

УДК 008.12

**PREFERRED WAYS OF SPENDING FREE TIME BY HEALTH RESORT VISITORS
AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS FORMS OF TOURISM ILLUSTRATED
BY HEALTH RESORT VISITORS OF POLANICA ZDRÓJ AND DUSZNIKI ZDRÓJ**

Roman NOWACKI

Opole University of Technology, POLAND

**НАЙПОПУЛЯРНІШІ СПОСОБИ ПРОВЕДЕННЯ ПАЦІЄНТАМИ ВІЛЬНОГО ЧАСУ ТА ЇХ
УЧАСТЬ У РІЗНИХ ФОРМАХ ТУРИЗМУ В САНАТОРІЯХ ПОЛЯНИЦЯ І ДУШНІКІ. Роман НО-
ВАЦКІ. Опольський технологічний університет, ПОЛЬЩА**

Анотація. Подана стаття містить аналіз знань пацієнтів санаторіїв про власний стан здоров'я, інформацію щодо піклування про своє здоров'я, фізичні кондиції, а також притаманні респондентам способи проведення вільного часу. Анкетування було проведено у санаторіях в Polanicy Zdroju і Dusznikach Zdroju. Результати анкетування свідчать, що більшість опитаних відвідують санаторії не перший раз. Пацієнти приїжджають у санаторії не лише для лікування, а також для відпочинку, релаксації та участі в різних формах туризму.

Ключові слова: туризм, релаксація, санаторне лікування

Introduction. The progressing process of population ageing in the highly-developed European Union countries makes it necessary to study the life-style of elderly people, especially those who approach their retirement age or have already retired¹. Most of these people devote their time remaining after fulfilling their family or social responsibilities to various activities, with the objective to develop their intellectual interests and to keep fit².

It is very often difficult for a retiring person to adjust to the new situation. It brings about various consequences. Many retired persons feel lost and sometimes useless. The frustration related to such emotional states very often leads to the feeling of loneliness and the perception of being left out of the society. Some people approaching the retirement age or those who have already retired, live very actively and participate in political and economic affairs, influence social life of their regions. Most often they participate in various forms of the so called health tourism, as for the majority of elderly people health care is a priority in their every day activities³.

People who are approaching their retirement age or those who have already retired and who are treated in Polish health resorts – Polanica Zdrój and Duszniki Zdrój – are a very interesting and diversified study group⁴. Research of the preferred ways of spending their spare time and their participation in various forms of tourism seems to be justified for several reasons:

- no research within this scope has been conducted so far,
- persons participating in the study can be characterised as those who try to take care of their health and to keep fit,
- the results will allow for taking a closer look at the group of persons participating in the study and assess their knowledge on the process of ageing and health care issues.

The objective of this study is to assess the knowledge of health resort visitors, who are more than 55 years old, on the process of ageing and efforts taken in order to prevent it.

¹ J. Drabik, *Aktywność ruchowa w treningu zdrowotnym osób dorosłych*, Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego, Gdańsk 1996; L. J. Lindqvist, P. Björk, Perceived safety as an important quality dimension among senior tourists, „Tourism Economics” 2000, nr 2, s. 151-158; R. Rowiński, *Aktywność rekreacyjna i turystyczna drogą usprawniania osób starszych*, w: *Drogi i bezdroża sportu i turystyki*, ed. Zbigniew Dziubiński, Warszawa 2007, p. 421-426.

² J. Wolski, *Wypoczynek i turystyka w uzdrowiskach*, Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Poznaniu, Poznań 1978.

³ M. P. Napierała, *Turystyka w «jesieni życia»*, Zeszyty Naukowe, Wyższa Pomorska Szkoła Turystyki i Hotelarstwa w Bydgoszczy, 2002, nr 2, p. 183-196; T. Skalska, *Życie zaczyna się po sześćdziesiątce*, „Aktualności Turystyczne” 2004, nr 11, p. 20-21.

⁴ R. Nowacki, *Health resort's tourism in South Poland*, in: *Tourist and spa advantages of selected places*, ed. W. Drobek, R. Nowacki, Typesetting: Opole University of Technology, Opole 2006, p. 79-92.

Analysing the number of decisions on sanatorium treatment taken by persons, who are older than 55, and the ways they are spending their spare time in health resorts, it will be possible to identify reasons behind such decisions and presented preferences.

Conditions to growing tourism in Polanica Zdrój and Duszniki Zdrój

Civilisation diseases, mainly cancer, but also cardiovascular, nervous and respiratory systems diseases as well as overweight and obesity cause more and more individuals exercise and participate in various recreational activities in order to stay fit and healthy. For these reasons a growing number of spas provide increasing amount of information on well equipped fitness centres, football fields, volleyball and tennis courts, swimming pools, health and beauty saloons and steam rooms.

Some Polish resorts made numerous efforts to improve the quality of provided medical services, hotels, restaurants and sports and recreational infrastructure. They can be treated as an example to be followed by other resorts which are preparing strategies of their further development.

Polanica Zdrój is one of the most renowned resorts, which decided to develop active tourism. According to the geographical division of the mountains, it is located in the Middle Sudetes, in the Klodzko Valley and on the two major geographical units: Bystrzyca Mountains and Table Mountains⁵. There are two resort hospitals and four sanatoria for approximately 600 patients. These facilities provide rehabilitation and relaxation therapies. Apart from treatment, a new offer of these hospitals and sanatoria is changed in order to include prevention of diseases which are the result of stress and overwork. In Polanica, patients and tourists can go on long walks along quiet forested and less popular trails. Everyone can participate in a longer walking or cycling expedition as there are excellent trails⁶. Polanica Zdrój has been making efforts in order to meet the requirements of patients and tourists. Apart from developing health care services, these efforts have been oriented towards active tourism and their objective is to satisfy various requirements and expectations of tourists. Among others, health-promoting, family and relaxation tourism is developing there⁷. "Góralka" summer toboggan run (more than 450 meters) is very popular. In the summer, patients and tourists can use a well-maintained swimming pool, tennis courts, volleyball, basketball and football pitches⁸.

Those for whom walks around the town and resort are not enough, can go hiking on trails along the Szczytnik Massif slopes in the Stołowe Mountains or the Kamienna Mountain slopes in the Bystrzyckie Mountains. Tourists most often go to the Piekielna Mountain; to see larches; to the Piekielna Valley and to Stary Wielisław⁹.

In Polanica Zdrój every tourist can participate in survival technique trainings and go on expeditions, during which he can face mysteries of the past. For those seeking more extreme experiences, there are power hang glider flights with instructors.

Duszniki Zdrój is another Polish health resort offering its tourist many interesting attractions¹⁰. For many years, the resort has been making successful efforts to adapt to the new reality. Geographical position is the biggest asset of this resort. Duszniki Zdrój is situated in the Duszniki Depression, located at 530-570 m above sea level, stretching between the southern slopes of the Stołowe Mountains and northern slopes of the Orlickie and Bystrzyckie Mountains¹¹. The Bystrzyca Dusznicka River (formerly known as the Zielona River), a left-bank tributary of Nysa Kłodzka, flows through Duszniki Zdrój making its way between the Stołowe and Bystrzyckie Mountains. Bystrzyca

⁵ *Słownik geografii turystycznej Sudetów*, ed. M. Staffa, t. 15, Wrocław 1994.

⁶ *Polanica Zdrój wczoraj i dziś*, t. I, ed. Henryk Grzybowski, Georg Wenzel, t. II, ed. Krystyna Jazienicka-Wytyczak, Nowa Ruda-Polanica Zdrój 2006.

⁷ *Polanica Zdrój*, published by: Agencja Word-Press, Wrocław 2005, p. 7.

⁸ R. Nowacki, *Lecznictwo uzdrowiskowe i turystyka w Polanicy Zdroju w zmieniającej się Europie*, in: *Z dziejów i dnia dzisiejszego turystyki*, ed. R. Nowacki, Typesetting: Opole University of Technology, Opole 2005, p. 105-120.

⁹ B. Jaśkiewicz, *Polanica Zdrój i okolice*. Travel guide, published by: Biuro Usług Turystycznych „Pol-Kart”, Kłodzko 2002, p. 45-49.

¹⁰ See also R. Nowacki, *Duszniki Zdrój*, Typesetting: Opole University of Technology, Opole 2005.

¹¹ W Zielony, T. Windyka, *Duszniki Zdrój i okolice*. Travel guide. Duszniki Zdrój 2003, p. 1; see also J. Sarostek, K. Sembrat, A. Wiktor, *Sudety*, Warszawa 1975; Z. Martynowski, K. R. Mazurski, *Sudety. Ziemia Kłodzka i Góry Opawskie*, Warszawa 1978; R. Chanas, J. Czerwiński, *Sudety*. Guide, Warszawa 1979.

Dusznicka flows through a narrow forested valley in which the health resort is situated, reaching the town from which, along its bed, a road leads through the Piekielna Valley to the east. At its eastern end, behind the slopes of Księżówka (599 m above sea level) and Piekielna Mountain (533 m above sea level), there is the Kłodzko Valley¹². The Polskie Wrota pass (660 m above sea level), leading to the Kudowa Depression, open towards the Czech Republic, is a passage to the west.

More and more tourists from abroad, particularly from Germany and the Czech Republic, decide to spend their holidays or receive sanatorium treatment in Duszniki Zdrój. In the middle of 2004, patients from abroad accounted for the majority of patients of Zespół Uzdrawisk Kłodzkich facilities. It was caused by both, competitive treatment prices as compared to health resorts from abroad and highly-specialised personnel and advanced equipment in local hospitals and sanatoria for treatment of many diseases.

For many years in Duszniki Zdrój there has been a tendency to improve hotel infrastructure standards¹³. As far as numbers are concerned, the most important are 26 holiday resorts which offered more than 1600 beds. In these facilities, apart from basic services (holidays, group and individual stays), winter camps and special trainings and conferences are also organised. Altogether, Duszniki Zdrój sanatoria, hospitals, hotels, pensions and private apartments offered approximately 3,400 beds. Estimate data show that more than half a million visitors and tourists stay there overnight every year¹⁴.

Local holiday organisers provide their facilities with appropriate sports and recreation equipment. In Duszniki Zdrój there are 11 gyms, 13 billiard rooms, 2 tennis courts, 5 playing pitches and 4 gymnasiums. Catering infrastructure (40 facilities, including 10 restaurants and pizzerias, 5 coffee shops and cafés and 26 bars, drink-bars, etc) is also well-developed. In the town, including the health resort zone, patients and tourists may use massage rooms, solaria, saunas, bicycle rentals and winter equipment rentals. In the near future, town authorities are planning to build a sports hall in which even international competitions could be organised.

Material and Method. The data which is the basis for achieving the objective of this study was collected at the turn of 2009 and 2010. The data was gathered by means of an anonymous poll. The study covered a total of 240 persons aged 55 or more, including 125 health resort visitors from Polanica Zdrój (55 men and 70 women) and 115 health resort visitors from Duszniki Zdrój (50 men and 65 women).

The poll included questions regarding the following issues:

- the number of stays in a sanatorium,
- assessment of the state of health of persons under study,
- ways they spend their spare time in the health resorts and activities taken in order to keep fit.

Results and Discussion.

Discussion of problems related to decisions on sanatorium treatment should be initiated by roughly identifying how often the respondents stay in such institutions. Within the study group, only 8,9 % men and 11,9 % women indicated that it was the first time they decided to receive the sanatorium treatment, while 85,8% men indicated that they stay in a sanatorium 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 75,9 % of women. Other respondents indicated that they stayed in sanatoriums at least 10 times. The same answers were also given by 5,3 % of men and 12,2 % of women.

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

¹² See W. Zielony, *Polanica Zdrój, Duszniki Zdrój, Kudowa Zdrój*, Wrocław 1979, p. 14.

¹³ See also: Tourist Information Point in Duszniki Zdrój. Materials on tourist development plans of Duszniki Zdrój commune.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

when it is highlighted that women start their sanatorium treatment at a much earlier age than men. 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 sanatorium). However, there are fewer of them in the third group, especially that an average life expectancy for men is much lower than for women.

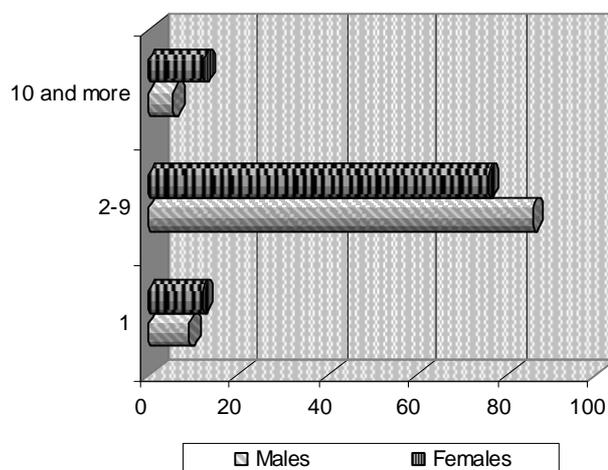


Fig. 1. Stays in sanatoriums of the poll respondents

The fact that a considerable percentage of women decide on the health resort treatment very early, shows that they care about their health much more than men. It is also supported by the answers provided to the question on past diseases and current state of health of the respondents. As much as 79 % women provided detailed answers which were very often complemented by enumerated diseases and ailments. Majority of men either failed to answer this question or answered it very briefly. It may be a proof of the fact that they are either simply not fully aware of their state of health or that they are not interested in the health-related problems.

The way the health resort visitors spend their spare time is also very interesting. The majority of respondents – 74.1 % – 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, they made choices presented in the table below.

Table 1

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

Ways of spending spare time	Age and number of health resort visitors	
	55-65 years 142 persons	66 years and more 98 persons
Walk around the health resort	21	39
Sightseeing, visiting galleries, museums, nature monuments, scenic places	55	24
Participation in cultural events organised in health resorts or in the neighbourhood	40	19
Excursions to other places renowned for sights	18	10
Regular exercises	8	6

On the basis of the data presented in the table above, it may be concluded that the majority of health resort visitors aged between 55 and 65 prefer sightseeing, visiting galleries, museums and scenic places and participation in cultural events organised in their health resorts. The group of respon-

dents who are 66 or older prefers walks around the health resort. The ways of spending spare time by the group of respondents aged 55-65 are also very popular.

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 (which is confirmed by the poll in the part devoted to a health state assessment) 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 tourism¹⁵. Both age groups are very interested in participating in cultural events organised in health resorts. Gymnastic exercises are the least popular form of activity among the respondents. Only a few persons from each age group exercise systematically. It is presumably caused by the fact that gymnastic exercises are part of the recommended sanatorium therapy.

Conclusion. The study shows that a considerable majority of the health resort visitors receives sanatorium treatment more than once – some of them even more than ten times – which allows to state that this type of treatment is greatly appreciated.

Significant part of women who decide on sanatorium treatment is well-informed about a treatment process and aware of dangers, which they may be exposed to, if they fail to take care about their health. 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 specialised. Health resorts should offer more and more attractive products in the area of medicine, recreation, culture and entertainment. Their offers should include sightseeing tours and educational excursions, hiking and bicycle races, training activities and expeditions at various difficulty levels.

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. Theatres and concert halls for artistic events, galleries and museums, cafés, teashops are visible manifestations of the health resort social life.

References

1. *Jaśkiewicz B.* Polanica Zdrój i okolice / Jaśkiewicz B. // Travel guide. 2002. – p. 45–49.
2. *Lindqvist L. J.* Perceived safety as an important quality dimension among senior tourists / Lindqvist L. J., Björk P. // *Tourism Economics*. – 2000. – № 2. – P. 151–158.
3. *Napierała M. P.* Turystyka w «jesieni życia» / Napierała M. P. // *Zeszyty Naukowe*. – 2002. – № 2. – P. 183– 196.
4. *Nowacki R.* Disabled Tourists at Health Resorts / Nowacki R. // *Tourist and spa advantages of selected places* / ed. W. Drobek, R. Nowacki. – Opole, 2006. – P. 59 – 77.
5. *Nowacki R.* Lecznictwo uzdrowiskowe i turystyka w Polanicy Zdroju w zmieniającej się Europie / Nowacki R. // *Z dziejów i dnia dzisiejszego turystyki* / ed. R. Nowacki. – Opole, 2005. – P. 105 – 120.
6. *Rowiński R.* Aktywność rekreacyjna i turystyczna drogą usprawniania osób starszych / Rowiński R. // *Drogi i bezdroża sportu i turystyki* / ed. Zbigniew Dziubiński. – Warszawa, 2007. – P. 421 – 426.
7. *Skalska T.* Życie zaczyna się po sześćdziesiątce / Skalska T. // *Aktualności Turystyczne*. – 2004. – Nr. 11. – P. 20 – 21.
8. *Wolski J.* Wypoczynek i turystyka w uzdrowiskach / Wolski J. – Poznań, 1978.
9. Compact publishing houses Chanas R, Czerwiński J. – Warszawa : Guide, 1979.

¹⁵ A. Jagusiewicz, *Zasoby dziedzictwa kulturowego i historycznego jako wartości turystyczne*, Instytut Turystyki, Warszawa 2000; T. Jędrzyński, *Turystyka kulturowa*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2008; idem, *Wiejska turystyka kulturowa*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2010.

10. *Drabik J.* Aktywność ruchowa w treningu zdrowotnym osób dorosłych / Drabik J. – Gdańsk, 1996.
11. *Martynowski Z.* Sudety. Ziemia Kłodzka i Góry Opawskie / Martynowski Z., Mazur-ski K. R. – Warszawa, 1978.
12. *Nowacki R.* Duszniki Zdrój / Nowacki R. – Opole, 2005
13. *Polanica Zdrój wczoraj i dziś* / ed. Henryk Grzybowski, Georg Wenzel. – Nowa Ruda-Polanica Zdrój, 2006. – T. 1.
14. *Polanica Zdrój*. – Wrocław : Agencja Word-Press, 2005. – 7 p.
15. *Sarostek J.* Sudety / Sarostek J., Sembrat K., Wiktor A. – Warszawa, 1975.
16. *Słownik geografii turystycznej Sudetów* / ed. M. Staffa. – Wrocław, 1994.
17. *Zielony W.* Polanica Zdrój, Duszniki Zdrój, Kudowa Zdrój / Zielony W. – Wrocław, 1979. – 14 p.
18. *Zielony W.* Duszniki Zdrój i okolice / Zielony W., Windyka T. – 2003.

NAJPOPULARNIEJSZY SPOSOBY SPĘDZANIA PACJENTAMI CZASU WOLNEGO I ICH UDZIAŁ W RÓŻNYCH FORMACH TURYSTYKI W POLANICY ZDROJU I DUSZNIKACH ZDROJU

Roman NOWACKI

Opolski Uniwersytet Technologiczny, POLSKA

Streszczenie. Niniejsze studium zawiera analizę wiedzy kuracjuszy o własnym stanie zdrowia i ich dbałości o zdrowie, kondycję fizyczną, a także określa preferowane przez nich sposoby spędzania wolnego czasu. Badania ankietowe przeprowadzono w Polanicy Zdroju i Dusznikach Zdroju. Wynika z nich, że zdecydowana większość kuracjuszy już po raz kolejny korzysta z leczenia sanatoryjnego. Kuracjusze przyjeżdżają do uzdrowiska nie tylko po to aby się leczyć, lecz także wypocząć, zrelaksować się i skorzystać z różnych form turystyki.

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, rekreacja, lecznictwo uzdrowiskowe.

PREFERRED WAYS OF SPENDING FREE TIME BY HEALTH RESORT VISITORS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS FORMS OF TOURISM ILLUSTRATED BY HEALTH RESORT VISITORS OF POLANICA ZDRÓJ AND DUSZNIKI ZDRÓJ

Roman NOWACKI

Opole University of Technology, POLAND

Annotation. The study provides an analysis of the health resort visitors' knowledge about their state of health and care about health and good shape, as well as defines the preferred ways of spending their free time. The poll was conducted in two health resorts, Polanica Zdrój and Duszniki Zdrój. The poll results show that a considerable majority of health resort visitors receive sanatorium treatment more than once. Health resort visitors come to the resorts not only in order to receive treatment but also to rest, relax and enjoy various types of tourist activities.

Key words: tourism, recreation, health resort treatment.