

**Agnieszka Surynt**

Department of Humanities and Health Promotion University School of Physical Education in Wrocław  
Katedra Nauk Humanistycznych i Promocji Zdrowia Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu

## **The issue of physical activity among students of high schools in Wrocław in the opinion of the physical education teachers**

### **Problem aktywności ruchowej wśród uczniów szkół wrocławskich w opinii nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego**

#### **Summary**

The aim of the paper is to gather teachers' opinion on children willingness to do sports, their participation in various sport and recreation activities, and in school and interschool competition. Its objective is also to obtain information on the preferred forms of physical activity and the level of physical fitness among children.

To meet the aim of the study a diagnostic survey was used and the technique applied was a questionnaire, which included 6 questions. 464 questionnaires have been analysed, which were filled by teachers from 10 primary schools from Wrocław.

**Key words:** children , sport activities, sport, teacher of physical education

#### **Streszczenie**

Celem pracy jest zebranie opinii nauczycieli wychowania fizycznego na temat chęci dzieci do uprawiania sportu, ich udziału w różnych zajęciach o charakterze sportowo-rekreacyjnym oraz w zawodach szkolnych i międzyszkolnych a także uzyskanie informacji na temat preferowanych form aktywności ruchowej i poziomu sprawności fizycznej.

Do celów niniejszego opracowania wykorzystano sondaż diagnostyczny, zastosowaną techniką była ankieta, która obejmowała 6 pytań. Łącznie analizie poddano wyniki 464 ankiet dla nauczycieli pochodzących z 10 wrocławskich szkół podstawowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** dzieci, aktywność ruchowa, sport, nauczyciel wychowania fizycznego

#### **Introduction**

Nowadays, people lead more and more sedentary lifestyles. It turns out that if even one hundred years ago 90% of the energy expended by people at work concerned muscles, it is today, especially in developed countries, this factor could be barely equal to 1. It is not difficult, therefore, to note that there has been a marked decline in physical activity for mental work (Grabowski, 1997). Such behavior has become almost a standard, that worst of all, not only adults but also children and adolescents.

There's no doubt that one of the main reasons for this is the progress of civilization, on the one hand, it contributes to the human development, on the other hand leads to its

biological destruction (Grabowski, 1997). This makes young people lead increasingly sedentary lifestyle, they are not interested in their own health and fitness, and yet not from today, it is known that a systematic activity undertaken is considered the primary stimulator of mental and physical development, affects the sporting achievements of the future, as and the promotion of health and sport attitude (Gracz, Sankowski, 2000; Osinski, 1990). There also has an impact on the modeling of the relation to the body which is relied to the shape of somatic attitudes (Sankowski, 2005). Properly dosed physical activity is essential in everyone's life. For an adult helps to maintain health and fitness, for children and young people for the proper development in all aspects: physical, mental and social (Osinski, 1990). That's why the movement is one of the strongest arguments of modern physical education teacher, but rather to the development of education and health.

It is therefore important to look and at and note the lessons of physical education a little bit more. It should also be seen in the health benefits, because the facts on exercise and health relation are already sufficiently documented and widely known (Blum, 1998; Nowocień, 2001; Robacha, 2001). Such attempts concepts they have already been taken (Derbich, 2001), and even the fitting was done for practical implementation of the urban agglomeration healthy in the city of Wroclaw (Kulmatycki, 1995). Some solutions could be taken from other countries that successfully combine physical activity with health education and the wider recreation (Smith, Smoll, 1990; Winkler, 1993). Perhaps this was also the goal of the Ministry of National Education which was preparing a new core curriculum for physical education classes in conjunction with health education as well as Wroclaw School Sports Association, which since 2003 has been implementing in Wroclaw yards and neighborhoods program „Community Sports Coach” (Surynt, Kulmatycki 2009; Surynt, Kulmatycki, 2010; Surynt, Kulmatycki 2011). Since 2008, a similar project is also conducted in the Youth Sports Center in Wroclaw (Surynt et al. 2011; Surynt et al. 2012), which, while analyzing the study of physical fitness of children, initiated cooperation between parents and teachers in Wroclaw 10-year-olds pupils, which was also an attempt to evoke greater participation in taking responsibility for the physical and psychological development, condition and health of future generations (Anderssen et al. 2007; Kantomaa et al. 2007). Fundamental question I set ourselves at this point is the question of how physical education teachers so they see activity movement of children living in Wroclaw? Specific questions are as follows:

1. What is the proportion of positive and negative teachers attitude toward pupils?
2. If, in their opinion, the young generation of Wroclaw enjoy practicing physical activity?
3. What kind of activities most children prefer to test and what is their level of physical fitness?

To answer these questions the attempt for survey was made, which aim was to gather teachers' opinion on children willingness to do sports, their participation in various sport and recreation activities, and in school and interschool competition. Its objective is also to obtain information on the preferred forms of physical activity and the level of physical fitness among children.

### **Material and research**

In May 2010 from the Youth Centre in Wroclaw initiative, the physical efficiency was examined. In that survey took part 800 students of 4<sup>th</sup> classes from 14<sup>th</sup> primary schools numbers: 2,3,40, 44, 46, 51, 58, 72, 74, 85, 90, 93, 95 and 118. It was the third round of long-term surveys, which goal was to find children sport talented.

Within the confines of physical fitness survey, concerning 11 year old Wroclaw children, the diagnostic poll among parents and teachers was carried out. The applied technique was the questionnaire. The questionnaire included 12 questions for parents and 7 for teachers.

In questionnaires the greater quantity of questions were close questions, which were equipped with so called cafeteria, the set of possible answers. Open questions also appeared which allowed to express one's opinions, and also alternative questions, which fulfilled function of filter-questions.

For the necessity of this study 6 questions from the questionnaire directed to teachers were taken into the consideration.

Questions for teachers:

1. Does a pupil exercise eagerly during physical education classes?
2. What forms of physical activity are the most preferred by a pupil?
3. What optional courses the student / pupil would attend willingly?
4. Do pupil / student is involved in school and interschool competitions?
5. What level of fitness does a pupil present?
6. What motor skills are the most developed at a pupil?

464 questionnaires from teachers were taken into the analysis. Ten primary schools were asked to take part in the research.

The other four schools that were invited to cooperate, did not return a survey results led to the teachers, while the same schools sent questionnaires filled by parents.

Among 464 returned surveys, 220 are teachers' opinions concerning girls and 244 concern information on boys.

### **Data analyses**

The results were analyzed separately for girls and boys and for each of the school. Because of the data protection, the results of the research were coded by numbering the schools from 1 to 10. The 11<sup>th</sup> column presents the average results of all the schools.

Analyzing the teachers' answers for first question, it was noticed that most of children participate eagerly in physical education lesson (81,6%- girls and 81,9% boys).

Depending on school these results were between 54% to 100% bearing in mind girls, and 33,3% to 100% concerning boys.

With a total of 30% of boys seems to be surprisingly low, but it should be noted that such a small percentage rate was observed only in one of the schools, which indicate the remaining responses, ie, "no" or "no opinion" at a similar level (Figure 1-2).

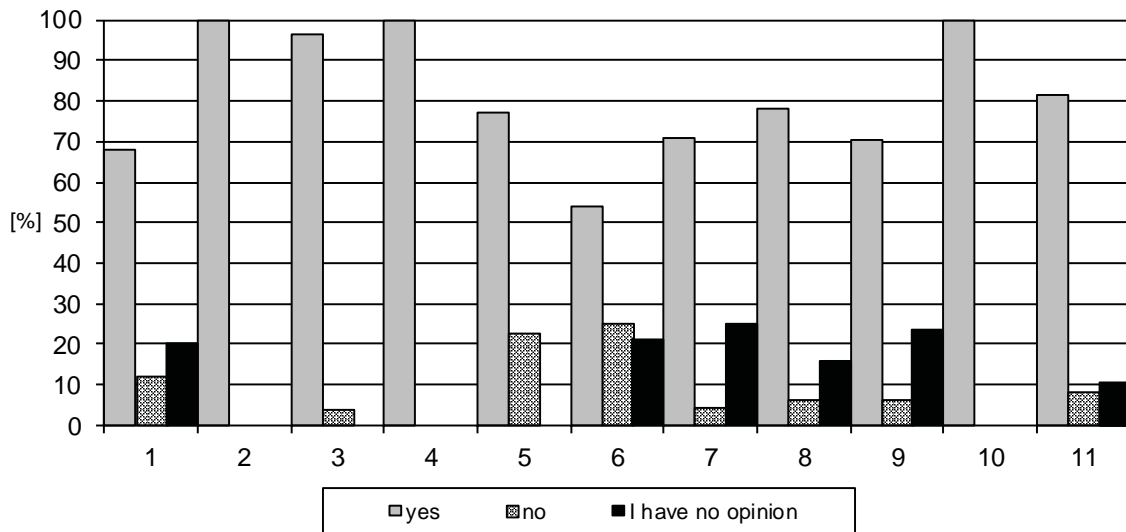


Fig. 1. The percentage of girls eager exercise during physical education classes in the opinion of teachers.

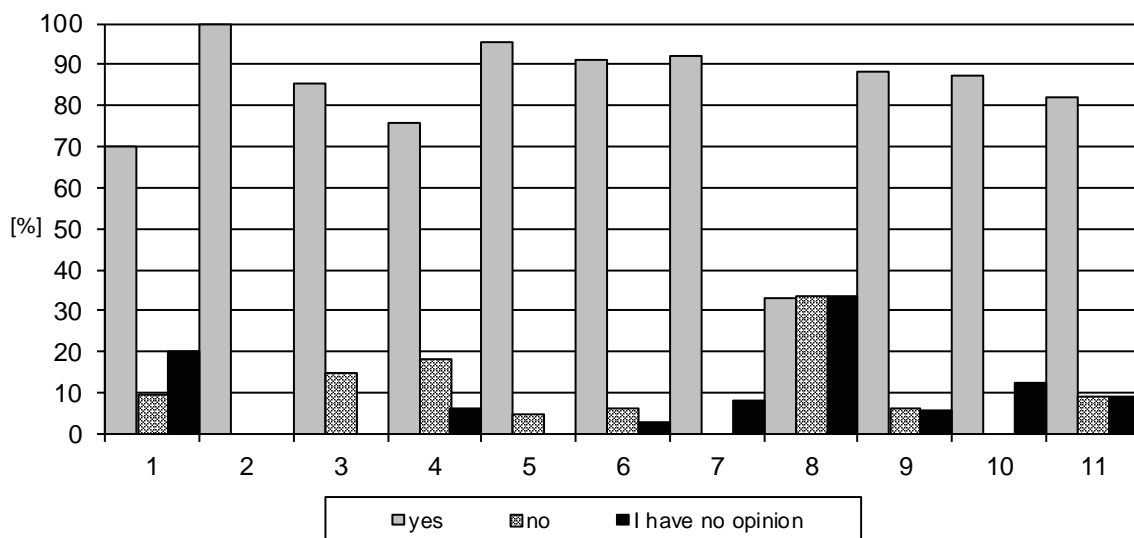


Fig. 2. The percentage of boys eager exercise during physical education classes in the opinion of teachers.

Teachers asked what sport does their schoolchildren practise the most often, answered that team games (43,6%- girls, 46%- boys). On the second place there's gymnastics and athletics. Another forms of activity were chosen by teachers not so often (Figure 3-4).

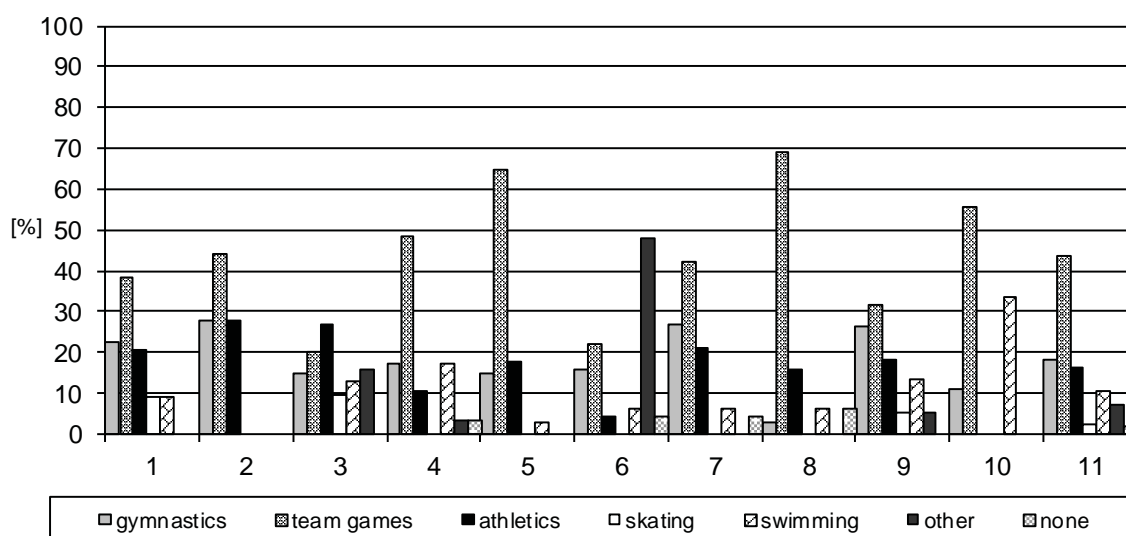


Fig. 3. The most preferred forms of sport activity for girls in the opinion of teachers.

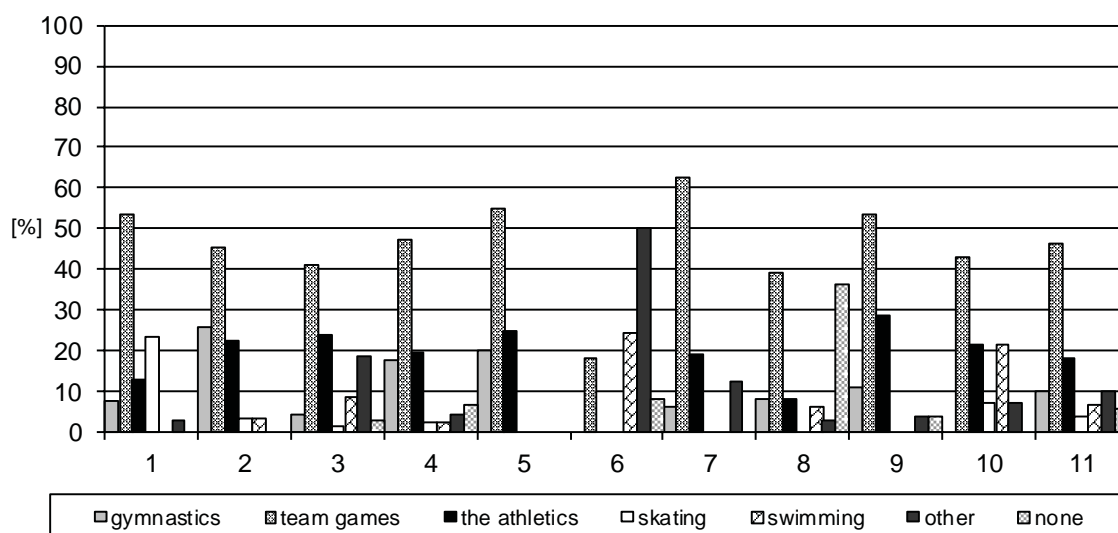


Fig. 4. The most preferred forms of sport activity for boys in the opinion of teachers.

Referring to the new proposal of the curriculum of physical education, teachers were also asked about optional courses student / pupil would choose, if given the chance? According to the teachers surveyed children would attend classes with sport, recreation and health program. Sports would find favor in the group of girls in about 53,1% and boys at 61,5%. The recreation and health program would gain popularity in approximately 29,3% of girls and 26,3% boys. Dance classes and touristic courses according to teachers would not so popular, common among the younger generation, ie male and female students of IV the class of elementary school, but most likely dance classes would be chosen by girls and the touristic ones by boys (Figure 5-6).

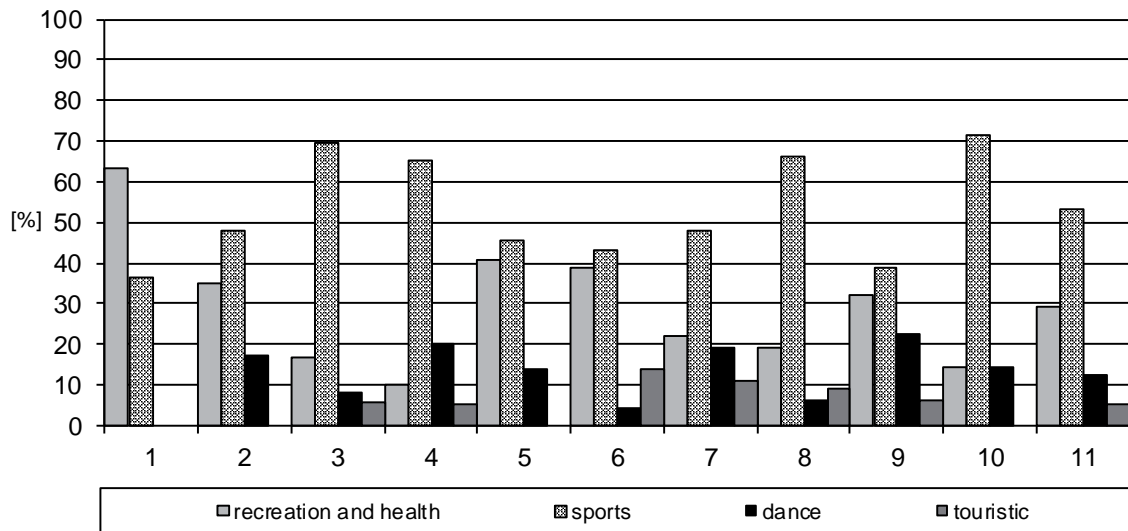


Fig. 5. Readily selected optional classes for girls in the opinion of teachers.

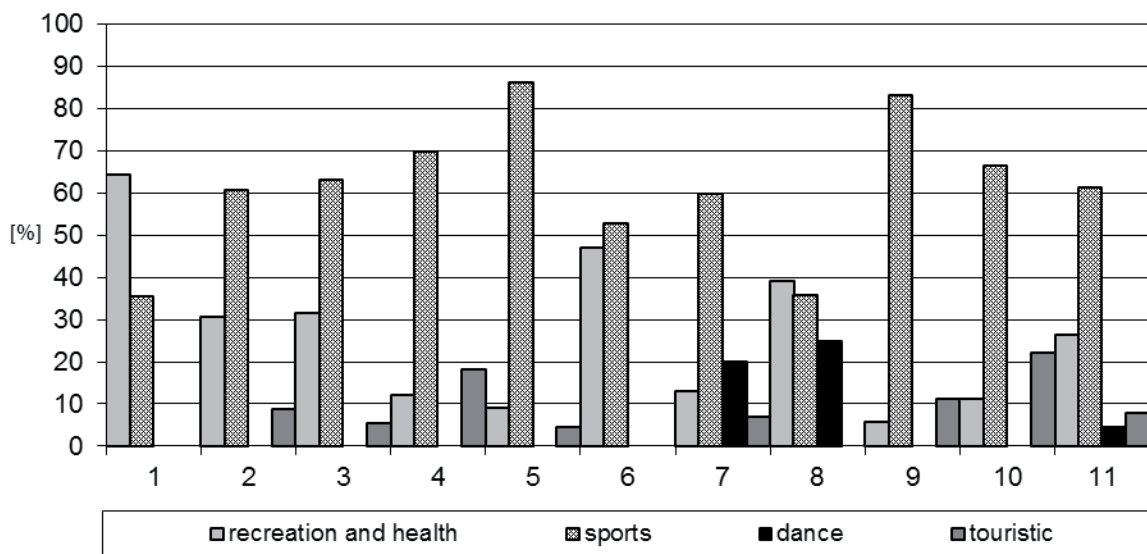


Fig. 6. Readily selected optional classes for boys in the opinion of teachers.

The analysis of responses to the fourth question leads to the conclusion that, according to teachers about 42,3% of girls and 43,5% boys take part in schools and inter-schools competition, which may lead to a conclusion that in the opinion of the respondents, that they have a predisposition to engage in sports. At the same time almost 60% of young people, both girls (57,7%) and boys (56,5%) did not participate in any competition, which doesn't mean necessarily the lack of talent in this field (Figure 7-8).

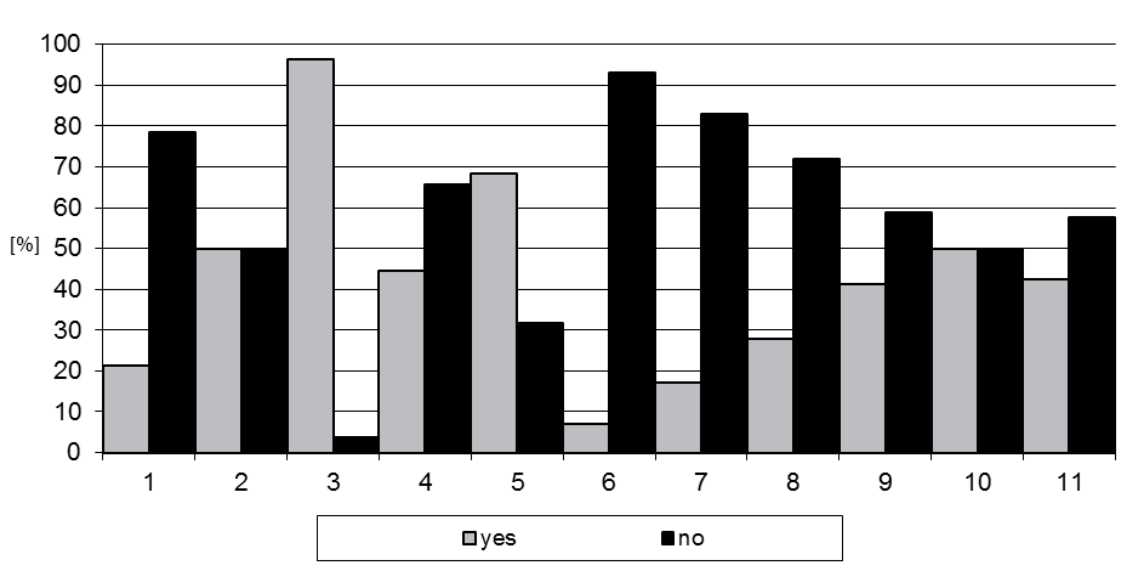


Fig. 7. The percentage of girls taking part in schools and inter-schools championships in the opinion of teachers.

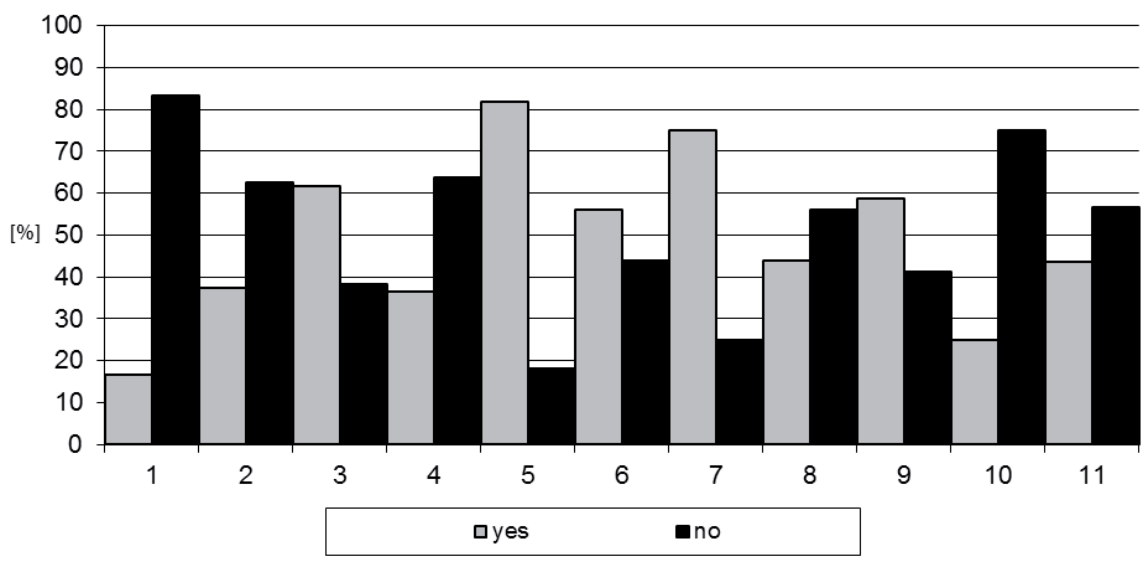


Fig. 8. The percentage of boys taking part in schools and inter-schools championships in the opinion of teachers.

Analyzing the teachers' answers for next question, which concerned the level of fitness of Wrocław 11 year old children, it was noticed that on average 40-50% teachers have the opinion that their children have got average level of fitness. In case of girls 49,6% of teachers were of the same opinion, whereas in case of boys 43,2%. Teachers of examined children rarely thought that their children have low fitness level, both among girls (10,5%) and boys (13,1%). The rest of teachers thought that their schoolchildren have high level of fitness (girls 39,9%, boys 43,7)-figure 9-10.

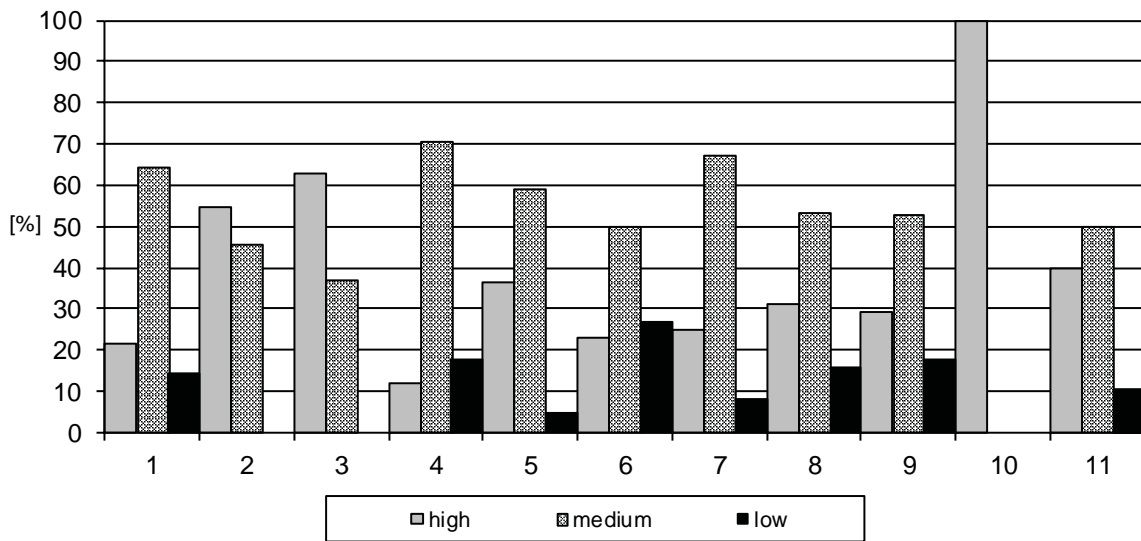


Fig. 9. The level of fitness of girls in the opinion of teachers.

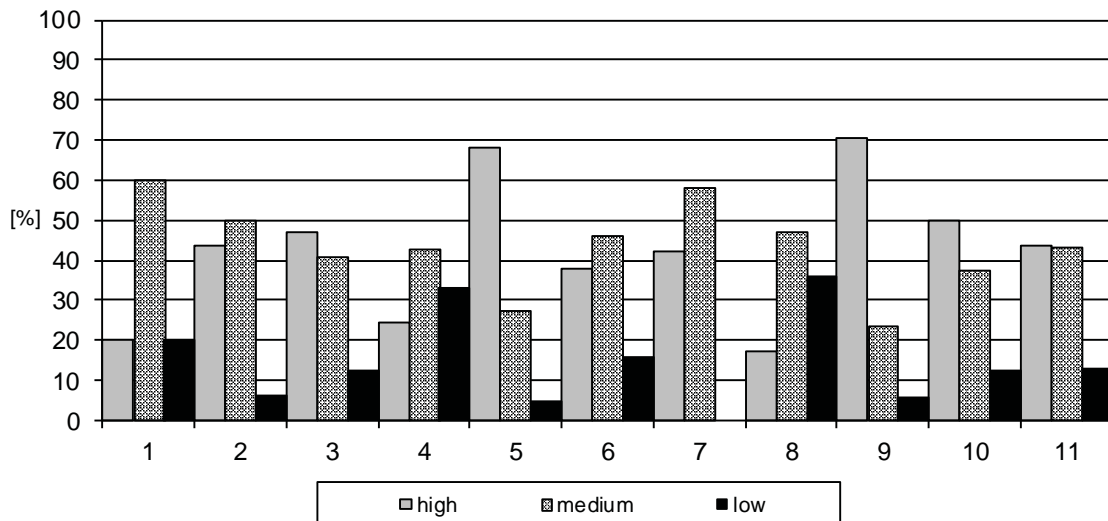


Fig. 10. The level of fitness of boys in the opinion of teachers.

Teachers were asked about the most developed motor skills of 11 year old children. Teachers answered that the most developed motor skills are speed, strength, agility, flexibility and endurance. It's worth to point that in teachers opinion girls' the worst developed motor skill is endurance and boys' is flexibility. This should not be surprising, as evidenced by the fact that during this period of development there is a sexual dimorphism in motility (Figure 11-12).



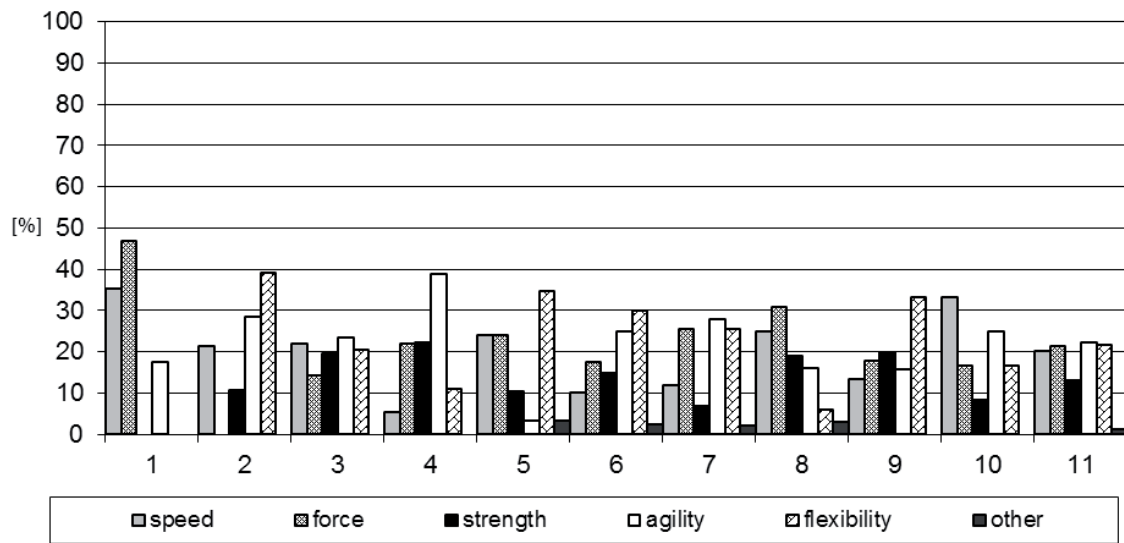


Fig. 11. The most developed motor skills of 11 year old girls in the opinion of teachers.

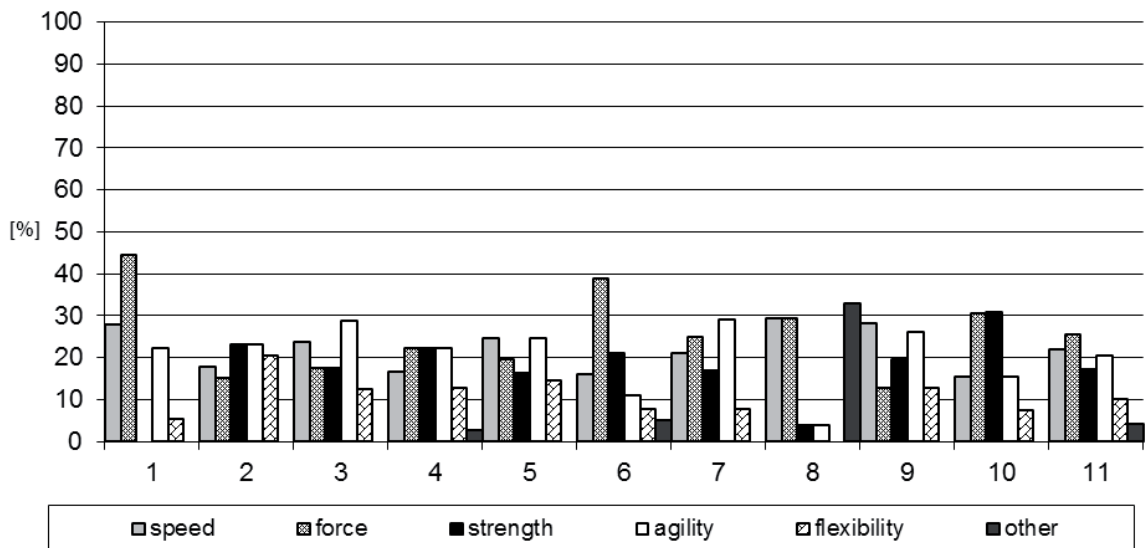


Fig. 12. The most developed motor skills of 11 year old boys in the opinion of teachers.

### Discussion

Wroclaw school teachers surveyed are positive about the opportunities and abilities of their pupils. In the context of the development of a young man and doctors statements, developmental psychologists and educators and teachers, the time of habits evolution, favorable to an active lifestyle is related to early school period (Strong, 2005). It was at this time when the teacher is the authority for children and has a most significant impact on health behaviors. A physical education teacher and coach, without compromising the role of family and peer environment, have the major extent in forming and developing physical activity attitude (Sankowski, 2005). Physical activity is one of the most

important determinants of a healthy lifestyle. There's a reason for the efforts of many governments and education systems in developed countries to focus on the growth of sport and physical activity. International research of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Youth Children (WHO Collaborative Study) has been conducted regularly since 1982 also in Poland (Health Behaviour In School-aged Children. WHO Collaborative Study). WHO enables to track many phenomena related to health behaviours and lifestyle in Europe and North American countries. Researches aim also at enabling monitoring of changes occurring in next generation of the Internet and computer era. Their purpose is also preparation of efficient strategies to promote active lifestyle. Last report edition (Mazur, Małkowska-Szkutnik, 2011) presents results of last HSBC 2010 research.

The main question related to general physical activity (MVPA Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity) in these studies was associated with an explanation to students that it is "any action that gives the feeling of" shortness of breath "or rapid breathing." The examined pupils were asked to give a number of day of the past week, when they dedicate more than 60 minutes for physical activity. The report shows that in the first year of the HBSC study, in the 2001/2002 it was assumed that 5 days or more meant the appropriate level, and now it is 7 days a week. That means that the child should have at first an encouragement from parents and teachers for this kind of activity and the opportunity of time and place. In a recent survey 2009/2010 question was given in all age groups. It turns out that the image presented by the Wroclaw teachers do not fully coincide with the Polish HBSC surveys. Still, it is clear that confronting the teachers opinions about their students' physical activity with the opinions of the students themselves these differences become even more exposed. Tests may indicate that teachers watching 10-year-old students can see that over 80% of them could spend a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity. This is a very positive and optimistic message and final conclusions are as follows.

### **Conclusions**

1. The study shows that teachers generally have a positive opinion on the charges and are optimistic about students' physical activity.
2. Analyzing the teachers' answers for next question, which concerned the level of fitness of Wroclaw 11 year old children, it was noticed that on average 40-50% teachers have the opinion that their children have got average level of fitness. Teachers of examined children rarely thought that their children have low fitness level, both among girls (10,5%) and boys (13,1%). The rest of teachers thought that their schoolchildren have high level of fitness (girls 39,9%, boys 43,75).
3. According to responding teachers, the majority of (more than 80%) children practice willingly physical education. At the same time, teachers indicate that almost 60% of young people, both girls (57,7%) and boys (56,5%) did not participate in any sports.
4. Teachers asked what sport does their schoolchildren practise the most often, answered that team games (43,6%- girls, 46%- boys).
5. According to teachers, students having a possibility to choose sports, dance, tourism and recreation and health select sports, 53,1% of girls and 61,3% boys. Recreation and health would gain popularity in approximately 29,3% of girls and 26,3% boys.

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