

The role of balneotherapy in helping older people take advantage of new job opportunities

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Introduction

Maintaining and supporting the physical and mental health of older people is not only in the interest of individuals, but also of the community, as active and healthy older people are able to continue participating in the labor market, volunteering, and fulfilling family roles. Balneotherapy is a therapeutic method that has been known and used for centuries, playing a key role primarily in the treatment of musculoskeletal problems, rehabilitation, and the prevention of chronic diseases. This is particularly important for the older generation, among whom degenerative joint diseases, rheumatic complaints, and mobility limitations are more common. The aim of our research was to explore the experiences and attitudes of elderly people using two different spas in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and how this relates to maintaining labor market activity.

Method

The research was conducted at two different spas. A total of 120 people with musculoskeletal disorders were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Most of the respondents received social insurance-supported treatment. The questionnaire contained partially identical questions, allowing for comparative analysis based on certain key questions.

Results

The majority of the patients surveyed were of retirement age, and a significant proportion of them were repeat spa users. The vast majority of respondents said they would recommend the treatments to others, and a large proportion rated the effectiveness of the services as “completely useful.” The differences between visitors to the two spas were mainly in their attitude to treatment and additional activities (e.g. exercise, cycling). The proportion of female respondents exceeded that of males at both locations.

Conclusions

The results support the health-preserving role of spas among the older age group. Regular spa visits not only bring symptomatic relief, but can also contribute to maintaining the activity and independence of the elderly. This is particularly important in maintaining opportunities for participation in the labor market and community involvement. In the future, it would be worthwhile to further investigate the role of balneotherapy in the region in the context of elderly care and health policy using a standardized questionnaire and involving more spas.