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TOURISM AND RECREATION IN HEALTH RESORT NORTHERN POLAND

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ТУРИЗМ І РЕКРЕАЦІЯ В ОЗДОРОВЧИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ ПІВНІЧНОЇ ПОЛЬЩІ. Роман НОВАЦЬКИЙ, Катажина НОВАЦЬКА. Політехніка Опольська, Польща

Анотація. У статті висвітлено аналіз участі відпочивальників, які перебувають в оздоровчих закладах північної Польщі, у різних формах туризму і рекреації та проведення ними вільного часу. В анкетуванні брали участь 275 осіб старші за 18 років, які перебували в трьох оздоровчих місцевостях: Свиноусьцю, Устце і Колобжегу. Проведені дослідження свідчать, що оздоровчі заклади провели низку заходів для підвищення стандартів якості медичних послуг, проживання й харчування, розбудови спортивної і рекреаційної інфраструктури. Аналіз відповідей респондентів дозволяє стверджувати, що вони приїждять до оздоровчих закладів не тільки для лікування, відпочинку й релаксації, а також щоби залучитися до різних форм туризму, рекреації, спорту.

Ключові слова: туризм, рекреація, оздоровчі установи.

Introduction. Visits to health resorts for treatment and recreation have long tradition. It is confirmed in historic sources and by the preserved historic buildings. Most health resorts develop their activities in order to provide something more than just medical treatment. As other modern European resorts, they become health care, recreation and holiday centres[1]. We should expect a substantial increase in foreigners' demand for services offered by those Polish resorts which meet international standards. Such resorts will also be attractive to domestic patients and tourists who are looking for better conditions for treatment and recreation. The percentage of young and active people receiving medical treatment and using tourist and recreational infrastructure will increase at a much faster rate than in the past. Health resorts have recently undertaken a number of actions aiming at elevating quality of the services and extending their offers, mainly in the areas of health, relaxation tourism and recreation[2].

People coming to health resorts for tourism are a very interesting and diversified study group. Research of their participation in various forms of tourism seems to be justified for several reasons:

- no research within this scope has been conducted so far in last years,
- persons participating in the study try to take care of their health and to keep fit,
- Obtained results will allow to observe the group of respondents and specify their need for tourism and recreation in health resorts. The aim of the research is the analysis of tourists' participation in various forms of tourism and recreation as well as specifying directions for further development of health resort northern Poland. The attempt of assessing perspectives for tourism development in Polish health resorts was taken by examining tourists in well-known Polish spas Swinoujscie, Ustka and Kołobrzeg. It was preceded by a short outline of these towns' development.

Conditions to growing tourism in Swinoujscie, Ustka and Kołobrzeg

Swinoujscie is located at the Bay of Pomerania at the mouth of the river Swina to the Baltic Sea. The resort has a very transitional moderate climate which is highly influenced by the warm Atlantic current. Sometimes there are periods of warm and sunny weather and periods with predominance of high cloudiness and rain. There are curative waters there: sodium-chloride, bromide and iodide. The town has a lot of spa treatment objects of different standards situated near the sea[3].

¹ R. Nowacki, Tourism in Polish health resorts, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Opolskiej, Opole 2011, p. 179-180; see also Uwarunkowania rozwoju turystyki zagranicznej w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej, t. 9, edited by J. Wyrzykowski, Współczesne modele turystyki uzdrowiskowej w kontekście zrównoważonego rozwoju, published by Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Wrocław 2007.

² See more in Turystyka a uzdrowiska, edited by A. Gowt-Jeziorska, J. Wyrzykowski, published by Polskie Stowarzyszenie Turystyki, Warszawa 2005.

³ More information in W. Mechio, Świnoujście, miasto i okolice, Wydawnictwo Krajoznawcze „Gryf”, Świnoujście 2003.

In the spa two large natural therapy centers: "Rusaika" and "Baityk" operate. In the first one there are carried out about 30 treatments of hydrotherapy, kinesiotherapy and physiotherapy. A number of treatments is based on some natural resources, therapeutic mud and mineral waters – brines. In the Natural Therapy Centre "Baityk" there are about 20 hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and kinesiotherapy treatments carried out. Swinoujście was mentioned in the source documents in the 12th century. The medical properties of local mineral waters were discovered on its area in the second half of the 19th century. Bringing a railway line to this town contributed to further development of the spa treatment. The health resort attracts tourists by its old spa and historic buildings which testify to the former glory of the town. The best known are the Angel's Fort, built in 19th century and Museum of Deep Sea Fishing. Exhibits include the history of sea fishing and sea animals. Social life concentrated in the seaside district. Cultural and entertainment offer in town is diverse. There are organized: the International Sea Song Festival „Wiatrak”, the Neptune Festival, the Swinoujście Organ Nights, the Sea Days. The town has regular connections to Denmark and Sweden. Tourists may take a trip to Bornholm Copenhagen, Trelleborg.

Ustka is situated on the Siowickie Coast at the mouth of the Siupia River which flows to the Baltic Sea. It has a maritime climate, characterized by high insolation in spring and summer and strong winds in autumn and winter. There are exploited chloride-sodium, bromide and iodide mineral waters. The town was recorded in the source documents in the 14th century[4]. In the 19th century the town acquired the status of a summer resort. Buildings made of wood were located on both sides of the harbour. In the baths the sea water was used. Today mostly operate in the town some small spa treatment centers, situated near the sea beach. The patients of these centers use the treatments carried out in the Natural Therapy Centre. Today Ustka entices tourists by a range of attractions. These include a lighthouse built in the late 19th century. The tourists' interest is aroused by the local harbour where 19th century buildings are preserved including the harbour granary. In the town you can find old fishing houses. In the Ustka Land Museum there are exhibits from the turn of the 19th and 20th century connected with the town's history. In the Mineralogical Museum there are rock crystals and fossils including shells from different parts of the world. The tourists visiting Ustka willingly use the seaside promenade with holiday houses, holiday centres and guest houses located along this boulevard[5]. In the town there are organised many cultural and entertainment events including the Polish Championships in Amber Leaching. Some musical concerts, theatre plays are held there, too. The health resort has some well-equipped hotels. Additionally there are a lot of holiday houses, holiday centres and guest houses.

Kołobrzeg is situated at the mouth of the river Parskta which flows into the Baltic. The climate depends on the influence of the Baltic Sea. It has characteristics of a maritime stimulus climate with high insolation in the summertime, high precipitation and strong winds in autumn. There are chloride-sodium, bromide and iodide waters. It received Kołobrzeg privileges in the 13th century [6]. In 19th the first baths were created. After bringing to Kołobrzeg railway lines from Szczecin and Gdansk the rapid development of the health resort was observed. Numerous sanatoria, guest houses and holiday houses were built there. In the interwar period Kołobrzeg belonged to the most popular European health resorts[7]. The health resort attracts a lot of tourists by its historic buildings. Kołobrzeg is on the list of towns of the European Route of Brick Gothic. The most frequently visited Gothic building is the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church erected in the 14th century and the Detonating Fortified Tower. The great attraction of Kołobrzeg is the Polish Arms Museum. In the museum there are collected numerous exhibits coming from archaeological excavations and collections of weapons and military equipment. Tourists looking for adventures may enjoy a sailing cruise or can take a trip to Bornholm. Tourists' attention is attracted by the anchored museum warships: ORP Fala and ORP

⁴See more in J. Lidmajer et al., *Dzieje Ustki*, published by Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Siupsk 1985.

⁵Town Office in Ustka, documents regarding tourism development conditions in Ustka.

⁶More information in *Dzieje Kołobrzegu, X-XX wiek*, edited by H. Lesiński, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1965; T. Gasztold et al., *Kołobrzeg. Zarys dziejów*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1979.

⁷See more in J. Patan, *Dzieje dawnego kurortu Kołobrzeg 1872-1945*, Wydawnictwo Patan, Kołobrzeg 2010.

Władysławowo. Seaside tourism concentrates near the 26 metres high lighthouse. The town has a very well developed spa treatment base[8]. One of the best known objects is the Spa Sanatorium “Kombatant”, which offers 450 places, the Children’s Spa Hospital “Sioneczko” intended for children at the age of 3 to 16 consists of five pavilions where there are more than 230 places, the Rehabilitation Centre “Niwa”, The Recreation – Sanatorium Centre “Bursztyn”, or the Spa Hospital “Willa Fortuna”. Near the sea beach there is located the Sanatorium “Baityk” with a complex of swimming pools. The spa hospitals “Mewa” I-V (“Seagull”) situated near the sea coast have an intimate character. In the town there are organized numerous regular events including: the International Festival “Music in the Cathedral”, the “Silver Bell” Regatta and the International Folk Meetings “Interfolk”[9]. In the resort there is also an aqua park. This complex consists of several pools, water cascades and slides. Kołobrzeg has an excellently developed accommodation and catering base. It includes the hotels: the Hotel “Marine”, the Hotel “Aquarius”, the Hotel “Sand”, the Hotel “Baltic Plaza” and more. The health resort also offers a number of holiday houses and centres and guest houses.

Material and Methods. The data which are the basis for achieving the objective of this study were collected at the turn of 2009–2011. The data was gathered by means of an anonymous poll. The research was conveyed among visitors living outside a health resort. The random selection was applied to the investigative test. The study covered a total of 275 persons aged 18 or more, including 92 tourists visitors from Swinoujście, 77 tourists visitors from Ustka and 106 tourists visitors from Kołobrzeg.

The poll included questions regarding the following issues:

- the number of respondents’ visits in Polish health resorts.
- preferred ways of spending leisure time in health resorts
- the condition of health resorts’ tourist management
- directions for further development of Polish spas

Results and Discussion.

Table 1

Stays in sanatoriums of the poll respondents

Quantity of stays in health resorts	Males	Females
1	27,7 %	32,6 %
2-9	66,2 %	57,1 %
10 and more	6,1 %	10,3 %

Discussion of problems related to tourism in health resorts should be initiated by roughly identifying how often the respondents stay in such institutions. Within the study group, 27,7% men and 32,6% women indicated that it was the first time they stay in health resort, while 66,2% men indicated that they stay in health resort for the second time or that they stayed there more than twice but not more than 9 times. The same answers were also given by 57,1% of women. Other respondents indicated that they stayed in health resort at least 10 times. The same answers were also given by 56,1% of men and 10,3% of women.

The above-mentioned data indicate that within the study group, the percentage of men who came to the health resort for the first time is lower than the percentage of women. On the other hand, the percentage of men who were in health resort several times is higher than in the case of women. The situation is quite different in the case of persons who were in health resort at least 10 times. Here the percentage of women is much higher.

⁸See also A. Dudek, Powiat kołobrzegi, portret turystyczny, Wydawnictwo „Kamera”, Kołobrzeg 2005.

⁹See also K. Widawski, Folklor i obiekty materialnej kultury ludowej jako składnik oferty komplementarnej na przykładzie polskich uzdrowisk [in:] Uwarunkowania rozwoju turystyki zagranicznej w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej, t. 9, edited by J. Wyrzykowski, Współczesne modele turystyki uzdrowiskowej w kontekście zrównoważonego rozwoju, published by Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Wrocław 2007.

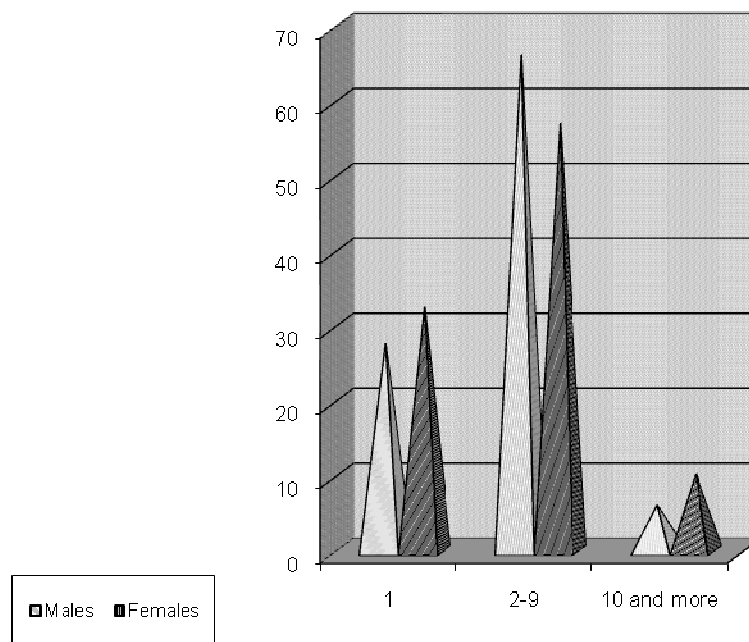


Fig. 1. Stays in sanatoriums of the poll respondents

The results are more understandable when it is highlighted, The results are becoming clearer if you state that 54,3 of respondents are visitors at a health resort. The ones who start sanatorium treatment earlier are women. Men take advantage of the sanatorium treatment when they are much older. Hence the high percentage of men in the second group (2–9 stays at the health resort). However, there are fewer of them in the third group, especially that an average life expectancy for men is much lower than for women.

The way the health resort visitors spend their spare time is also very interesting. The majority of respondents – 83.4% - declares that they come to resorts not only to treat their diseases but also to relax, rest and visit some interesting places. When they were to select only one way of spending their spare time from among other options provided in the poll, growing the sport, they made choices presented in the table below.

On the basis of the data presented in the table above, it may be concluded that the majority of health resort visitors aged between 36-50 and 51 prefer sightseeing, visiting galleries, museums and scenic places and participation in cultural events organised in their health resorts. Team sports and water sports are the most popular in the youngest age group of 18-35 years olds. In a group of people at the age of 50 and more the large number of people prefers.

Better physical condition of persons from the younger group of respondents is a decisive factor in this case. Better physical skills and presumably better state of health account for the fact that these people very eagerly take advantage of various forms of spending their spare time organised as a part of the so called cultural tourism. Both age groups 35-50 years and 51 years and more are very interested in participating in cultural events organised in health resorts. Systematic jogging, cycling, horse riding are the least popular form of activity among the respondents.

The above data shows that vast majority of tourists, from all age ranges, recognize the need for developing cultural and entertaining activities in a health resort. For tourists from both age groups, either 18-35 or 35-50 year olds, the great meaning have both the development of accommodation and catering conditions and tourist and sports infrastructure. For 50 and above year olds it is also crucial to develop health resort treatment. It is connected with declining health and physical conditions while ageing. Progressive ageing of some of those people results in a bigger interest in taking care of health than in younger age groups. It is proved by the lowest interest in development of health resort treatment in the group of 18-35 year olds.

Table 2

Age of health resort visitors and ways of spending their spare time

Ways of spending spare time	Age of health resort visitors						Total	
	18–35 years		36–50 years		51 years and more			
	Persons number	%	Persons number	%	Persons number	%	Persons number	%
Walk around the health resort	1	0,4%	8	2,9%	36	13,1%	45	16,4%
Sightseeing, visiting galleries, museums, nature monuments, scenic places	5	1,8%	17	6,2%	42	15,3%	64	23,3%
Participation in cultural events organised in health resorts or in the neighbourhood	6	2,2%	14	5,1%	33	12%	53	19,3%
Excursions to other places renowned for sights	5	1,8%	8	2,9%	17	6,2%	30	10,9%
Team sports (tennis, volleyball, basketball, football, etc.)	9	3,3%	14	5,1%	7	2,5%	30	10,9%
Water sports	14	5,1%	16	5,8%	10	3,6%	40	14,5%
Systematic jogging, cycling, horse riding	6	2,2%	4	1,4%	3	1,1%	13	4,7%
Total	46	16,8%	81	29,4%	148	53,8%	275	100%

Table 3

Age of health resort visitors and preferred directions of the more far development of health resorts

Preferred directions of the more far development of health resorts	Age of health resort visitors						Total	
	18–35 years		36–50 years		51 years and more			
	Persons number	%	Persons number	%	Persons number	%	Persons number	%
The extension of the hostel and gastronomy base	14	5,1%	23	8,4%	17	6,2%	54	19,6%
The extension of the touristic and sport infrastructure	13	4,7%	18	6,5%	26	9,4%	57	20,7%
The extension of the health resort medical care	1	0,4%	12	4,4%	48	17,4%	61	22,2%
The extension of cultural and amusement subsidiaries	18	6,6%	28	10,2%	57	20,7%	103	37,5%
Total	46	16,8%	81	29,5%	148	53,7%	275	100%

Conclusion. The study shows that a considerable number of surveyed tourists stayed at the health resort a few times and some of them even more than ten times that testifies to both trust in sanatorium treatment and popularity of health resorts. Especially since most respondents did not stay there for treatment.

Health resort visitors come to the resorts not only in order to receive treatment but also to rest, relax and enjoy various types of tourism forms.

Nowadays, health care and staying young and beautiful for as long as possible starts to be increasingly important. Therefore, health resorts should seek an opportunity for development in implementing various unconventional solutions which combine modern therapies and preventive treatment with recreation, particularly active and specialized. Health resorts should offer more and more attractive products in the area of medicine, recreation, sport, culture and entertainment. Their offers should include sightseeing tours and educational excursions, hiking and bicycle races, training activities and expeditions at various difficulty levels.

In order to stay competitive in the market, the present health resorts have to offer numerous additional services. They have to satisfy the requirements of patients and tourists. Generally accessible sports and recreation infrastructure is necessary, including indoor swimming pools, thermal water pools, rinks, pitches, gyms, fitness trails, well-prepared tourist trails, skiing trails and horseback riding facilities. Appropriate cultural and entertainment facilities are also important.

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Abstract. The present study includes the analysis of participation of health resort in northern Poland tourists in various forms of tourism and recreation and shows the ways of spending leisure time there. The poll was conducted in three health resorts, Swinoujście, Ustka, Kołobrzeg, and participated by 275 persons over 18 years of age. The poll results show that health resorts have already undertaken a number of efforts to raise the standard of medical services, accommodation and catering base, and sports and recreation facilities. The analysis of respondents' answers allows to state that they come to a health resort not only to cure but to rest, relax and use different forms of tourism, recreation and sport as well.

Key words: tourism, recreation, health resort.