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Zachowania seksualne wśród młodzieży ponadgimnazjalnej, a system moralności seksualnej

Sexual behaviours of the secondary school youths vs. sexual morality system

Streszczenie

Wstęp. Ludzie młodzi, wkraczający dopiero w dorosłe życie, stają przed dylematem wyboru określonych zachowań seksualnych. Modele zachowań seksualnych są kształtowane głównie przez: wzorce identyfikacyjne płci i podejmowanie roli płci, wczesnodziecięcy trening emocji, trening zachowań społecznych oraz światopogląd religijny i zasady moralne. Seksualność człowieka można traktować jako lustro, w którym odbijają się problemy epoki, kultury, filozofii czy moralności. Seksualność obejmuje zarówno sfery biologiczne, jak i antropologiczne: inspiruje pytania o tożsamość osobową i konstrukcję cielesności, dotyczy relacji międzyludzkich i struktury wspólnotowości.

Cel pracy. Celem niniejszej pracy było ukazanie zachowań seksualnych młodzieży ponadgimnazjalnej i ich wpływ na system moralności seksualnej.

Materiał i metoda. Badania przeprowadzono w oparciu o metodę sondażu diagnostycznego, wykorzystując autorski kwestionariusz ankiety. Objęto nim 145 uczniów szkół ponadgimnazjalnych, dwóch województw Polski: mazowieckiego i śląskiego. Materiał badawczy zebrano w styczniu 2010 roku. Zebrane dane empiryczne poddano analizie opisowej i statystycznej.

Wyniki i wnioski. Badania pozwoliły na poznanie zachowań seksualnych i problemów życia seksualnego młodych dorosłych województwa mazowieckiego i śląskiego. Średnia wieku ankietowanych wynosiła 18 (± 1.8) lat. Z materiału empirycznego wynika, iż 46% badanych rozpoczęło współżycie seksualne. Średni wiek inicjacji wynosił 16.5 (± 1.5), co stanowi dowód stopniowego obniżania się wieku, w którym dochodzi do pierwszych doświadczeń seksualnych. Taki stan rzeczy czasami może sprzyjać utrzymywaniu kontaktów z wieloma różnymi partnerami seksualnymi. Wśród respondentów aktywnych seksualnie, prawie 80% stosowało zabezpieczenia przed ciążą. Najczęściej stosowaną metodą antykoncepcji była prezerwatywa. Wraz ze wzrostem poziomu intelektualnego, wzrasta częstość stosowania różnorodnych metod antykoncepcyjnych. 60% ankietowanych w podejmowaniu współżycia kierowało się miłością. Główne źródło edukacji seksualnej stanowią media.

Słowa kluczowe: zachowania seksualne, młodzież ponadgimnazjalna, moralność.

Abstract

Introduction. Young people who just go into the adult lives face the dilemma of choosing of definite sexual behaviours. The models of sexual behaviours are mostly developed by the identification patterns and undertaken roles of gender, early children's emotional training, training of social behaviour as well as religious belief and moral principles. Human sexuality can be treated as the mirror where problems of epochs, culture, philosophy and morality are reflected. Sexuality includes biological and anthropological spheres of humanity: inspires questions about personal identity and spiritual and corporeal nature of man, concerns interpersonal relations and commonality structure.

Aim. The aim of the study was to reveal the sexual behaviour of the secondary school youths and the way it influences their sexual morality system.

Material and methods. The study was conducted on the basis of using diagnostic survey method with application of self-constructed questionnaire. One hundred forty five (145) pupils of the secondary schools from two Polish regions: Mazowieckie and Silesian voivodships took part in the study. The data were collected in January 2010 and statistically and descriptively analysed.

Results and conclusions. The study allowed to get knowledge about sexual behaviours and problems of sexual lives of young adult people from Mazowieckie and Silesian voivodships. The average age of respondents was 18 (± 1.8). The empirical data show that 52% of pupils already had their sexual initiation. The average age of sexual initiation was 16.5 (± 1.5) which confirms the fact of lowering of the age of sexual initiation. This phenomenon sometimes favours the sexual relations with many different partners. Among the sexually active respondents almost 80% used contraceptives to protect against pregnancy. Condom was the most common contraceptive method among young people who took part in the study. Together with the intellectual development of pupils the frequency of using different contraceptive methods grows. Sixty percent of respondents claimed that love was the main factor with decision-making of having sexual intercourse.

Key words: sexual behaviours, secondary school youths, morality.

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, sexual health is defined as the integration of biological, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of sexual life which are important for positive development of health, personality, communication and love [1]. In accordance with WHO assumptions health is the fundamental right of human being, so sexual health as the one of its elements is also the basic right. From now on there is a widespread correlation and interrelationships between health and human sexuality [2]. The human sexuality starts to develop from the moment of birth and continues until the old age and it is the result of interactions that take place between an individual and his/her social structure because people are not born with sexual identity. A human being learns that he or she is defined by other people and that they have some expectations about him/her throughout the social interactions. Gathering such information is realised in education process starting from someone's childhood. Generally, **human sexuality** can be treated as the mirror where problems of epochs, culture, philosophy and morality are reflected. But from psychological point of view, it focuses on the explanation of the role of emotions and feelings in development and targeting sexual behaviours [1].

Sexual behaviours decide about someone's lifestyle and cannot be left as a coincidence because they are one of the basic ground where human life goes on. They function in procreative, hedonistic and bonds-creating spheres and might be treated as the symptoms of good physical and psychological conditions and general activity of human system [3].

An excess of sexual stimuli in contemporary world causes a serious dilemma for young people who just go into the adult lives with a kind of definite sexual behaviours they need to choose. Despite the view that normality in sexual life in great degree depends on culture, family, religion, mass media, peers and general attitude towards sexuality, children and youths need information about socio-psychological aspects of human sexuality mostly showed from moral perspective [4]. The more rigorous the culture is the more sexual behaviours are recognised as deviations, the more liberal one – the bigger consent for diversity of sexual behaviours is allowed. Sexology, as other scientific disciplines, needs to develop norms that would delimit the boundaries between what is normal and healthy and what is abnormal and pathological. A few concepts of sexual norms exist that are based on International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) and Declaration of Sexual Rights recommended by WHO that classify norms in the following groups: religious, cultural, lawful, medical and partnership norms [5].

Considering the fact that formulating norms of human sexuality varies with regard to epoch, cultural level, geographic and climate conditions and the level of living of particular society, the human relations in the area of sex are regulated by two basic factors: moral and biological norms [1].

The typology of moral systems seen as the explanation of sexual norm was drawn up to find moral basis for sexual behaviours. For example, the model of Imeliński consists of the six indicators of sexual norm: difference of gender, maturity, mutual acceptance, desire for satisfaction of both

partners, condition of not harming the health and condition of not harming others. Rubin, in his typology, lists six types of sexual morality that might be arranged on the rank scale from the most restrictive to the most liberal behaviours concerning premarital sex. The concept of Kozakiewicz assumes the three types of sexual ethics that are restrictive, permissive and ethics of "golden mean" [4]. But there is no such definition of sexual norm that is universally accepted by everyone. According to Kozakiewicz, existing systems of sexual morality have been classified either related to premarital sex or in accordance with basic moral attitude towards sexuality as it is [6]. The diversity of sexual norms is a fact but from the moral point of view the rules of sexual ethics aspire to create such respect for other person and self in each human being that inappropriate behaviours step aside or even from physiology [1].

AIM

The aim of the study was to reveal the sexual behaviour of the secondary school youths and the way it influences their sexual morality system. The following questions were attempted to be answered in the study:

1. How do respondents perceive their sexual behaviours?
2. Does local environment influence sexual behaviours of respondents?
3. Does the relation between tendency of sexual behaviours of youths and their sexual education exist?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was carried out in January 2010. The study was conducted on the basis of using diagnostic survey method with application of self-constructed questionnaire. One hundred and forty five (145) pupils of the secondary schools from two Polish regions: 84 (57.93%) of Mazowieckie voivodship and 61 (42.07%) of Silesian voivodship, took part in the study. The girls accounted for 67.59% of them and 32.41% – were boys. The average age of respondents was 18 (± 1.8). The data collection was anonymous and voluntary. The collected data were statistically and descriptively analysed using STATISTICA 8.0 software. For the existence of relationships between analysed variables Chi-square test was used assuming 5% error of inference and the related to it level of significance was $p < 0.05$.

The research was approved by the Bioethical Committee at the Medical University of Lublin no. KE-0254/25/2009.

RESULTS

The evaluation of sexual behaviours showed that 52% of respondents already had their sexual initiation (Fig.1).

The empirical data in Table 1 show that the major percentage of sexual initiation was at the age subgroup between 15 and 18 years of age (53%) and the minor one – among pupils over 18 years of age (15%). The average age of sexual initiation was 16.5 (± 1.5) because the respondents initi-

TABLE 1. The age of respondents when they had their first sexual experience.

Age of sexual initiation	A town of Mazowieckie voivodship				A town of Silesian voivodship				Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
< 15			12	30.00			10	35.71			22	32.35
15-18	40	53.33	22	55.00	28	50.91	14	50.00	68	52.31	36	52.94
>18			6	15.00			4	14.29			10	14.71
Not applicable	35	46.67	--	--	27	49.09	--	--	62	47.69	--	--
Total	75	100	40	100	55	100	28	100	130	100	68	100

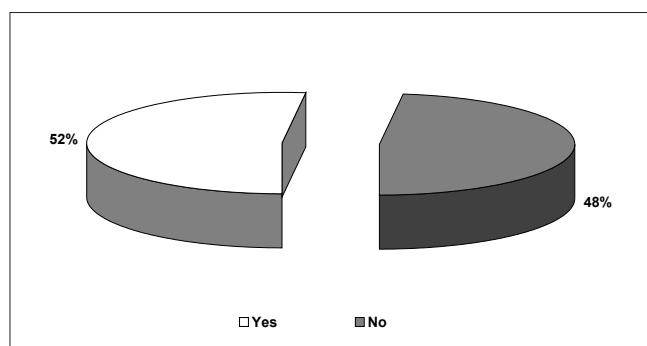
 $\chi^2=9.29$ (**); $p<0.01$


FIGURE 1. Answers of respondents answering the question – Have you already initiated your sexual life?

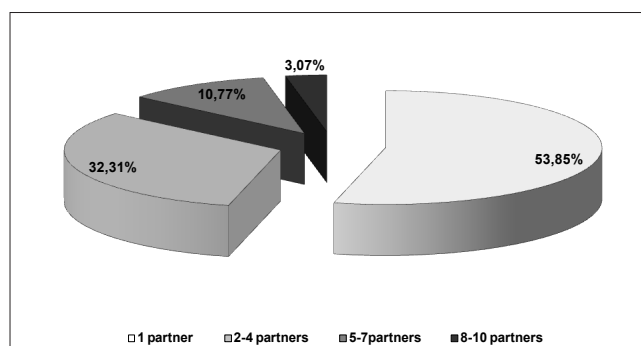


FIGURE 3. Number of sexual partners.

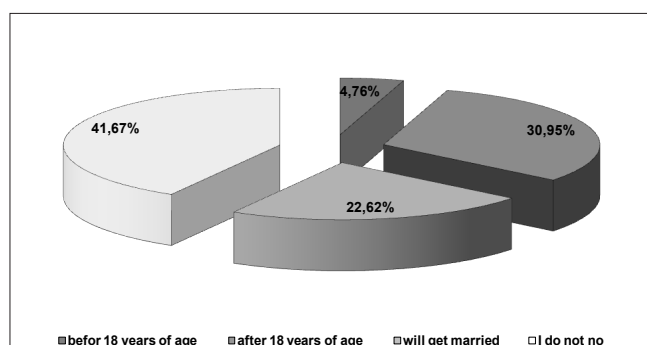


FIGURE 2. Answers of respondents answering the question – How old would you like to be when initiating your sexual life? (answers of respondents who have not initiated their sexual life yet).

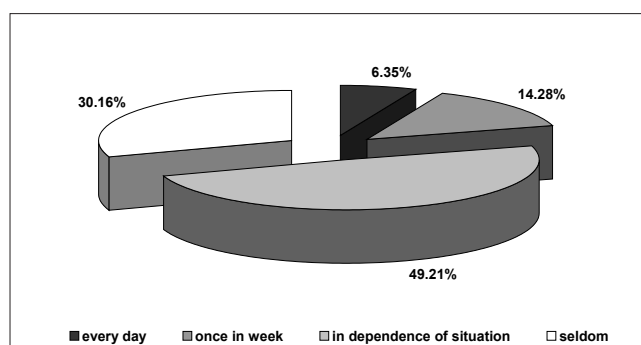


FIGURE 4. Frequency of sexual intercourse.

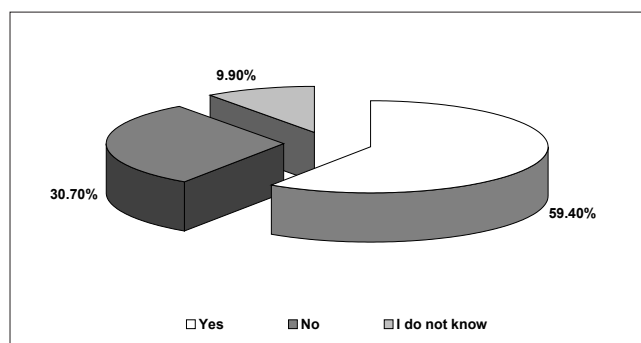


FIGURE 5. Answers of respondents answering the question – Do you consider love when taking decision to initiate sexual intercourse?

ated their sexual life before they were 15. The percentage of youths from Mazowieckie voivodship who declared sexual activity was 53% and was statistically significant in relation to percentage of youths from Silesian voivodship that was 51%. The initiation of sexual life and the age when it happened correlated with the age and local environment of living ($p<0.001$).

Among the respondents who had not initiated their sexual life yet, almost 42% of them did not declare when they would like it to happen, 31% declared that they would wait until they are 18 and 23% – after they will get married (Fig.2).

Among the sexually active respondents, 54% declared the relationship with permanent partner, 32% had sex with 2-4 different partners, almost 11% – with 5-7 partners and 3% with 10 partners (Fig.3).

The collected data proved that every second person had sexual intercourse depending on the situation, 14% had sexual contacts once a week and 6% – once a day. The youths that had sex rarely constitute 30% of research group (Fig.4).

Almost a half of pupils of secondary schools (48%) confessed that their erotic lives were determined by a number of factors: 31.48% of them declared that they liked having sex and 20.37% confirmed a dislike of this activity. More

specific analysis showed that among factors influencing the sexual life – love is the main feature of doing it (60%). Thirty one percent (31%) of respondents answered that they had sexual intercourse independently from their feelings and 10% did not know why they did it (Fig.5).

According to 40% of respondents sexual intercourse is the complement of love, for almost ¼ – sex is a pleasure and for 13% of them, it is satisfaction of biological needs. The detailed results are illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Definitions of sexual norm in opinions of respondents.

What sex is	A town of Mazowieckie voivodship		A town of Silesian voivodship		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Complement of love	50	38.17	39	42.39	89	39.91
	$\chi^2=0.29 (-) p>0.05$					
Satisfaction of biological need	19	14.50	10	10.87	29	13.00
	$\chi^2=0.86 (-) p>0.05$					
Pleasure	32	24.43	22	23.91	54	24.22
	$\chi^2=0.06 (-) p>0.05$					
Adventure	9	6.87	6	6.52	15	6.73
	$\chi^2=0.03 (-) p>0.05$					
Fun	10	7.63	7	7.62	17	7.62
	$\chi^2=0.006 (-) p>0.05$					
Sport	11	8.40	8	8.69	19	8.52
	$\chi^2=0.00001 (-) p>0.05$					
Total	131	100	92	100	223	100

* N number does not equal to number of respondents because they might have chosen more than one answer

It is proved in Table 2 that statistical analysis did not show any relationship between the definition of sexual norm and the surveyed youths of two towns of Mazowieckie and Silesian voivodships. So, the local environment of living does not influence the diversity of erotic life concept.

In accordance with 30% of respondents sexual education does not influence their erotic experience, whereas for 28% of them it precipitates their sexual initiation. Forty one percent (41%) of pupils did not declare a clear view in this issue (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Education influence on sexual experience.

Do education accelerate sexual initiation?	A town of Mazowieckie voivodship		A town of Silesian voivodship		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	24	28,57	17	27,87	41	28,28
No	25	29,76	19	31,15	44	30,34
Do not know	35	41,67	25	40,98	60	41,38
Total	84	100	61	100	145	100
	$\chi^2=6.27 (*); p<0.05$					

Statistical analysis demonstrated a relationship between the influence of sexual education on erotic experience and a town of particular voivodship ($p<0.05$). The respondents from a town of Silesian voivodship were more convinced that education did not precipitate their sexual initiation.

Among sexually active youths 2% confessed that they did not use any contraceptives, whereas 32% declared the usage of condoms as the most common contraceptive to protect against pregnancy. The second on the list was coitus interruptus declared for 7% of pupils and subsequently: spiral contraceptive, contraceptive pills and measures spermicidal were mentioned. The methods of natural family planning constituted 2% of answers only what is illustrated in Table 4.

Statistical analysis of the collected data did not show the statistical significance in the relationship between contraceptives used by the youths and local environment of living. So, any town was not the determinant of choice of method of protection against pregnancy.

TABLE 4. Methods of contraception.

Type of protection	A town of Mazowieckie voivodship		A town of Silesian voivodship		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Contraceptive pills	4	4.30	2	3.08	6	3.80
	$\chi^2=0.20 (-) p>0.05$					
Measures spermicidal	3	3.22	2	3.08	5	3.16
	$\chi^2=0.19 (-) p>0.05$					
Contraceptive spirals	4	4.30	4	6.15	8	5.06
	$\chi^2=0.21 (-) p>0.05$					
Condoms	30	32.26	21	32.31	51	32.28
	$\chi^2=2.57 (-) p>0.05$					
Natural methods	2	2.15	1	1.54	3	1.90
	$\chi^2=0.09 (-) p>0.05$					
Coitus interruptus	6	6.45	5	7.69	11	6.96
	$\chi^2=0.06 (-) p>0.05$					
Do not use any protection	2	2.15	1	1.54	3	1.90
	$\chi^2=0.09 (-) p>0.05$					
Not applicable	42	45.16	29	44.61	71	44.94
	$\chi^2=0.08 (-) p>0.05$					
Total	93	100	65	100	158	100

* N number does not equal to number of respondents because they might have chosen more than one answer

DISCUSSION

The analysis of empirical material collected during the research conducted among the youths of secondary school allowed to reveal the sexual behaviours of young people from two towns of two Polish voivodships (Mazowieckie and Silesian regions), which induces to make an attempt of confronting it with other studies done in similar areas.

The issue of sexuality is more and more common among the specialists of public health and other scientific disciplines. The majority of data related to sexual behaviours comes from annual research of public opinion studied by Centre for Public Opinion Research [7].

It has to be emphasised, though, that results in this social area are based on declarations of respondents what might cause some distortion in real sexual behaviours when the existence of differences between declarations and behaviours are taken under consideration.

The current study confirmed that more than a half of young people initiated their sexual life. The biggest percentage was constituted by people between 15 and 18 years of age (53%). The average age of sexual initiation was 16.5 (± 1.5). Thirty two percent (32%) of respondents initiated their sexual life before they were 15. Nowosielski et al, in the study conducted among 720 pupils of secondary schools, where the average of age was 20.5, showed that 76% of respondents started their sexual lives and the average age of initiation was 18.1 (± 1.67). The initiation of sexual life correlated with the age and the level of education ($p<0.05$). The older and more educated young people were they started their sexual lives later than others [8].

The study of Wróblewska confirmed that among pupils between 15 and 19 years of age every fourth girl and every

third boy positively answered the question about their experience concerning sexual initiation. Among the nineteen-year-old youth over half of girls and 60% of boys had already their sexual intercourses. It means that more boys than girls started their sexual lives, which is also confirmed in Izdebski's research. Because boys feel stronger sexual tension in relation to maturing women, whose sexuality is more complex and the attitude towards emotional life is more developed [9,10]. The results show that the age of sexual initiation is systematically reduced. This phenomenon is often explained by the influence of a number of factors, e.g.: place of living, religious beliefs, level of education, concept of sexual norm understanding, but for some young people the main determinant of their first sexual intercourse is the model of culture in which they exist (patriarchal system where a man initiates a sexual contact) [7,10]. Although, when comparing empirical data of the study of health behaviour in school-aged children in 30 countries, Poland is the state where percentage of teens who initiated sexual intercourses before 15th year of age is the lowest – 10% of girls and 20% of boys (Fig.6). Similar results at girl group of young people are visible in Greece, Israel, Macedonia and Lithuania. Considering young boys, similarity is seen in such countries as: Spain, Estonia, Czech Republic and Austria. The percentage of young people who have started their sexual lives at this age in other countries was higher than in Poland [11]. Retrospective reports about the trends of sexual activity among U. S. teens conducted as nationally representative cross-sectional survey show that the proportions of male and female teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 who had sexual intercourses are much more higher (46%) [12,13]. It seems that young people in Poland initiate their sexual lives relatively late and the percentage of those who keep this issue for the future is fairly high.

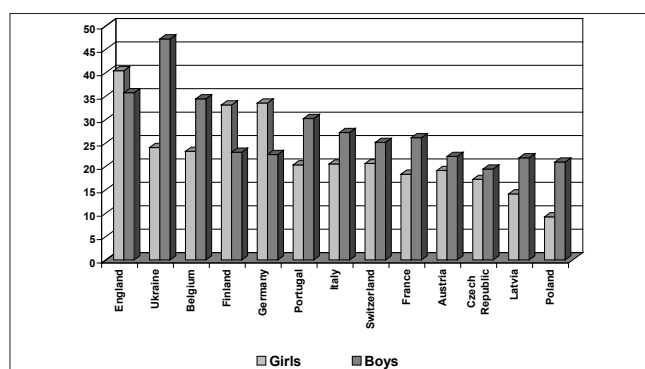


FIGURE 6. The percentage of 15 year-old teenagers who started their sexual lives – international comparison (based on: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study, 2001-2002)

Fifty four percent (54%) of young people who start their sexual lives still have the only one permanent partner. Additionally, 60% of sexually active respondents declared that the decisive motive to start sexual intercourses was the affection to a partner, 40% pointed out some other factors. That means that the initiation of sexual activity is more often conditioned by factors of personality (personal feelings, system of value) than by external factors (persuasion of friends). For 40% of respondents their erotic life is the compliment of love. The studies conducted by Borzucka-Sitkiewicz and some other authors [8,14] proved that only one quarter of the

respondents conditioned their sexual lives on love. It means that sexual intercourse is conditioned by strongly emotional feeling towards a partner. What is interesting, that argument was more often put forward by men (26.70%) than women (22.64%). The second occurred reason was curiosity and the subsequent factors were: persuasion of friends and alcohol. Considering the stability of feelings only one-fifth of people who started their sexual lives had only one partner. The rest had incidental sexual contacts. In the current study sex was defined as a pleasure by 24% of respondents and as satisfaction of biological needs - by 13%.

Zielińska [15] conducted her study among 400 female inhabitants in reproductive age from the city of Łódź. The results show that the most common methods of contraception are: condom (22.8%), oral hormonal pills (17.5%), coitus interruptus (12.0%) and marriage diary (9.0%). The results of this study illustrate that the school youth most frequently used the following contraceptives: condoms (32%), coitus interruptus (7%) and contraceptive pills (4%). The predominance of condom as the effective contraceptive used by young people is confirmed in WHO – 70% [11]. It proves that people at this age depart from methods of natural family planning. The meaning of this fact can be seen in new and modern methods of contraception that meet the criteria of safety, effectiveness, reversibility and usage comfort in accordance to WHO [16]. Although it has to be very strongly stressed that the issue of fertility regulation seems to be multifaceted and depends on number of factors such as: level of knowledge, economic situation, ethic, moral, cultural and religious factors [17].

Thirty percent (30%) of surveyed youth think that sexual education did not influence the fact of earlier sexual activity initiation. The review done by WHO of the results of thirty five studies from different countries proved that the implementation of sexual education programmes in schools often postpones or decreases sexual activity of young people and causes more often usage of contraception [11]. It should be added that those programmes are more effective when young people have not started their sexual intercourses yet. The better results were also achieved when practical information about safer sex was offered to young people together with knowledge related to attitudes and social norms. It means that more successful were those programmes which linked promotion of sexual abstinence with sound knowledge about safer sex than those which emphasised only sexual abstinence [5,6,7,8]. Besides objective reasons the decisive factors influencing happiness of erotic life are upbringing and sexual awareness. Sometimes it might be difficult to have influence on objective factors but definitely one might have a great control of ways of upbringing and education of young generation. Sexual education which is an element of upbringing process aims to instil moral norms to young people. It must be very significant to care about established conviction that erotic life is nothing bad but constitutes positive value of human life. Considering the fact that medical norms for sexual life based on definition of sexual health are not universal but they evolve and slightly change contemporary model of sexual life consists of the following components: healthy sexual development means positive attitude towards sexuality, successful sexual life is meaningful for human health and

promote longevity, achieving sexual satisfaction is important for sexual life. Therefore, it can be concluded that sexual norms are differently understood worldwide, conditioned by various factors and WHO medical model is not universal for everyone. The most accurate definitions what is sexual norm and what is sexual pathology are proposed by sexual dysfunction therapists [5,6,11,18].

CONCLUSIONS

1. Among the surveyed secondary school youths 52% declare that they have started their sexual lives. The average age of sexual initiation was 16.5 (± 1.5) which confirms the fact of lowering the age of sexual initiation. This fact might favour sexual intercourses with many different partners. Statistical analysis shows that local environment of living significantly influence sexual behaviours of the respondents.
2. Among sexually active respondents almost 80% of them use protection against pregnancy. The most common contraceptive method is condom. Together with the development of intellectual level the frequency of usage of various contraceptives increases and the methods of natural family planning are dramatically reduced.
3. According to 40% of respondents sexual intercourse is the complement of love. Defining sexual norm is very difficult because it is connected with a big complex of human behaviours and sexual preferences. Although 60% of sexually active respondents declare that love is the main factor they consider when taking decision to initiate sexual intercourse.
4. Respondents do not recognise that sexual education influences their sexual behaviours what is statistically confirmed by Chi-square test ($\chi^2=6.27$; $p<0.05$).

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