dhara et al., 2009; Purwaningrum et al., 2015).

The purpose of the appropriate and ergonomically designed school furniture is to ensure proper and comfortable sitting at the desk, under the terms set by the contemporary curriculum, during writing, reading, listening or tutoring, drawing, individual or team work, during computer use or any other activity (Domljan and Grbac, 2003). Ergonomic and fully-fitted furniture is available in the world market but, due to extremely high prices, many schools cannot afford such furniture (Domljan et al., 2015). The price of ergonomically adjusted furniture also depends on higher resources needed for systematic and comprehensive research of school children anthropometric measures in individual schools or across the country and the objective is to define educational guidelines and design standards for furniture (Domljan and Grbac, 2003).

Classroom chairs connect pupils to the classroom environment and therefore are a key factor in providing adequate physical support to pupils’ behavior during classes (***, 2008). Sitting ergonomics also has the same validity for the younger generation – there is no correct posture in which a pupil would not feel fatigue and there is no perfect chair where the body fatigue would not appear (Walch, 1985). Children come to sit in school chairs directly from the kindergartens, where there was no six to eight hours of continuous sitting at the (school) desk. Therefore, especially young pupils (age 6 to 10) need a possibility to realize a dynamic and active position of the body when sitting (which teachers should never explain as “fidgeting during a teaching hour”). In other words, furniture should be designed to meet the needs of students of the 21st century (***, 2008; Domljan et al., 2010a).

The problem is even bigger due to the impact of numerous external factors: changes in the pedagogical system of education, the economic and public system of the state, the culture of behavior, the traditional attitude of “adults” in terms of changing the habits of school equipment, the needs of any individual curriculum and schedule in higher education when one classroom can be transformed and occupied by different age groups (and anthropometric groups) of pupils, unconsciousness of most bureaucratic staff concerning the importance of carrying out the knowledge of sitting position, the anthropometric changes (secular changes in growth and development), which were already noticed some twenty years ago. In the last 50 years, the children height of the same age group has been increasing; the average height of children aged 7 to 10 increased by an average of 5-7 cm, while the height of
children aged 11 to 14 increased by as much as 7 to 10 cm. Furniture measurements in the classrooms should follow this data (Domljan et al., 2008).

The solutions in classroom sitting and furniture design should enable free movement and dynamics of the pupil’s body while working. Chairs that can be quickly and easily moved and rotated are the essence of the modern design. The requirements for the school furniture construction are becoming more and more stringent, demanding distinctive stability and strength, in particular for desks and chairs, but also lightweight portability, collapsibility, and easy storing (Domljan and Grbac 2002; Vlaović et al. 2004; ***., 2008).

The aim of this paper is to determine and prove, by review of the scientific studies, how big is the impact of inadequate school furniture, primarily chairs and tables, on the health of pupils and their sitting postures during educational activities.

1.1 The consequences of mismatched dimensions of school furniture compared to anthropometric dimensions of pupils

1.1.1 Posljedice neusklađenosti dimenzija školskog namještaja s antropometrijskim značajkama učenika

Children of school age spend most of their school activities in sitting position, while writing, drawing, reading or listening to the teacher (Knight and Noyes, 1999). Problems that occur due to prolonged sitting arise mainly because children have to sit in classrooms around 5-10 hours in almost unvaried position as this is required by the norms (Grbac and Domljan, 2007). Muscle fatigue that occurs due to many hours of sitting results in back pain, postural discomfort, headache, pains in hands and feet (Murphy et al., 2004). The professional literature pays much attention to postural disorders such as children bad posture as well as development of musculoskeletal disorders and back pain (MSD / BP) (Trevelyan and Legg, 2006; Domljan et al., 2010b; Saes et al., 2015; Yanto and Lu, 2016). Physical and psychological disorders that occur as a result of prolonged sitting are one of the pressing problems of today’s civilization. Therefore, school furniture is an essential product for the education process but also for the preservation of health. However, still very little attention is paid to the issue of the appropriate ergonomic furniture design (Domljan et al., 2015).

1.1.1 Musculoskeletal disorders and back pain

1.1.1.1 Miščeno-koštane smetnje in bol v ledina

Muscle and bone system syndromes, especially the occurrence of musculoskeletal disorders and back pain (MSD / BP), are an important issue of the contemporary society, being more accentuated in young people and school children (Jones and Macfarlane, 2005; Trevelyan and Legg, 2006; Domljan et al., 2010b; Azabagić et al., 2016). Musculoskeletal disorders are diseases affecting the tendons, muscles, joints and neck nerves, upper and lower back parts, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, hips, legs, knees, and feet (Murphy et al., 2004). They mostly occur due to non-ergonomic environmental conditions. Neck pain is the most common musculoskeletal disorder in school children, followed by pain in the upper back, and pain in the lower back (Domljan et al., 2010b). A high prevalence of pain in the neck indicates the existence of a high level of cervical flexion as well as static and uncomfortable body posture of a child when sitting (Murphy et al., 2002; Azuan et al., 2010).

Although the back pain in children has been identified, this diagnosis was considered uncommon in the clinical practice in the past (Prebeg and Prebeg, 1985). However, studies showed that the pain in the lower back is an increasingly important and growing problem of school age groups and represents a serious health problem for the wider community (Burton et al., 2004). Low back pain includes the pain associated with problems in the lumbar region of the spine, discs between the vertebrae, the ligaments around the spine, the spinal column, and nerves, the lower back muscles, the internal organs of the pelvis and abdomen and/or the skin covering lumbar region. The back pain in children and adolescents, as well as in adults is rapidly increasing, mainly due to lifestyle changes and the evolutionary unsuitability to prolonged sitting (Watson et al., 2002; Đapić et al., 2013; Usman et al., 2014), to the heavy school bags (Mačak- Hadžiomerović et al., 2018), to less and less physical activity and other current problems. This is particularly evident when, after school and college school desks, the graduates start to work in offices and continue prolonged sitting at computer displays.

The prolonged sitting in a static posture, with the body tilted forward, was confirmed as the main cause of the low back pain. The discrepancy between the thigh length and the seat depth is also connected with this malaise, whereas the discrepancy between the elbow height in a sitting position and the desk height is associated with pain in the neck and shoulder (Ismaila et al., 2013).

1.1.2 Poor posture of school children

1.1.2.1 Loše držanje tijela u školske djece

In the last few years, the concern of parents, teachers and medical professionals about children posture has been growing, as the situation seems to be worse compared to previous generations (Jones and Macfarlane, 2005; Furian et al., 2013). Based on the numerous studies carried out by different authors in the field of school-age children postural deviations, the obtained results show that the number of children with bad posture increases each year (Bajrić et al., 2012). Non-ergonomic school furniture is often considered as one of the main causes of bad posture in adulthood. Improperly designed school desks and chairs, which are not harmonized with the anthropometric characteristics of children, have a negative impact on pupils’ health (Domljan et al., 2008; Kurban et al., 2015).

Poor posture of preschool and school children is an indicator of health problems that can become very serious if not eliminated in time (Prebeg and Prebeg 1985; Burton et al., 2004; Breithecker, 2005; Cardon et al., 2007). However, very often these problems are not
detected in time. In fact, the wrong body posture is one of the initial deformity stages (Bridger and Whistance, 1998). Malfunctions, caused by incorrect posture, will be reflected first on the spine, and then on the other parts of the locomotor apparatus (Dačević and Jovović, 2013; Nikić et al., 2015a; Nikić et al., 2015b). There are no changes in the bone structure of the spine because of the poor posture, but insufficient muscle strength can lead to the presence of bad posture (Popović, 1998). When speaking about the incorrect body posture, it is usually referred to a variety of functionally bad positions of the spine such as the kyphotic (distortion of the upper part of the spine), the lordotic (curvature of the spine inwards in the cervical and the lumbar part of the spine) or scoliotic (lateral curvature of the spine) bad postures (Prebeg and Prebeg, 1985; Paušić et al., 2009; Kujundžić and Paušić, 2011).

1.2. Preventive ergonomic measures against poor posture of school children

1.2. Ergonomiske mjere za prevenciju lošeg držanja tijela u školske djece

The prevention against the development of postural disorders is a crucial element for children health as the disorders, in their progression, may advance to deformities, with consequences that are hard to imagine. Their impact is very important for the general psychic and physical development of the child (Gojković and Milinković, 2013; Protić-Gava, 2015).

Preventive measures imply the use of kinesiotherapy activities to prevent the occurrence of a bad posture (Breithecker, 2000). If a poor posture is not recognized in the preschool period, there is a risk of progression and serious changes in the spine. For this reason, practical suggestions should be directed to educators, teachers, trainers and other professionals working with children, to practice the corrective exercises and workout in order to help the children muscular system to accompany their physical growth (Cardon et al., 2007). In preventive kinesiotherapy activities, the emphasis is placed on improving all segments of the musculoskeletal system. The main focus of treatment is to improve all components of the anthropological status (improvement of muscle tissue, connective tissue, flexibility and posture). Preventive kinesiotherapy procedures are most commonly used with children in stages of development for the prevention of the musculoskeletal system functional disorders (deviations from the correct posture, flat feet, etc.) (Pavlović, 2012; Terzija, 2015).

1.2.1 “Correct” sitting at a school desk - Traditional versus “moving” sitting

1.2.1. „Pravilno” sjedenje u školskoj klupi – tradicionalno sjedenje nasuprot sjedenju „u pokretu”

Using of the furniture that promotes healthy and correct body posture is more important to children than adults because a bad habit of sitting may be established at the young age. Bad seating habits acquired in childhood are very difficult to change later in adolescence or adulthood. Correct sitting posture is an important factor for prevention of musculoskeletal disorder symptoms (Mandal, 1982; Aagard-Hansen and Storr-Paulsen, 1995; Hänninen and Koskelo, 2003; Murphy et al., 2004; ***; 2005; Al-Saleh et al., 2013).

In most schools around the world, the traditional practice is to encourage (compel to be more accurate) children to sit in the body position of the so called “three right angles” – back straight, head up and look forward, i.e. when sitting, children have to:

- sit straight, with the thighs at an angle of 90° to the spine – forming the right angle
- have knees bent at an angle of 90°, keeping their legs straight – forming the second right angle
- have legs bent at ankle at an angle of 90°, resting on the floor – forming the third right angle (***, 2005; Grbac and Domljan, 2007).

Regrettably, despite this practice and the efforts of teachers, from the biomechanical and physical-medicine point of view, no child can keep such sitting position of his/her body for more than a couple of seconds (Walch, 1985, Attinger et al., 1993; Domljan et al., 2010a). Fatigue occurs, the body begins falling in an uncomfortable and dangerous spine curve for the body, which, after frequent repetition, can cause serious consequences for the child’s health, as already mentioned above.

The efforts of doctors, orthopaedists, physiatrists and designers have shown that the only correct way is to enable pupils to make easy movements of their body while sitting in class, which would not interfere with teaching on the one hand, and on the other hand the students would subconsciously have the feeling that they are moving and that the muscles of the body are constantly in an active position (Mandal, 1982). It has been proven that with such type of sitting, known as “dynamic sitting”, children have a better memory, they continue to be active in the teaching process and are ready to work without any fatigue or pain (Dordel and Breithecker, 2002; Cardon et al., 2004; ***; 2005; Domljan et al., 2010a).

New manuals and standards (***, 2005; Domljan et al., 2015; Yanto et al., 2017), revised standards for school furniture dimensioning (Molenbroek et al., 2003; EN 1729-1:2015) and the contemporary furniture manufacturers focus on the design of school furniture that allows students unrestrained movements of body during sitting.

The European standard EN 1729-1:2015, which defines the functional dimensions of school desks and chairs, is consistent with the anthropometric proportions of school-age children and prescribes seven classes of size (size marks). Moreover, apart from a traditionally designed chair, which can have a fixed seat angle forward or backward at an angle of maximum 5 degrees, they recommend the design of the seat with a double-tilt (the so called double slope seat), which moves forward-backward together with the lower part of the sitter’s body and thus prevents the static position of the back, spine and lumbar muscles (Domljan et al., 2015).

However, regardless of the above, in many countries of the world, the general problem of inadequate
pupils’ sitting posture during their educational activities is still present. This paper seeks to highlight, through a comparative review of the results of previous scientific studies, the reasons of inadequate pupils’ postures and the consequences arising therefrom.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2. MATERIALI I METODE

Electronic databases, published from the year 2004 to 2017, were searched by keywords: school furniture, poor posture and ergonomics. Out of a total of 68 articles found, there were ten scientific papers that explored the issues: design and ergonomics of school furniture, matching furniture dimensions with pupils’ anthropometric dimensions, the behaviour of children sitting in the classroom, the consequences of poor sitting on pupils’ health. Based on these articles, consequences were highlighted and solutions were proposed. In preparing the paper, different databases have been used, including Pub Med, Google Scholar, Medline, Hrčak, Dabar, Science Direct, and Science Citation Index.

3 RESULTS

3. REZULTATI

By studying previous research of the authors, who have dealt with the issue of sitting in school classes, an overview of impacts of inadequate body posture on the pupils’ health was obtained. Potential consequences shown by the results are outlined in conclusions (Table 1).

The results include comparison of ten articles published in the period 2004 – 2017. The research published in the studies reviewed were carried out in Finland, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Nigeria, Brazil, Iran, Belgium, United Kingdom and India.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4. RASPRAVA I ZAKLJUCAK

The above studies showed that furniture of the appropriate dimensions is not available to a large number of students both in Europe and in the world. In the last 50 years, the height of children of the same age group has been increasing; the average height of children aged 7 to 10 increased by an average of 5-7 cm, while the height of children of 11 to 14 years increased by 7 to 10 cm (Domljan et al., 2008). Year after year, the height of children changes, while, on the other hand, the dimensions of the existing furniture remain the same, which can lead to poor posture and other health problems.

In many countries of Europe and the world, it has been proven that the existing standards to produce school furniture are outdated and should be revised because there is a significant degree of mismatch between the anthropometry of children and standard dimensions of school furniture (Yanto et al., 2017). Guided by the fact that children spend in school most of the time during the day, it is important to use ergonomically designed furniture that suits their anthropometric sizes, and therefore it is necessary to adopt new standards for the production of school furniture. Due to the mismatch between the school furniture and the anthropometry of school children, they sit in an unfavorable posture most of the time during school classes, which leads to health problems (Saarni et al., 2007). Panagiotopoulou et al. (2004) dealt with the same issues and their results proved that badly designed school furniture adversely affects the correct posture at sitting, which leads to a poor posture, especially while reading or writing.

Many authors deal with incorrect sitting and other factors that cause muscular and skeletal disorders of elementary school pupils caused by non-ergonomic sitting conditions, overweight of school bags, sedentary lifestyle, reduced physical activity, and lack of exercise. Kurban et al. (2015) outlined that non-ergonomic school furniture is one of the main causes of bad posture in adulthood. The use of furniture that does not meet the anthropometric characteristics of its users has a negative impact on health. Domljan et al. (2010a) used in their research video recordings as a method of observing the posture of children during classes, and owing to the mentioned research method, detected even 43 distinguishing postures of pupils during classes. Based on their research, the conclusion was that any new design of school furniture has to stimulate the dynamics of sitting and thus prevent the poor posture of pupils in performing their school tasks. In a study conducted by Koskelo et al. (2007), it was concluded that the adjustable school desks and chairs provide better seating and thus prevent poor posture, increase muscle strength and relieve pain. The mismatch between the measurements of school furniture and anthropometry of the student’s body may be the reason for the presence of poor posture. It can be concluded that an ergonomic intervention is needed to redesign school furniture in order to prevent bad posture and other health disorders (Dhara et al., 2009).

The scientific literature review has shown that in most schools in Europe and the world there is a large discrepancy between the anthropometric dimensions of students and the functional size of school furniture, which results in consequences outlined in this paper. Some of them are: fidgeting in classes, restless sitting in the desire to find a suitable comfortable posture, body aches, musculoskeletal disorders, lower back pain (MSD/LBP), headache and similar complaints. School furniture, especially the chairs and desks that are mostly manufactured and supplied to schools around the world, do not provide seating comfort and focus on work over a long period of time. Moreover, the application of ergonomic principles and anthropometric dimensions of school age children in the design is still not a guarantee that the children will sit comfortably and feel pleasure (Knight and Noyes, 1999, Domljan et al., 2010a). There is no simple answer to the question: “What kind of furnishings should be offered to the school classroom environment to make children...
It is concluded that the adjustable school desks and chairs promoted better sitting and standing postures, increased muscle strength, alleviated pain and appeared to be associated with better overall academic marks.

Zaključeno je da su prilagodljivi školski stolovi i stolice pridonijeli ispravnom sjedenju i stajanju, povećali snagu mišića, ublažili bol te se pokazalo da su povezani s boljim ukupnim akademskim ocjenama.

The results showed that trunk muscle strength increased in the intervention group whereas in control students' lumbar tension increased.

Rezultati su pokazali da se snaga mišića trupa u učenika intervencijske grupe po-većala, a napetost u mišićima trapeza i lumbalnog zgloba tijekom nastave znatno se smanjila, dok se u kontrolnoj grupi učenika lumbalna napetost povećala.

Further research is required to examine the association between sitting posture and pain reported at different spinal locations.

Potrebna su dodatna istraživanja kako bi se ispitala povezanost položaja sjedenja s bolovima u različitim područjima kralježnice.
Cardon et al., 2007
Cardon i sur., 2007.

Belgium
Belgija

To evaluate the effects of combining a back-care program with a physical activity promotion program in elementary schoolchildren. The subjective evaluation of health problems of school children was made by questionnaire technique. Postural analysis of the children during classroom work was made by video-photographic method as well as direct observation method. In the control group the back care program was not provided. The subjective evaluation of health problems of school children was conducted by questionnaire technique. Postural analysis of the children during classroom work was made by video-photographic method as well as direct observation method. It has been shown that children, due to a mismatch between school furniture and anthropometry, suffer from various ailments, and that often changed the position of the body during use of such furniture.

The back-care program and the physical activity promotion program were both comprehensive ones. In both intervention groups, the scores for back related knowledge and back care behavior were significantly higher than in the control group. Oba programa, i program održavanja zdravih leđa i program promoviranja fizičke aktivnosti, vrlo su kompleksni. U obje interventivne grupe rezultati znanja i pravilnog održavanja zdravlja leđa bili su znatno viši nego u kontrolnoj grupi.

The present study findings favor the addition of a physical activity promotion program to a back-care program in elementary schools within the scope of early back pain prevention efforts. Poruka studije glasi: u sklopu preveniranja pojave rane bolesti u osnovnim školama koristimo je dodati i program promicanja fizičke te jednako učenju i zdravstvenim aktivnostima.

Dhara et al., 2009
Dhara i sur., 2009.

India
Indija

To evaluate the degree of mismatch between the different dimensions of school furniture and anthropometric measures of school children. To evaluate health problems and the cause of postural disorders among school children while attending classes related to furniture. Procijeniti stupanj neuskladenosti različitih dimenzija školskog namještaja i antropometrijskih mjera školske djece. Procijeniti zdravstvene probleme i uzroke posturalnih poremećaja školske djece tijekom pohađanja nastave koji su povezani s neadekvatnim namještanjem.

It has been shown that school children have different biomechanical postures and semi-postures recorded as the evidence that children are not performing activities with their back straight and stationary. Fokus je ponajprije bio na ponašanju učenika pri rada, njihovim pokretima i čestim aktivnostima tijekom korijenja stolova i stolica u učionicama.

An ergonomic intervention is required to redesign the classroom furniture for school children of different age groups in order to reduce furniture-related health complaints. Za redizajn školskog namještaja namijenjena različitim dobim skupinama učenika potrebna je ergonomska intervencija kako bi se umanjili zdravstveni problemi koji su posljedica neodgovarajućeg namještaja.

Domljan et al., 2010
Domljan i sur., 2010.

Croatia
Hrvatska

To identify main pupils’ working postures and define them as notable criteria when designing school furniture for the future. To identify main pupils’ working postures and define them as notable criteria when designing school furniture for the future. To identify main pupils’ working postures and define them as notable criteria when designing school furniture for the future. Prepoznati glavne radne položaje učenika i primijeniti ih kao uočene kriterije pri dizajniranju školskog namještaja u budućnosti.

It has been shown that 43 characteristic postures and semi-postures, classified in four main groups were recorded as the evidence that children have different biomechanical postures while sitting and working in classrooms. Promatrana 43 karakteristična položaja i polu-položaja, razvrstana u četiri glavne skupine, zabilježena su kao dokaz da djeca smeštaju različite biomehaničke položaje tijela dok sjede i rade u učionicama.

New school furniture design has to encourage sitting dynamics and fit psychological, ergonomic, physical, social and cognitive aspects of their users. Novi dizajn školskog namještaja mora poticati dinamiku sjedenja i odgovarati psihološkim, ergonomskim, fizičkim, socijalnim i kognitivnim zahtjevima korisnika.
The research showed high mismatch of school furniture and anthropometrical dimensions, which may have serious consequences on the development of pupils.

According to ISO 5971, size 6 corresponds to the pupil's height 173 – 184 cm. The results of anthropometric measurements showed that the pupils in the 6th grade were on average 152 cm high, and those in the 7th grade were 160 cm high. It is recommended that public authorities be informed of this situation and request that school furniture be urgently brought into line with prevailing legislation.

Measurements were made on certain pupils' anthropometric dimensions, including posture, popliteal height, buttock-popliteal length, elbow height sitting, thigh thickness, subscapular height and hip width. To identify adequacy of school furniture, a simplified Nordic Questionnaire for AOS* was used for the analysis of musculo-skeletal symptoms, and parameters recommended by standard NBR 14006** were used to analyze furniture.

A survey was carried out with 65 students and the furniture of 69 classrooms. The simplified Nordic Questionnaire for AOS* was used for the analysis of musculo-skeletal symptoms, and parameters recommended by standard NBR 14006** were used to analyze furniture.

To assess the presence of musculoskeletal deformities in lower extremities, a prevalence of cervical lordosis, FHP, thoracic kyphosis, and genu valgum in 14-20-year-old students was determined. To determine the ergonomic suitability of educational furniture, a survey was conducted in 69 classrooms. The study showed that 87.2% of chairs and 45.6% of desks were totally inadequate. A significant difference in height between males and females was found, but no significant difference was measured between other anthropometric variables.

In Nigeria, Odunaiya et al., 2012 and 2014, conducted a study on the prevalence of cervical lordosis, FHP, thoracic kyphosis, and genu valgum in 14-20-year-old students.

In Brazil, Saes et al., 2015 and 2017, conducted a study on the prevalence of cervical lordosis, FHP, thoracic kyphosis, and genu valgum in 14-20-year-old students.

In Slovenia, Herga et al., 2017 conducted a study on the prevalence of cervical lordosis, FHP, thoracic kyphosis, and genu valgum in 14-20-year-old students.

More attention should be paid to implementing school-based screening programs aimed at early detecting abnormalities and taking preventive steps to reduce their consequences.
feel good?” The solution for a part of the problem is the production of ergonomically designed school furniture that complies with the relevant standards, the furniture appropriate to the size and body dimensions of different age students, which provides safety, comfort, improves quality of sitting and thus preserves students’ health. There are, however, many other requirements related to the way of teaching, functional arrangement in school interiors, ecological and sustainable environment, social and psychological prerequisites and other designer parameters (Domljan et al., 2015).

This study provides an overview of one segment - what happens when anthropometric and ergonomic principles of furniture design are not followed, especially when the furniture does not comply with students’ body dimensions. However, open issues still remain related to the requirements of school furniture design to provide children comfort, satisfaction and well-being in the school environment. In any case, the issue of adequate school furniture design is more complex than it seems, and necessarily involves an interdisciplinary approach of experts from the areas of pedagogy and contemporary teaching methods, public health and school medicine, occupational therapy and physio-therapy, ergonomics and children anthropology, architecture of educational facilities, interior design and product/furniture design, ecology and sustainable natural materials, technology and production, and others, as well as pupils, parents and teachers above all.

5 REFERENCES

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