

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS RELATED TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE (IV) ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS RELATED TO ILLNESS

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Abstract: *Lifestyle is a determining factor for the population health status. The present study followed the behavioural and attitude characteristics regarding illness, on a representative sample of the adult population of Romania. The study revealed great concern regarding the side effects of drugs, an increased interest for the natural therapies and a direct relation between the educational level, family income, age and the level of health education.*

Keywords: *health condition, Romania*

Rezumat: *Stilul de viață este un factor determinant al stării de sănătate a unei populații. Studiul de față a urmărit caracterizarea comportamentelor și atitudinilor legate de starea de boală pe un eșantion reprezentativ din populația adultă a României. Studiul evidențiază un nivel ridicat de preocupare față de efectele adverse ale medicamentelor prescrise, un interes crescut pentru terapiile naturiste și o relație de directă proporționalitate între nivelul educației pentru sănătate și vârsta, nivelul veniturilor și gradul de instruire. Stresul și nivelul de trai sunt apreciați ca factori principali ai afectării stării de sănătate.*

Cuvinte cheie: *starea de sănătate, România*

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

The main purpose of promoting a healthy lifestyle at individual level and familial micro group level up to that of the society is to change the behaviours and attitudes in order to be favourable for health.

Through investments and activities, health promotion acts on the health condition determinants in order to produce substantial benefits for the people's health, to provide the human rights observance, as well as to create a social and demographic capital.

Changing the behaviours and attitudes is a long-term process, which involves an educative, valuable process. The investments made in this field are extraordinary profitable, being incomparably more reduced and useful at the same time, than the expenses made for therapeutic purposes (2).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research is to analyse the main characteristics of behaviours and attitudes of the Romanian adult population regarding illness.

MATERIAL AND WORKING METHOD

The universe of study comprised the uninstitutionalized adult population of Romania, aged between 20 and 64 years old. A probabilistic, bi-stadial, stratified sample of 3000 subjects was used. Regarding the first stage, the aleatory selection of the polling station was made within each layer, while in the second stage, the aleatory selection of the respondents of the election lists was made.

The tolerated error was of $\pm 1,8\%$, and the probability was of 95%. The sample was validated based on the Statistics National Institute databases and on the population census from 2002. The method for data gathering was the inquiry through the assisted, structured questionnaire. The study period was December 2005.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Today, 33% of the population use drugs currently.

The option for treating the diseases with the help of the **medicinal plants**, associated or not to the allopath therapy was identified in 78% of the population. Out of them, 40% rarely appeal to the medicinal plants, 22% in about half of the diseases situations and 13% always resort to the natural therapies.

Regarding the attitudes towards the **prescribed medication**, 4% of the population declare that they do not use prescribed medication. Out of those 96% who follow the therapeutic indications, only 12% strictly obey the physician's prescription and are convinced of the treatment efficacy. 51% of the subjects are always concerning about the **side effects of the drugs**, 31% - sometimes and 18% - never.

When they have a health problem, the majority of the subjects (63%) use a drug prescribed by the physician and not one bought without prescription or recommended by someone else. 22% do this in almost half of the situations, 4 sometimes and 11% usually use self-medication.

The majority of the subjects (61%) use the recommended drugs according to the prescription. But, there are respondents who declare, either that they did not procure themselves the indicated drugs from the drug store (5%),

or that they did not use them (4%), or that they did not strictly obey the prescription indications. (10%).

An important segment of the population (21%) uses drugs **that were prescribed for somebody else**. Thus, in the last five years, 10% used such medication only once, 8% few times and 3% regularly.

The respondents' attitude in the hypothetic case of a strong neck pain is the following; only 44% would go the doctor, 25% would resort to the chemist's help, 17% would ask their family or friends and 13% would not seek advice.

The main **factors that influence the health condition of the population** are: the level of the incomes/living standard (44%), living conditions (28%), working conditions (21%), relation with the family (12%), other stressing factors (48%).

Gender differences. In a larger measure, women use medicinal plants, worry about the side effects of the drugs, regularly use drugs and tend to obey the therapeutic indications.

Age differences. During the process of aging, the respondents tend to use the medicinal plants to a greater extent, as well as to use only the drugs prescribed by the physician and to go to the doctor when they have a health problem.

Education differences. The persons with a reduced level of education use fewer drugs; they go more frequently to the doctor and consider that the health condition is negatively influenced by the social and material conditions

Income differences. The level of income is directly proportioned with the observance level of the therapeutic indications and inversely proportioned with the fear of the side effects.

BMI differences. The use of the medicinal plants is higher in obese people. A large part of these persons worry about the side effects of the drugs, preferring the drugs prescribed by their physician. They usually use drugs and go to the doctor in case of a disease. The obese people consider that the health condition is negatively influenced by incomes, food and stress.

Smoking differences. Smokers consider that the health condition is negatively influenced by incomes, smoking and stress.

Alcohol consumption differences. Even the alcohol consumers consider that the health condition is negatively influenced by alcohol consumption. They also worry about the side effects of the drugs, preferring the drugs prescribed by the physician. They use the drugs the way they are prescribed, regularly use drugs and resort to a doctor in case of problems.

CONCLUSIONS

One third of the population constantly consumes drugs. Associated or not with the allopath therapy, the option for the naturist therapies can be found in the majority of the population (78%).

More than a half of the population is preoccupied by the side effects of the prescribed medication, which represents the main reason for not observing the medical prescriptions.

Less than half of the subjects go to the doctor in all diseases cases; almost a quarter uses self-medication, taking medicines prescribed by someone else and ask for the chemist's advice.

The living conditions directly related to the level of incomes and stress are considered the main factors that affect the health condition of the population.

There is a proportionality relation between the level of incomes and the level of education, age, female gender on one hand and the addressability level and the observance of the therapeutic indications on the other hand.

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