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ADULT LEARNING ON THE ENVIRONMENT RELATED THEMES – II

WOMEN'S HEALTH

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Introduction

Human health and the environment are closely linked. Some kinds of cancer can be attributed to chemical pollution in the environment. One of the main objectives of the European health policy, (Health to Everyone in the 21st Century) and the active health policy strategy that is stated in the national health conception and legalized in the Health System Law is the propagation of healthy life style and death rate reduction. Independent of nationality, place of residence, education or profession, people of the same age face certain problems.

The incidence of obesity in European countries and in the USA is increasing; the death rate of oncology disease is one of the highest in the general death structure. Breast cancer is the most frequent oncology disease of women in Lithuania. About 45% of breast cancer and cervical cancer cases are diagnosed too late, that is in stages III-IV. The results of cancer treatment directly depend on early diagnostics. When cancer is diagnosed in stage I, the expenses of treatment, sick-lists, disability and life quality get less; thus justifying investment in health promotion. . Presently the number of people receiving low income is getting bigger in Lithuania. As the birth rate gets lower, the number of middle-aged and older people relatively increases. The level of the unemployment is high, at the same time, working people are afraid of losing their jobs and do not pay enough attention to their health and illness prophylaxis. They pay attention to the disease only when they get ill and rely on expensive medication, having found no other solution. Our offered program is prophylactic, universal rather both for urban and rural people and does not require big financial investment from people.

Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of the following issues: obesity, hypodynamia and oncology disease prophylaxis among women, and to use it to help improve personal wellbeing
2. Having mastered the knowledge, to adapt it not only for oneself but also for other people in one's community;
3. To provide statistics to one's tutors, instructors and to perform material analysis;
4. To compare the results received with the communities of other states, to make general conclusions and to propose a general strategy to help solve these problems.

Individual health depends on some factors, especially on lifestyle (according to the World Health Organization (WHO) analysis). The main depending are:

1. Health protection - 10%
2. Heredity – 16%
3. Environment – 21%
4. Lifestyle – 53%

Following the data from the World Health Organization, in most cases a person's health depends on his/her lifestyle (lifestyle makes up to 53 % health determinative factors). Such problems as obesity, hypodynamia and oncology disease prophylaxis among women will be touched upon in this program; therefore, we suggest the following three teaching modules:

- A. Obesity problem among women;
- B. Hypodynamia and its role in the fight against obesity;
- C. Basics of breast cancer prophylaxis.

A Teaching Module includes:

Is obesity absolutely harmless? Following the data from the World Health Organization, only 60% of obese people reach the age of 60; 30% of them reach the age of 70; and only 10% of obese people live till they are 80.

There are 5 myths about the obesity problem.

The 1st myth – obesity is only a small cosmetic problem.

Obesity provokes other illnesses which makes life shorter. Arterial hypertension is more often (by 2,9 times) for people with overweight, atherosclerosis for young people with overweight is more often by 2,1 as for persons with normal weight. Diabetes is more often by 2,9 times among overweight people.

When overweight is more then 40% of ideal weight the risk of cancers is higher. Women with oncology disease are as rule high (height over 165cm) and fat (weight over 70kg). Overweight people have problems with joints illnesses, gall-bladder, futility etc.

The 2nd myth – it has no sense to fight obesity as it is inherited

Medicinal statistics show significant numbers of people with “idiopathic obesity”. The cause of it is eating too much (high levels of energy intake from food) and low physical activity levels. One factor is that women often try to improve their low mood and stress by eating too much.

The 3rd myth – a person must eat less sweets and pastry, drink less water for losing weight

The main cause of obesity by modern medicine is fat. Excessive fatty foods give to a person more energy than is necessary

The 4th myth – I know I eat a lot but I should be losing weight because I do exercise.

If you are over-eating, unless you are an athlete you are unlikely to burn up all those calories. For example, if you eat a cheese sandwich, you must exercise for an hour to use up the calories; or a large meal including French fries would take a 20 km walk to burn it off.

The 5th myth – it is possible to lose weight due to special diets and medicines.

Studies show that although you may lose weight through dieting in the first month after 2 months the weight generally is gained back again. The most effective weight loss is about 5-10% of weight over a year. The body mass index is calculated to evaluate person’s weight (BMI – weight (kg) divided on height).

BMI		Risk for health
BMI<18,5	under weight	no
BMI 18,5 – 24.5	normal weight	no
BMI 25 – 29,9	overweight	bigger
BMI 30 – 34,9	obesity	very high
BMI 35 – 39,9	high obesity	very high
BMI>40	sickly obesity	especially high

This data demonstrates proportion between BMI and risk for person’s health.

More women are overweight than men. Overweight/obesity depends on age, family size (the risk is higher if there are more children). It is more often in urban areas as rural people generally carry out more physical work. Incidence of obesity is lower amongst people with high education. due to increased understanding of the problem and its solutions.

There are three questions to look at to address obesity:

They are the following:

- **Who is to blame?**
- **What actions can we take to change?**
- **Where do we begin?**

The first answer would be: we are guilty. First of all, it needs to be acknowledged that we have to blame ourselves. Obesity is a chronic metabolism trouble. It is the final result of fat accumulation in the organism. There are many ways of losing weight described in literature. These include various cleansing diets, psychotherapy, starvation, use of medications, nutrition supplements, etc. This teaching module suggests regulating one's weight gradually and in moderation, by following a normal alimentation regime and by consuming low-fat food. The solution may seem very simple at first sight: each of our friends, relatives, colleagues has his/her own experience in this area; besides there is plenty of information available in the media. A person can choose from lots of ways to lose weight, such as diets, starvation, medicine helping to reduce the appetite, etc. Let's evaluate some of the ways to fight obesity:

- Psychotherapy. It helps to achieve a short-term effect, especially when combined with dieting.
- Starvation. While starving, one loses protein, not fat. The skin reflects this loss first of all: it becomes less elastic, gets wrinkled, and finally person looks older. Shortage of carbohydrate provokes constipation. Starvation causes accumulation of ketone bodies in the organism (it is called the starvation ketosis). The increase of ketone bodies leads to the intoxication of organism, that is harmful first of all to the brain. The intoxicated person becomes tired, he/she has headaches, tachycardia, he/she feels sleepy.
- Diets. The most popular diets nowadays are the rice/Chinese diet, and English diet, which suggests scoring points (instead of calories). Very popular and interesting is low-calorie diet (it contains only 400-600 calories per day). It suggests making cocktails from 15-30 grams of various special mixtures (consume 4-5 cocktails a day). It is very effective (by 100%) but very difficult to follow, as one must consume cocktails only the whole month. It has several side-effects, such as misbalance of water and microelements, insufficient brain supply, formation of gall stones, heart problems.
- Medicine. One cannot lose weight using diuretics or cathartics for losing weight. Fat burning medicines are effective only when combined with dieting. Nowadays food supplements (e.g. REDU-SAN), as natural and effective products, are very popular.

Where do we begin? In this teaching module we emphasize choosing suitable food, taking up physical activities. First of all a person him(her)self must decide to lose weight. The other people (i.e. relatives, colleagues must help him/her psychologically (not to laugh at him/her, not to provoke him/her, not to offer him/her unsuitable food or alcohol).

Main confessions have fasting (Lent) days. We forget often that fasting allows eating vegetables. For example, here is an interesting recipe of nettle soup:

Let's put 25 grams of sliced onion, 1 tablespoon of boiled rice, 1-2 sliced potatoes into 2 litres of boiling water. Before end of cooking (for 15min), let's put 150 grams of nettle.

In order to lose weight, we suggest to follow diets, however it is very important to follow human physiology while dieting. The main principles of dieting are: follow diet every second day (one can eat all products before the diet), eat less sweets, pastries, fats, have one fasting day a week.

Recommended day's ration:

- 1,5 kg of apples – or
- 400 g of curds – or
- 2 kg of vegetables (except potatoes) –
- Follow this diet for a long time.

Recently, an Individual Weight Reduction Program (IWRP) was offered in Lithuania. Presently in Lithuania the Individual Weight Reduction Program (IWRP) is applied widely in the obesity treatment. The process is long enough. It takes from 5 days to 3 months. The IWR Program includes:

1. Nourishment correction plan
2. Physical training correction plan
3. Choice of medicines
4. Surgical treatment

The 3^d and the 4th steps are recommended only when person's BMI is more than 30.

Obesity is a very serious problem. Besides, there's no universal treatment recipe for everyone. Certainly, IWRP can help a person. One should remember, that "everything that grows is edible". We suggest varying one's daily ration with nettle soup or vitamin tea (fit-tea). All the weight-loss measures are effective only when they are used complementary. One should also not forget the following 10 rational nutrition rules:

1. Food must be various;
2. Eat neither too much, nor too little;
3. Eat less but often;
4. Food must contain enough proteins;
5. Don't eat too fat food;
6. Eat sweets only occasionally;
7. Eat fresh vegetables, fruits and products from high quality grain every day;
8. Prepare food properly;
9. Do not use much salt;
10. Refuse alcohol.

B. Teaching Module includes:

- 1) Description of hypodynamia term.
- 2) Hypodynamia as a social problem.
- 3) Dosage of physical load.

The theme of physical activity helping to fight obesity was discussed in program separately.

Nowadays a special term, such as hypodynamia, has appeared. Hypodynamia means that a person moves less and his/her muscles work less. Indeed, we often use the elevator, go to work by car, bus or another transport, we spend plenty of time watching TV. Hypodynamia, is a social phenomenon, that depends on the quality of life (usage of escalator, various means of transport). We would like to remind, that muscles burn 90 % of fat. However that does not mean that one should actively train up to “loosing one’s consciousness”. It has been proved, that exercises of low intensity and long duration, such as a one hour walk every day or aerobics exercises and dance 5-6 minutes four-five times a day, are the optimal variant. Physical exercises are indispensable because they can affect separate muscle groups (e.g. abdominal, leg muscles). It is very important to do exercises outside, because oxygen is needful for fat-loss. Let’s do your favorite exercises. Don’t stop if you began to do it.

The main principle of correct exercising is to calculate the intensity. If you feel pleasant warmness, and your muscles are in good tonus after the exercising, your are doing it correctly. If you feel tired, hungry, and your muscles tonus is low, you must change your speed. One more advantage of exercising is possibility to train different muscle groups (waist, legs). It is especially relevant for women, because diets do not help removing fat from legs and waist area. Massage of these areas also gives good results. In general, we can say that physical activity is one of the ways to fight against obesity.

One should look after the health until he/she is healthy, and to pay attention to prophylaxis.

C Teaching Module includes:

- 4) Significance of gynaecological prophylaxis.
- 5) Identification of breast cancer risk groups.
- 6) Basics of breast self-examination.
- 7) The European code against cancer.

There are a lot of diseases, but it is considered that the hardest and most dangerous are oncologic ones. Today it is possible to speak about the oncology prophylaxis. The base of the prophylaxis is to diagnose illness in its early stage. However prophylaxis needs person to be active him(her)self: prophylaxis is not effective at all if a person acts passively.

Further in this module the early prophylaxis of oncology diseases is touched upon. Every year every ninth woman in Europe and the USA hears the diagnosis – breast cancer. Every year over 570000 new cases of breast cancer are estimated worldwide. In this module we especially emphasize the primary breast cancer prophylaxis, that is, the identification of risk groups. The teaching module points out, what a woman can do and how she can take care of her health on her own, without big financial investment and help from outside, that is we provide women with the basics of breast self-examination. It has been noticed that amongst women, who have been taught breast self-examination and have performed this analysis regularly, the death rate has dropped down by 18%.

The first step in breast cancer prophylaxis is to identify risk groups.

The 1st group – the factors which provoke risk to be diagnosed with oncology disease:

- The nearest relatives (mother, sister, daughter) had the breast cancer
- Overweight after menopause and age over 60 years
- Using hormone-therapy for a long time (over 10 years)
- Anamnesis includes information about cancer existed earlier, especially “Ca in situ”.
- Irradiation episodes

The 2nd group – the factors which provoke risk to be diagnosed with the breast cancer in less level:

- Late climax
- Application of oral contraception
- Irrational nourishment, including much fat
- Late first pregnancy and childbirth after 30, having no children

The 3rd group –the factors which provoke risk to be diagnosed with the breast cancer in the least level

- Early menstruation beginning
- Absence of lactation after child-birth
- Hypodinamia

It should be taken into account, that existing factors are not the evidence of cancer.

The introspection of breasts is very important factor in the breast cancer prophylaxis. Having the regular introspection decreases the death rate by 18%.

It is needed to examine and palpate the breasts (it should be performed 10 days after menstruation; when menstruation does not exist, it is recommended to be made the same day each month)

A woman to 40 year old must visit a gynaecologist, surgeon, oncologist yearly. A woman over 40 must make mammography regularly. Women must take care of themselves.

The European code against cancer consists of the following postulates:

1. Do not smoke.
2. Limit alcohol consuming.
3. Don't sun too much.
4. If you work with carcinogens be especially careful.
5. Consume a lot of fruits and vegetables, as well as high-fibre products.
6. Avoid obesity.
7. Visit a doctor if you note some changes, such as uprising of lump, modification of mole, haemorrhage.
8. Consult with a doctor if you have some pathological reactions, such as chronically falling weight, cough, etc.
9. Women must visit gynaecologist regularly.
10. Women must inspect their breasts regularly.

In our programme we promote natural healthcare means. Summarizing, we would like to quote Hippocrates: *"Who wants to remain strong, healthy and young, has to train one's body regularly, breathe fresh air and treat one's aches more by means of starvation than medication"*.

Teaching methods are the following:

1. Information provision during conferences, lectures and seminars;
2. Training of adults, working in the groups;
3. Round-table discussions;
4. Leaflets;
5. Collection of feedback and its statistical processing.