

Active leisure time in relation to the quality of ageing

Aktivno slobodno vrijeme u odnosu na kvalitetu starenja

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Introduction and objective: Retirement is a sort of milestone in life. The loss of a professional role leads to a change in motivation for most activities and has both positive and negative effects. The free time that comes in the post-retirement period is experienced individually by each person. Pre-retirement habits and lifestyle, as well as the type of retirement, have a major impact on the perception of free time.

Encouraging elderly people to actively use their leisure time after retirement in the form of physical or mental activities is of great importance for active and quality ageing.

Objective: To investigate the frequency with which pensioners in the island and rural mainland areas of Dubrovnik-Neretva County spend their leisure time in certain ways, and the importance of the way they spend their leisure time for specific areas of life.

Methods: The study was conducted on a sample of elderly people of both sexes in rural areas on the mainland and on the islands, divided into two groups, using questionnaires prepared for research purposes. The data is presented through absolute numbers, percentages and measures of central tendency and graphically through charts. SPSS version 26.0 software was used for the analysis.

Results: The results of the survey show that there is a statistically significant difference between older people from the island area and the rural mainland area for all categories (frequency of spending leisure time in specific ways) except for: “time with family and friends, card and board games, computer and computer games, religious commitments”, as well as a statistically significant difference in the observed indicators related to the gender of the respondents. Respondents’ answers to the questions on the importance of leisure activities by category show that there is a statistically significant difference for most of the observed indicators, except for the categories: “Strengthening family relationships” and “Living a spiritual life”, which is also consistent with the results on the frequency of engaging in certain types of leisure activities.

Conclusion: Active leisure time after retirement and active involvement in the community have a positive effect on all aspects of quality of life. It leads to the expansion of the social network and the prevention of social exclusion of elderly people, the maintenance of physical activity as well as mental and spiritual components, which is of great importance for the quality of ageing.