

# Determinative factors of the choice of physical and sport activities by rural population of Yakutia

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## Abstract

The following article touches upon the climatic geographical, socioeconomic, ethnic and regional issues of physical activity of various population categories and groups of the Far East. Based on the results of the conducted research among rural population of Yakutia the factors of people's choice of health and fitness and sport activities were determined.

**Keywords:** physical activity; various population categories and groups

## Introduction

The issues of physical activity of various population categories and groups as well as the search for modern forms and methods of engaging them in regular sport and fitness activities were the subject of research of many scientists (Khankeldyev, 1986; Guzhalovsky, 1993; Alekseev, 1996; Prokopenko, 1997; Levushkin, & Landa, 2000; Petrova, & Krivoshepkin, 2000; Pasyukov, 2007; Degtiareva, 2012, etc.). According to the results of the conducted research, the issues of physical activity of population are determined by regional peculiarities of living, including climatic geographical, socioeconomic and ethnic ones.

Being a region with vast economic and geographical perspectives, the Far East however experiences a range of negative factors, such as extreme environmental conditions, poor development and

remoteness from the industrial areas, inaccessibility of most territories, impassability, instability and outflow of population. According to the Russian Census of 2010, the total number of population in the Far East was 6,291,900 people, having dropped 6.4% in 8 years. Out of all subjects of the Far East the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic was the only one to have an increase of 1%. According to the forecast of UNESCO, the population of the region may decrease by one third and amount to 4.7 million people (level of 1959) by 2025. With the persistence of current demographic situation in the Far East the population may amount to 4 million people by 2050.

One of the chief factors responsible for population decrease in this region is the particular environmental conditions: from northern tundra with factors causing cold stress with sympathetic-adrenal responses to southern coastal territories with monsoonal climate responses having the adverse biogenic impact on human organism. This leaves a mark on migrants' adaptation processes to the changed environment as well as physical condition, workability and health of the indigenous inhabitants, including the "small-numbered peoples" (Nesterov, 1999).

As of "The Strategy of the Development of Physical Culture and Sports in the Russian Federation through to 2020", "the share of the Russian Federation citizens, who are systematically engaged in sport activities" target value is to increase from 15.9% in 2008 to 30.0% in 2015 and 40.0% in 2020. The strategy was developed and adopted

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in regions of the Russian Federation in compliance with local peculiarities and conditions. For example, as of “The Strategy of the Development of Physical Culture and Sports in the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic through to 2020”, “the share of the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic citizens, who are systematically engaged in sport activities” value is planned to increase from 17% in 2008 to 40.0% in 2020 (a 1.5% - 2% annual increase is expected).

Despite the extensive propaganda of sport activities in mass media, dynamic development of modern sports, construction of sports venues and facilities, organization of huge sporting events and contests, the number of the systematically engaged has increased only by 2.6% from 2008 (15,9%) to 2010 (18,5%) (Table 1). However, there was a slight growth compared to the data of 2005: “... According to the World Health Organization, the number of actively and regularly engaged in sport activities in the developed countries – USA, France, Germany, Sweden, Canada – is about 60% of population, 70% in Finland and only 6% (!) in Russia” (Chichua, 2005).

The total number of the systematically engaged in sport activities in the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic has increased from 15.9% in 2008 to 19.8% in 2009, 21.3% in 2010 and 22.5% in 2011.

For purposes of accomplishment of the objectives set in the Strategy, the search for the most rational and adapted to local conditions programs of population health improvement is carried out. The reason for this is the fact that the number of the systematically engaged in sport activities and the community awareness of self health condition and modern types of sport activities has been constantly increasing over the recent years.

## Methodology

In the course of the research “The development of programs for increasing physical activity of various population categories and groups of the Far East (in terms of national sports)” our research team has conducted an opinion survey of 1250 men and women among the rural population of the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic. The respondents were requested to complete a survey table with sport activities for increasing physical activity or developing sport skills based on age and gender. Based on the results’ analysis we have distributed sport activities in decreasing preference order (Table 2).

## Results

Studying of the survey responses allows indicating the following data:

- women may wish to consider mostly health and fitness activities, men’s choice would be either sport activities or less often activities aimed at health promotion and maintaining optimum workability;
- Eastern recreational gymnastics becomes popular with female population, while speed and strength sports are prevalent to males, although the 40-50-year-old and older age groups may wish to consider recreational gymnastics too. From our point of view, this fact is explained by P.N. Pasyukov: “... The “East – West” problem in the context of physical education, athletic training and recreational physical culture of population of the Far East, not excepting the national preferences, includes the rational adoption of the most valuable. These are more specifically the methods, which have historically proven their value – the exercises, their sets and everything that is connected with their apprehension in view of modern perceptions of social and psychophysiological human nature” (Pasyukov, 2004). Many respondents explained in oral interviews that for people in Yakutia, who are more subjected to cardiovascular, joint, respiratory and medical diseases, the systematic and correct exercising of Eastern recreational gymnastics has not only prophylactic but also curative effect. Eastern gymnastics is also known for potential maintaining of regular moderate physical activity and optimal physical fitness for performing different kinds of agricultural and household work;
- among sport activities recommended for women “male” sports, such as boxing, kickboxing, Tae Bo, mas-wrestling, judo, do also occur. It is commonly known that female groups in these types of sport activities are thin and their primary aim is developing sport skills and achieving high results rather than recreational aspects;
- despite large-scale promotion of national sports of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia in the region, mas-wrestling is the only national sport preferred by women within the 20-30-year-old age group. As for men, national sports are also recommended within certain age groups, though in a wider range: khapsagai, Yakut national jumps and mas-wrestling. Among these mas-wrestling is mentioned in all men’s age groups, which is indicative of its popularity and acknowledgement regardless of age.

According to the state-financed institution “Republican center of national sports named after V. Manchaara”, the number of annual attendances of national sports clubs has increased from 23788 in 2000 to 97650 in 2011; the number of national sports contests and other events has increased from 1 in 2000 to 3 in 2011 on an international level, from 0 to 21 in Russia, from 1 to 69 on the Republican level, from 1 to 14 on city level. We think that unidirectional development of national sports towards narrow specialization, that is sportization, may cause decrease in the number of the engaged among population (since the amount and the names of champions are hardly familiar across all contest levels). This raises the requirement of conducting sport clubs and contests based on age, gender and experience in order to assure participation of various population categories and groups and not only sportsmen with high qualification;

- as it can be seen from the table 2, men may wish to consider strength sports as well as speed and strength sports. Shooting sport, however being characterized as rather “expensive”, requiring serious financial expenses and special sport equipment, remains one of the most popular and accessible sports among rural population of Yakutia that have preserved the commitment to traditional hunting. One of the causes of the increasing number of the engaged in shooting sport after 35-40 years is the opportunity to continue competitive career for other sports veterans;

- the respondents’ sports choice is obviously influenced by the sporting events held in the region as well as the athletic feats of leading sportsmen at large-

scale contests: archery, boxing, kickboxing, mas-wrestling, shooting sport;

- the role of large ethnocultural events at the national holiday Yhyakh held in the Republic is especially noted in promoting healthy lifestyle and physical activity among the elderly generation by means of national cultural traditions. For example, the Yakuts have established some world records: the number of people dancing the national round dance Ohuokhai at the same time (more than 15 thousand people) in 2012; the number of people playing khomus at the same time (1344 people) in 2011. That is why khomus and Ohuokhai are recommended for women with specifications that Ohuokhai is good for physical activity and khomus being an instrument for breathing exercises;

- as can be seen in the table 2, rural population chooses sport activities based on the following factors: recreational effect, minimal financial expenses, the role of national traditions, the achievements of sportsmen in the region, entertainment and sporting events in the region, age transition from “active” sports to more “sparing”.

## Conclusions

We think that the development and implementation of programs for increasing physical activity of various population categories and groups of Russia based on their opinions and interests, which includes the ones on the regional level, will allow to improve living standards, the level of social and economic development, as well as define tasks and objectives more precisely and plan an efficient policy in the sphere of physical culture and sports.

**Table 1. Number of the engaged in sport activities by federal districts in 2010.**

Federal district of the Russian Federation	Number of the engaged	Of which women constitute
Central FD	6813419 - 17.7 %	2510522 - 36.8%
Northwestern FD	2275910 - 16.7%	880060 - 38.7%
Southern FD	3076296 - 22.2%	114436 - 37.2%
North Caucasian FD	1080957 - 11.4%	272680 - 25.2%
Volga FD	5956941 - 19.9%	2173325 - 36.5%
Ural FD	2419138 - 20.0%	879517 - 36.4%
Siberian FD	3505875 - 18.2%	1301293 - 37.1%
Far Eastern FD	1128511 - 18.0%	388049 - 34.4%
The Russian Federation	26257047 - 18.5%	9549882 - 36.4%

**Table 2. Respondents' recommendations of sport activities based on age and gender.**

Gender	Age	Sport activity
women	15-20	morning gymnastics – 70% ; cross, running – 70% aerobics – 65%; Eastern gymnastics – 58%; volleyball – 45%; shooting sport – 35%; dance sport – 30%; archery – 15%; boxing – 10%; judo – 8%; kickboxing – 6%; Tae Bo – 5%
	20-30	Eastern gymnastics – 65%; volleyball – 60%; running – 40%; basketball – 30%; table tennis – 25%; mas-wrestling – 10%
	30-40	gymnastics – 75%; jogging – 60%; qigong – 50%; aerobics – 40%; morning gymnastics – 35%; yoga – 30%; table tennis – 20%; shooting sport – 15%; cycling – 8%
	40-50	running – 60%; qigong – 45% yoga – 45%; morning gymnastics – 40%; walking – 35%; Nordic walking – 25%; volleyball – 25%
	50 and older	morning gymnastics – 50%; yoga – 45%; walking – 45%; qigong – 40%; Nordic walking – 30%; Ohuokhai (Yakut folk dance) – 25%; Yakut board games – 10%; checkers – 8%; chess – 5%; khomus – 5%
men	15-20	working out – 70%; running – 55%; football – 45%; freestyle wrestling – 40%; khapsagai – 35%; mas-wrestling – 35%; volleyball – 30%; judo – 25%; shooting sport – 25%; boxing – 15% kickboxing – 10%; Yakut national jumps – 8%
	20-30	running – 85%; working out – 55%; volleyball – 40%; khapsagai – 35%; football – 35%; mas-wrestling – 35%; kettlebell lifting – 15%; judo – 15%
	30-40	running – 60%; working out – 50%; volleyball – 35%; mas-wrestling – 30%; khapsagai – 15%; skiing – 10%; football – 10%; kettlebell lifting – 5%
	40-50	running – 65%; working out – 55%; volleyball – 35%; shooting sport – 35%; mas-wrestling – 25%; qigong – 10%
	50 and older	running – 55%; walking – 45%; working out – 40%; shooting sport – 35%; mas-wrestling – 35% ;Nordic walking – 10%; qigong – 8%; yoga – 5%

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