

CONSUMER OPINIONS FROM THE QUESTION OF A WELLNESS AND HEALTH CONSERVATION

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— Abstract —

This paper presents the sub results of our research project. The surveys carried out in 2013 with the help of standardised questionnaire. We received 956 questionnaires in the course of the domestic data registration, not continuing representative, national sampling. The object of the research was to recognise the consumers' opinion about wellness, their attitude towards the question of the health conservation. We analysed the expenses devoted to the health conservation, and the different kind of activities which has important role in health conservation according to consumers' opinion. We examined which concepts, which service

elements the people enclose to the wellness, what kind of factors influence them in the course of the selection of a wellness service. We hope the results can help for the service providers of domestic health tourism and wellness in their work to make well targeted marketing activities.

Keywords: *wellness, health providing, quantitative research*

JEL Classification: I 11

1. INTRODUCTION

The actuality of the topic derives from the statement of several national surveys which prove that Hungary's indicators of health are one of the worst in Europe. This negative tendency is present when evaluating the country on the basis of physical health as well as the mental, psycho-social /well-being of the Hungarians (Lazányi 2011a, 2011b). In the last years however we can experience a positive shift: It seems that part of the population is now starting to be aware how important role health preservation plays together with the significance of their own role and responsibility in this process. (Major challenges ahead for Hungarian healthcare Péter Gaál, Szabolcs Szigeti, Dimitra Panteli, Matthew Gaskins, Ewout van Ginneken *British Medical Journal* 2011; 343:d7657 (Published 07 December 2011))

We can say that a process has already started in Hungary that may help direct enough attention to health and health care in the everyday life of people. In our research we examined what role wellness play in health preservation. One of the main objectives of our research project was to examine what the characteristics of people's attitude to wellness is, how important is its role in health preservation.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

One of the main objectives of our research project was to examine what the characteristics of people's attitude to wellness were and how decisive its role was in health preservation and what factors influenced the selection of a wellness service provider. In the first phase of the research project a national survey was carried out in the form of a pre-tested standardised questionnaire in March 2013. Respondents were older than 18- both males and females by using a non-

representative snowball-type sample taking method. At the end, we received 953 questionnaires ready to be processed.

Besides analysing the costs spent on health preservation questions about the assessment of wellness and the selection of a wellness service as well as socio-demographic issues are also asked in the questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

3.1. The role of health preservation

Considering the results first of all I would like to talk about the role of health preservation. Respondents were asked about health preservation. We analysed how much money and how much time and attention respondents spend on programmes that are connected to health protection. According to the findings, respondents spend the most on healthy nutrition and they can or want to spend the least on meditation, sauna and massage services. The answers to the following questions are consistent with the extent of spending. It seems that proper liquid intake, healthy nutrients and sleeping enough hours are the priorities in health preservation.

3.2. Opinion about wellness

By means of a list of statements we analysed separately what respondents thought about wellness. According to this, a lot of people still regard wellness as a status symbol, the privilege of the rich. It is consistent with the data of previous research. (Árpási et al, 2010.) The fact that people do not think of somebody who regularly uses wellness facilities as being more health conscious in everyday life is also consistent with the findings above. (see Table 1.)

Table-1.: Opinions about wellness

	Average	Spread
Statements	<i>I=do not agree at all</i>	
Those who have wellness services pay more attention to health in everyday life	2.37	0.93
Wellness plays a significant role in health preservation	2.61	0.86

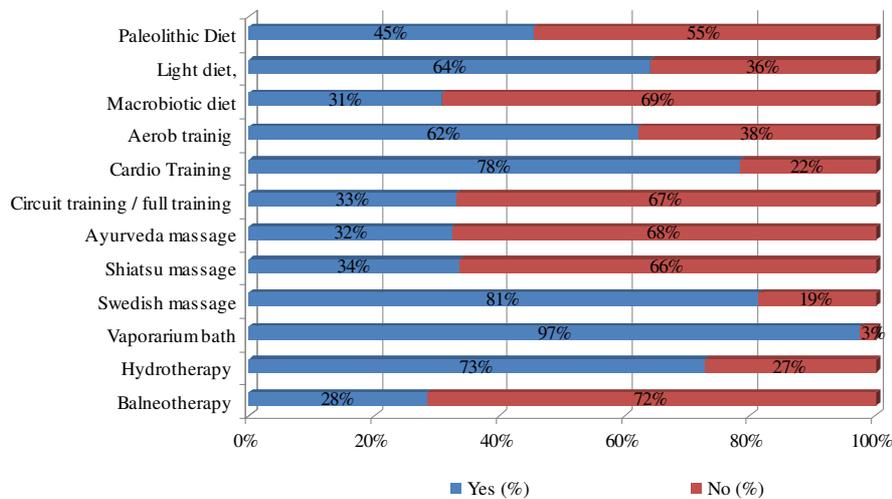
Wellness is the privilege of the well-off	2.76	0.90
In our country it is a status symbol to use wellness services	3.20	0.94

Source: own research N= 953

A lot of people (45%) thought that wellness did not play a significant part in health preservation. All the results support the fact that people's opinion about wellness is still far from its real sense. Nevertheless, it would be important to make people understand what this expression means and what a real wellness service includes in order to create a more positive image. It is true that national service providers contribute to this association to a great extent and in many cases communication is not purely professional. Its main point was to offer mostly enjoyable, relaxing weekend programme as a service –thus diverting from its original meaning. It is not a surprise that users create such associations.

From the point of view of marketing it is problematic because it excludes potential target groups from the possibility of using the service by assuming that it is the hobby of 'the well-off who are privileged'. In contrast, the really important fact would be if wellness could be part of people's life by playing a health preserving role, i.e. deliberately selected services with relaxation and practising to lead a life. Several successful West-European examples show that promoting wellness approach can be efficient only if its original mission is emphasised. It should not be treated as a marketing opportunity but also as an adjective to repositioning a fading service. The other result of the questionnaire designates tasks also for the wellness management in which we examined how well the respondents were aware of the ideas in close connection with wellness.

Figure-1.: Knowledge of concepts related to wellness (relative %)



Source: own research N= 953

According to the findings the idea of Swedish massage and steam bath was known almost by everyone. Cardio training, hydrotherapy, lighter diet and aerobic training also belong to the more popular notions whereas paleolithic diet, circle training, ayurveda and shiatsu massage were marked only by few people and the ides of macrobiotic diet and balneotherapy was almost unknown for most respondents. (see Figure 1.) All this proves that in our country there are a lot of things to do in connection with wellness and its lifestyle as well as getting to know its service portfolio and promoting it in a professionally fair and objective way. In our opinion this could be the first step to clarify an image and create a consciously formed positive attitude. However, we find it very important that people know and understand what wellness can provide them, what can at all be regarded as wellness, which can help in selecting a service. In our opinion making a more conscious decision is necessary as it can decrease the risk of the users and also can help evaluate the services based on relevant factors and last but not least, it can also result in raising the standard of supply.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results we can conclude that respondents primarily gain information on the internet but the opinions of their friends and acquaintances are also as important for them. The role of television and magazines cannot be discarded, either. We assume that on the basis of the results the most important task is to clarify the definition of wellness. Disclosing professionally fair information and wellness-related service alternatives are also stressed. To this end, there is a great need for selecting the right means of communication, which can primarily be implemented by the inclusion of the internet and social functions concerning the source of information on health consciousness and wellness service providers. In our opinion by creating a marketing strategy based on the right instruments and coordinating wellness service providers as well as a more conscious decision made by the users it would be viable for this life philosophy to play its role of health preservation.

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