



Hana Válková

MASARYK UNIVERSITY IN BRNO, THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
WYŻSZA SZKOŁA BANKOWA IN WROCŁAW, POLAND

## TOURISM FOR ALL: CHALLENGE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

### Abstract

The trends of tourism for all, including persons with disabilities, are visible both in the Czech Republic and in Poland, being reflected in the literature. However, publications presenting evidence-based research are still missing. In the paper, the authors refer to the issue, focusing on the explanation of principles, planning to deepen the focus in the forthcoming research. The United Nations Charter of Human Rights, issued in 1948, is mentioned as the first official modern document in which rights, freedom and obligations of 'different people' were defined with regard to political, social, and economic domains. The next important initiative was the Decade of People with Disabilities (1981–1991). The issue of physical activity and sport of persons with disabilities was stressed in the European Charter of Sports for All: Handicapped People (1987). All types and forms of physical activities are possible to be realized in the separate, parallel, and inclusive environments. Tourism and its accessibility for persons with disabilities should be accepted as the recent and future trend. Adaptation of communication, attitudes, methods, content of programs and technique conditions is important and has to respect the limits and abilities of the participants, but personal determinants are crucial.

**Key words:** tourism for all, persons with disabilities, legislation, adaptation, personal determinants

### INTRODUCTION

The idea 'Future in tourism – tourism in future' has become a strong inspiration in the context of the author's background: tourism for all, accessible nature and countryside for all, including persons with disabilities. Those trends are visible both in the Czech Republic and in Poland. In the paper, research findings of Polish authors are presented. E.g. Kaganek (2009) analyses the assessment of 334 persons with disabilities of various aspects. An important cohesive survey of foreign and Polish publications concerning the tourism-disability relation constitutes a very significant introductory part of the publication. Oleśniewicz (2012) is oriented to school tourism in general, with some information about disability. A suitable historical survey is provided by Oleśniewicz and Widawski (2013). In the Czech Republic, projects on accessible mountains, museums, and sight-seeing focus much attention (Bernard and Fabre 2003, Hodaň and Dohnal 2005, Korhelíková and Kudláček 2012, Zdařilová 2011). However, publica-

tions presenting evidence-based research are still missing, except for some articles in the *Journal of Outdoor Activities* (editor: University of J.E. Purkyne in Usti nad Labem).

The issue of 'tourism' is historically old, only technologies constantly change, which means both an advantage (accessibility, information, services) and disadvantage (environment pollution, indolent and lazy people).

As the combination of 'tourism' and 'disability' topics is too broad, the authors decided to describe it in two studies:

1. oriented to explanation of principles (current);
2. real evidence-based examples and arguments in the context of the Czech Republic (next).

### ASPECTS OF TOURISM: IMPACT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The impact of physical activity and sport (PAS) on prevention, benefit and well-being of the general population is investigated in

many projects, including research studies oriented to persons with disabilities. However, it seems to be on the edge of attention except English speaking countries (Kaganek 2010). Studies mostly refer to persons with physical, mobility problems, partially to those with visual and/or hearing problems. Population with mental disabilities is not attractive for research teams. Aspects of the impact of the 'tourism-disability' relation are as follows:

– *Biological*: tourism is associated with physical movement and motor skills like walking, cycling, climbing, skiing, etc., and with different vehicles and instruments manipulation. Movement and motor activities, particularly in nature and countryside, influence the somatic and physiological parameters of individuals.

– *Historical*: a suitable historical survey (Oleśniewicz and Widawski 2013) was already mentioned above. It is worthy to remind of such philosophers and educators as F. Rabelais (1494–1553), T. Campanella (1568–1639), J.A. Comenius (1592–1670), J.J. Rousseau (1712–1778). They proclaimed contact with nature as a means of positive influence on the personality. Since that time a slogan is known 'nature – the best gym'. Stay in the countryside was recommended for individuals of all ages and limits. Pilgrimage and travelling were respected activities for trade and business, as well as for knowledge and keeping know-how. A lot of mountain chains (the Tatras, Beskides, Jeseniky mountains) were discovered in the cooperation of Czech and Polish mountaineers and tourists.

– *Psycho-social*: outdoor activities, mountaineering, travelling, tourism are realized in social contact predominantly: social contacts in transport, services, group or couples participation. Alone participation in nature can be considered as a special psycho-social contact, too. Cognitive knowledge of different domains, emotional experience, positive self-awareness ('I mastered it'), coping with stress (weather, physical loading), leadership skills (dominance) and the opposite – skills to be lead (submission) – all of those phenomena are considered the crucial conditions of personal development since childhood (Demetrović et al. 1988).

The basic principles of travelling and tourism are similar in different historical periods (knowledge, business, trade, religion or economy migration). Owing to new technologies of mobility (information, transport means, outdoor wear, instruments and nutrition, infrastructure services), recent tourism is expanded to all corners of the world, even in different types or purposes (Oleśniewicz 2012). Tourism for all means tourism for persons of different age, abilities, interests, limits, including people with disabilities. There is, therefore, a relevant question: Even if the outdoor activities, hiking or tourism are common activities for us – are they also common for people with disabilities? Is tourism really accessible for all?

#### LEGISLATION REGARDING THE INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

The United Nations (UN) Charter of Human Rights, issued in 1948, can be considered as the first official modern document in which rights, freedom and obligations of 'different people' were defined with regard to political, social, and economic domains. The next important UN initiative was the Decade of People with Disabilities (1981–1991), in the former Czechoslovakia respected only as the Year of Invalid Persons (1981). Apart from including in the basic life domains (health care, social care, advising – consulting, education, job/employment), access to the *leisure time sphere* was formulated. National constitutions and legislation acts that follow have to respect basic rights in education, too (e.g. Education for All Handicapped Children Act, USA, 1975; School Law with a paragraph of inclusive education, CR, 1993, 2004; etc.). Policy of non-discrimination and accessibility was one of the important aspects of our countries (Czech Republic and Poland in 2003) joining the European Union member states.

The issue of physical activity and sport of persons with disabilities was stressed in the European Charter of Sports for All: Handicapped People (European Charter... 1987). Outdoor activities and tourism have been

specifically described in part C (p. 49): 'it is necessary to adjust all adaptations or modifications of outdoor activities for the accessibility of individuals with disabilities'. Recommendations are oriented to pathways for wheelchair users, cycling, camping, water tourism, but even for gardening, fishing/angling, skiing, etc. Recent policy is the policy of inclusion and mutual acceptance (both able-bodied persons and persons with disabilities) and of independent living (empowerment). Independent living means for the disabled 'the life status in which we are alive and we have all social, political, economic and cultural possibilities equal to the possibilities of the able-bodied' (Brown 1994, Potměšil 2007, p. 51). The markers of achieving independent living, which means coping with oneself, are as follows (Válková 2012b, Sherrill 1998):

- being able to make decisions,
- being able to regulate and check-on oneself,
- having imagination concerning future and perspectives,
- being able to perceive one's responsibility for oneself and for others and their environment,
- feeling satisfaction of taking pains and coping difficulties.

Individual intrinsic conditions (disability limits and abilities, intrinsic motivation) are met with external conditions (mutual social acceptance, information technologies, technique parameters of accessibility). In conclusion, the independent living approach is linked with personal wellbeing. And outdoor activities can support wellbeing.

The independent living (empowerment) approach is oriented to the principle that persons with disabilities are citizens like other people, which means that they have the same rights to participate in all types and levels of *physical (exercise) activities* (see later). This specifically refers to the right to participate in exercise and sport proclaimed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30 (United Nations... 2007, see Appendix to this paper). The Convention emphasizes the wide context of activities, including recreation through culture, movement and PAS, as important

for the healthy lifestyle and wellbeing of persons with disabilities.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EXERCISE AND SPORT?

Physical activity is used as an umbrella term to describe all movement activities that are linked with physical loading, using energy through movement. It can be cooking, walking with a dog, ground digging, car repairing, shopping, etc. *Physical (exercise) activities* are a sub-part – linked only with exercising; the basic ones include walking, running, crawling, throwing, walking for the purpose to walk, hiking, swimming, cycling, stretching, dancing, game playing.

Tourism is a specific kind of *physical (exercise) activity*; it can be divided into three basic domains, although these domains are not mutually exclusive and can be mixed:

1. *Sport (in the meaning of top competitive sport) – individual selection*: characteristically, the predominant purposes are:

- a) achieving absolute maximum performance;
- b) regular systematic and highly organized training (*sports clubs*);
- c) spectators participation, emotionality;
- d) performance, results recording.

*Aspect of tourism*: different types of orienteering, precision orienteering, biathlon, triathlon, iron-man, cross-cycling, cross-skiing, etc.

2. *Physical education – compulsory*: characteristically, the predominant purposes are:

- a) education in different aspects (safety in the countryside, environmental education, using means of transport, geography/biology/zoology knowledge), etc.;
- b) skills, hygiene, health habits, social-team behaviour, etc.;
- c) regular exercising, related to curricula (schools, centres, army-police education, accredited agencies);
- d) comparison (evaluation) related to the standards defined in the curricula.

*Aspect of tourism*: physical education can be realized as related to governmental, local curricula in special, parallel or inclusive education systems. The inclusion of *tourism*

depends on the age and type of education. In the Czech Republic, topics concerning tourism are traditionally involved in school curricula.

3. *Recreation activities – individual selection*: characteristically, the predominant purposes are:

- a) individual (relative) achievements;
- b) relaxing, fun, socialization, physical and psychological wellbeing, improvement;
- c) recreation with no performance recording, no competition – or on a relative level, play competition;
- d) possibly mixing with arts, crafts, music, and similar activities;
- e) organized or not organized recreation:
  - fully organized: by special centres, municipalities, civic organizations, scout organizations, leisure time clubs, etc.; the organization offers the program, regular schedule, facilities, venues, leaders (usually certificated specialists); the interested persons participate regularly;
  - partially organized: any organization (also a civic one) – a foundation, parent group, etc. – can provide the program for all; the event is usually short: lasting one day, week-end; occasional activity – not regular, for all; everybody can come and participate on their own risk; examples – running activities (Terry Fox Run, Run for Health), Children's Day, Multicultural Day, Celebration Days related to different anniversaries, family-teams tournaments etc.;
  - not organized: self-decision to exercise, to do something in one's own time; usually families, school mates, friends, or work colleagues decide to spend holidays or a weekend together.

Even the recreational level is organized mostly with parents, civic organizations, humanitarian foundations. *Tourism in the Czech Republic* is historically a strong and popular part of the national 'physical culture'. The area of recreation activities, especially the 'technocratic' part, is presented in politic proclamations and in a lot of commercial schemes (including services for people with disabilities). In spite of this – in reality – there is lack of regular groups, clubs with trained leaders. This is the reason why this area is developed with a great volunteer en-

thusiasm, low professional level and lack of financial and material support.

According to the UN Declaration and to the national legislation, all types and forms of *physical (exercise) activities* mentioned above are possible to be realized in the following environments:

1. Separate: special groups, clubs, schools, only with special population and specifically modified programs. *Tourism – a trip of a wheelchair group or of a deaf group with a sign language interpreter.*
2. Parallel: a game of two or more children groups (able-bodied and disabled) in the same playground or gym, but with separately adapted programs, or a sport competition organized for general sportsmen, with a similar arrangement, but extra awarding processes. *Tourism – a trip by one transport, e.g. a bus, program for the able-bodied, parts of the mobility program adapted for wheelchair users, parts of the cognitive program adapted for persons with intellectual disability, the camp in one location, some of the activities together, some of the activities separately.*
3. Inclusive: a game of all children/individuals playing together in one team. *Tourism – a tandem cycling trip for visually impaired participants together with other cyclists; inclusive rafting, hiking, car tourism.*

The most common form is parallel as it offers a chance to adapt the physical loading, transport requests, and even the individual interests. All persons can spend a day, a weekend or a longer period actively, together with friends, partners, family members.

#### TOURISM AS THE CHALLENGE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: PRINCIPLES OF ACCESSIBILITY

Tourism and its accessibility for persons with disabilities should be accepted as the recent and future trend, which includes:

1. the humanitarian aspect: tourism for all;
2. the commercial and economic aspect: employment of all persons in services, empowerment for employment of the disabled;
3. the psycho-social aspect: prevention, relaxation, personal/team challenge, knowledge and skills, social contacts.

Tab. 1. Principles of adaptation items used in adapted physical activity

Item/domain	MD	HD	VD	PD W	PD AM	PD CP
Communication (style)	X	X	X			
Teaching, motor learning methods	o	o	o	o	o	o
Content of activities			X	X	X	o
Sports rules			X	X	X	o
Conditions: access			X	X	o	o
venue/room			o	o	o	o
adapted tools			X	X	X	o

MD, mental disability; HD, hearing disability; VD, visual disability; PD, physical disability; W, wheelchair users; AM, amputees; CP, cerebral palsy; X, priority of adaptation; o, adaptation should be considered as well but is not crucial

The accessibility of tourism and participation in it are based on understanding the following three issues:

1. the background of the levels: competitive top sport activities, physical education, recreation (see explanation above);

2. the spectrum of tourism: the types of tourism can be distinguished according to:

- a) the length of time;
- b) the year season;
- c) the means of mobility or transport;
- d) the goals, purpose and motivation;
- e) the type of location and grounds (Demetrovič 1988, Neumann 2010, Oleśniewicz 2012, Sekot 2006);

3. the phenomenon of being 'different', 'disabled': even if we understand the basic categorical differences among individuals with physical, visual, hearing and mental disability, it is necessary to respect a non-categorical approach – every individual in each category is unique in age, experience, diagnosis (abilities and limits), interests, and motivation; besides, there is a wide spectrum of other problems in each category: cardiovascular diseases, breathing and allergy problems, diabetes, obesity, nutrition demands, etc.

In the context of the wide spectrum of external conditions (1 and 2 above) and individual internal factors (3), as well as determining accessibility of tourism for active participation of persons with disabilities, it must be admitted that it is not easy to develop conditions of accessibility. Prin-

ciples of adaptation can help us to manipulate with items and prepare a cohesive system of accessibility (Tab. 1).

All items can be modified according to the sphere of understanding (1 and 2 above) and some of them are crucial in the relation of individual internal factors (3). This can lead the way towards future tourism development. In the 'tourism development' aspect, we need to underline the environmental approach mentioned above: the internal and external determinants. Internal adaptations are only in the hands of individuals, the external ones are in the hands of the governmental policy, local representatives, civic organizations (mostly with European grants and sponsors), and enthusiastic volunteers. Then adaptations concern:

– *the individual attitude*: one has to accept the individual limits, be active in searching for information and chances, provide compensative tools, cultivate interest and present interest, including social contacts, respect appropriate safety behaviour with regard to selected activities;

– *the environment*: field reconstruction, ways reconstruction, sight-seeing accessibility, relevant and realistic information system;

– *communication and transfer of information and knowledge*: written and electronic materials, traffic and tourists marks, public transport accessible for the disabled, parking, accessible pathways and sight-seeing areas, services of board and accommodation,

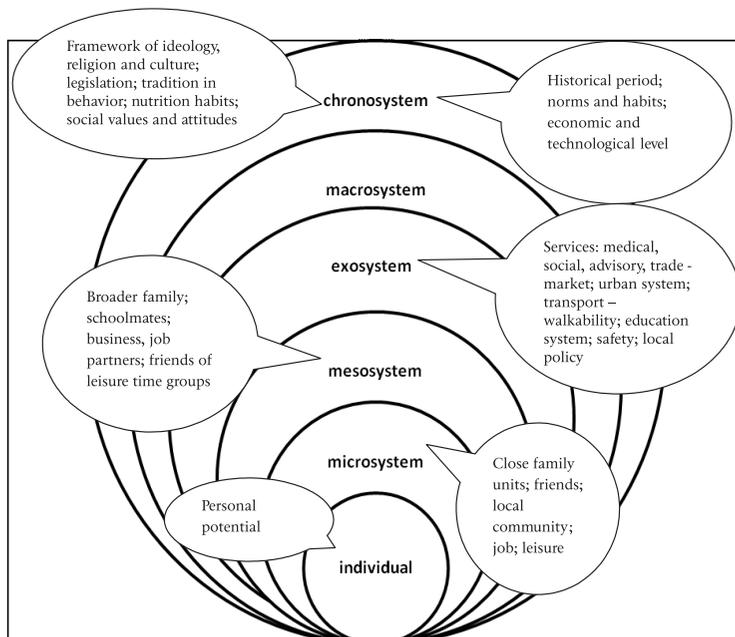
including supportive communication for persons with perception problems, positive mutual attitudes;

– *compensative and adaptive tools and instruments*: types of wheelchairs, hand-bikes, tandems, mono-skies, accessibility of guide dogs, tolerance to individual assisted with special tools (prostheses, hearing aids, visual compensative aids).

In spite of the predominant attention paid to the external factors of accessibility, real participation depends on intrinsic motivation, too, even if the background of individual intrinsic motivation is influenced with historically determined and developed environment. Every human being is influenced, formed and socialized with the environment they live in since early childhood up to the terminal life period. The equal principle is naturally functioning during the lifespan of all people, including persons with disabilities. Each individual is also determined with biological predispositions (e.g. somatotype, physiology capacity, quality of perception, cognitive level, etc.). To sum up, the individual capacity is a cohesive composition of abilities and limits developed, first of all, in the microsystem (the basic family

unit). The family context (either a biological or foster family) is crucial also for participating in leisure physical activities, sports and tourism, owing to generation transmission, family interests, and attitudes; broader environment systems influence the family microunit. According to the circular model of environment (Bronfenbrenner 2001 from: Bugatko and Daehler 2001), participating in physical activities is connected with legislation, governmental and municipal policy, economic status, transport system, sports facilities, counselling, education policy, and a lot of other components (Fig. 1). The family and the individual are responsible, too. It is therefore necessary to develop and/or improve the components in all the circles of the environmental system (Válková 2010).

Taking into consideration the external factors of accessibility, individuals can select appropriate activities from a wide spectrum of chances: from tourism for all, for fun, to education, knowledge, skills, or to competitive outdoor activities and personal challenges. Real examples of projects oriented to the accessibility of countryside and mountains, travel agencies, travelling and camping, volunteer inclusive groups, wheelchair iron-man



Source: Válková (2010), according to Bronfenbrenner 2001, from: Bugatko and Daehler 2001, p. 8

Fig. 1. A circular model of environment influence

competitions, top mountain climbing or extreme crosses are prepared for the next publication (with reference to the Czech environment). It would be advisable to compare the experience from both countries: the Czech Republic and Poland.

## CONCLUSION

Recent and future trends in tourism development comprise accessibility for all, including persons with disabilities. The rights of participating in active leisure time are confirmed in the European and national legislation, and physical activities, sports and tourism are considered an important part of life-span wellbeing of every individual. Tourism refers to the biological, historical, and psychosocial aspects. The main intention of participating is the 'independent living' approach. Tourism can be realized – depending on accessibility and individual selection – in three basic domains: top competitive level, school/education level, and recreation level; formally, in a separate, parallel or inclusive setting. Adaptation of communication, attitudes, methods, content of programs and technique conditions is important and has to respect the limits and abilities of the participants. Real adaptation of the external determinants (field environment, communication and transfer of information, knowledge and attitudes, compensative and adaptive tools and instruments) is very important and can influence the internal (personal) determinants. But personal determinants, like acceptance of abilities and limits, motivation, and effort to manage, are crucial. Internal adaptations are only in the hands of individuals, the external ones have to be improved by the governmental inclusive policy, local representatives, civic organizations (mostly with European grants and sponsors), and enthusiastic volunteers.

## REFERENCES

- Bernard P., Fabre P. (2003), *Musea pro všechny: příručka k fyzické a smyslové dostupnosti muzeí*. Překlad do češtiny: P. Seitlová, M. Mádl, Český výbor ICOM a Asociace muzeí a galerií ČR, Europrint, Praha.
- Brown S.E. (1994), *Nezávislý způsob života. Teorie a praxe*, Sbor zástupců organizací zdravotně postižených, Praha.
- Bugatko D., Daehler M.W. (2001), *Child development: A thematic approach* (4th ed.), Houghton Mufflin, Boston.
- Demetrovič E. et al. (1988), *Encyklopedie tělesné kultury*, 2 díl P–Ž, Olympia, Praha.
- European Charter of Sport for All: Handicapped People (1987), CDDS, Strassbourg.
- Hodaň B., Dohnal T. (2005), *Rekreologie*, Hanex, Olomouc.
- Journal of Outdoor Activities*. Universita Jana Evangelista Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem, a survey of papers.
- Kaganek K. (2009), *Turystyka osób niepełnosprawnych w aspekcie wybranych uwarunkowań*, EAS, AMS Grafix, Kraków.
- Kaganek K. (2010), *Edukačné aspekty v turistike telesne posihnutých osob*, EAS, AMS Grafix, Kraków–Bratislava.
- Korhelíková M., Kudláček M. (2012), *Možnosti turistiky vozíčkářů v Beskydech, Aplikované pohybové aktivity v teorii a praxi*, 3 (2), 33–37.
- Neumann J. (2010), *Wellness a aktivity v přírodě*, [in:] Hošek V., Tillinger P. (eds.), *Wellness jako odbornost*, Palestra, Praha, 19–27.
- Oleśniewicz P. (2012), *School tourism as a form of participation in physical education*, *Edukacja*, Wrocław.
- Oleśniewicz P., Widawski K. (2013), *Turystyka edukacyjna w kontekście turystyki szkolnej*, UWr, Wrocław.
- Potměšil J. (2007), *Zdravotní postižení a nezávislý způsob života*, [in:] Fialová L. (ed.), *Wellness, zdraví a životní styl*, FTVS UK, Praha, 49–54.
- Sekot A. (2006), *Sociologie sportu*, Masarykova univerzita et Paido, Brno.
- Sherrill C. (1998), *Adapted Physical Activity, Recreation and Sport. Crossdisciplinary and Life-span*, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Dubuque.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007), New York. Retrieved 20.1.2013, [www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150) [access: 12.08.2014].
- Válková H. (2010), *Kudy na to? O motorické kompetenci a principech adaptací v APA, Aplikované pohybové aktivity v teorii a praxi*, 1 (2), 31–39.
- Válková H. (2012), *Teorie aplikovaných pohybových aktivit pro užítí v praxi 1*, Univerzita Palackého, Olomouc.
- Zdařilová R. (2011), *Bezbariérové užívání staveb*, Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj ČR, Praha.

## APPENDIX

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

a) enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;

b) enjoy access to television programs, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;

c) enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

2. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate steps, in accordance with international law, to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or dis-

criminary barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials.

4. Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.

5. With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

a) to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;

b) to ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;

c) to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;

d) to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;

e) to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities.

Paper received by the Editors: August 25, 2014

Paper accepted for publication: September 05, 2014

#### *Correspondence address:*

Hana Válková

Faculty of Sports Studies

Masaryk University

Bohunice, Kamenice 753/5

625 00 Brno

The Czech Republic

e-mail: hana.valkova@upol.cz