

## Executive summary

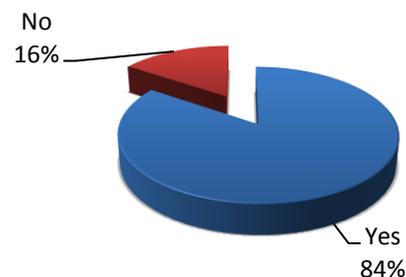
The survey was attended by the twelve countries that form the partners of the MENS Project. Target groups were mental health organizations, sports organizations, the general population and mental health patients. The aim of the survey was to explore the recognition over the contribution of physical exercise to mental health.

### Mental Health Organizations.

The survey involved a total of 458 representatives of mental health organizations. 56% of the sample was female and 44% male. Regarding specialty, 12.7% were psychiatrists, 22.8% psychologists and 30.6% social workers.

84.46% of the sample stated they use physical exercise as a means of improving mental health. However, there are major differences between the four regions as the Central European countries show a significantly lower rate. In cases where physical exercise is not used, the most important reason is the patient's lack of will. A small percentage (7.8%) argued that physical exercise does not help, according to the literature.

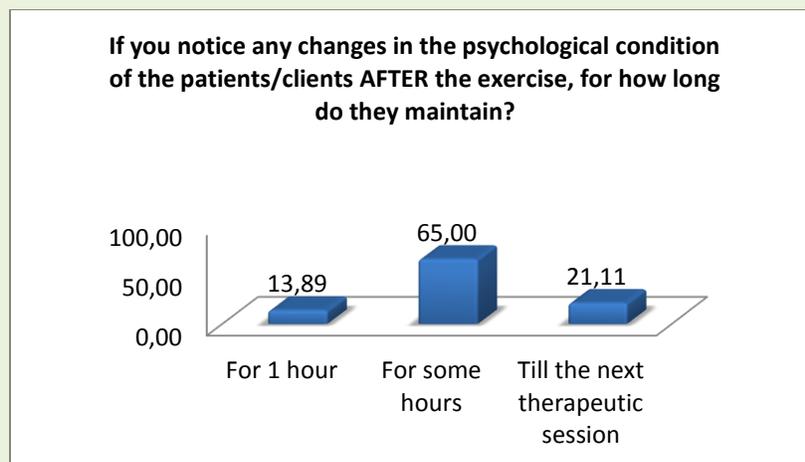
**Do you make use of exercise as a means of improving the mental health of your patients/clients?**





Team program, freestyle exercise and team sport are the forms of exercise suggested by the majority of the sample. At the same time, experts recommend physical exercise 1-2 times a week (46%).

An important indication of the contribution of physical exercise to mental health is the fact that experts see changes in the psychological state for some hours after the end of the exercise (65%).

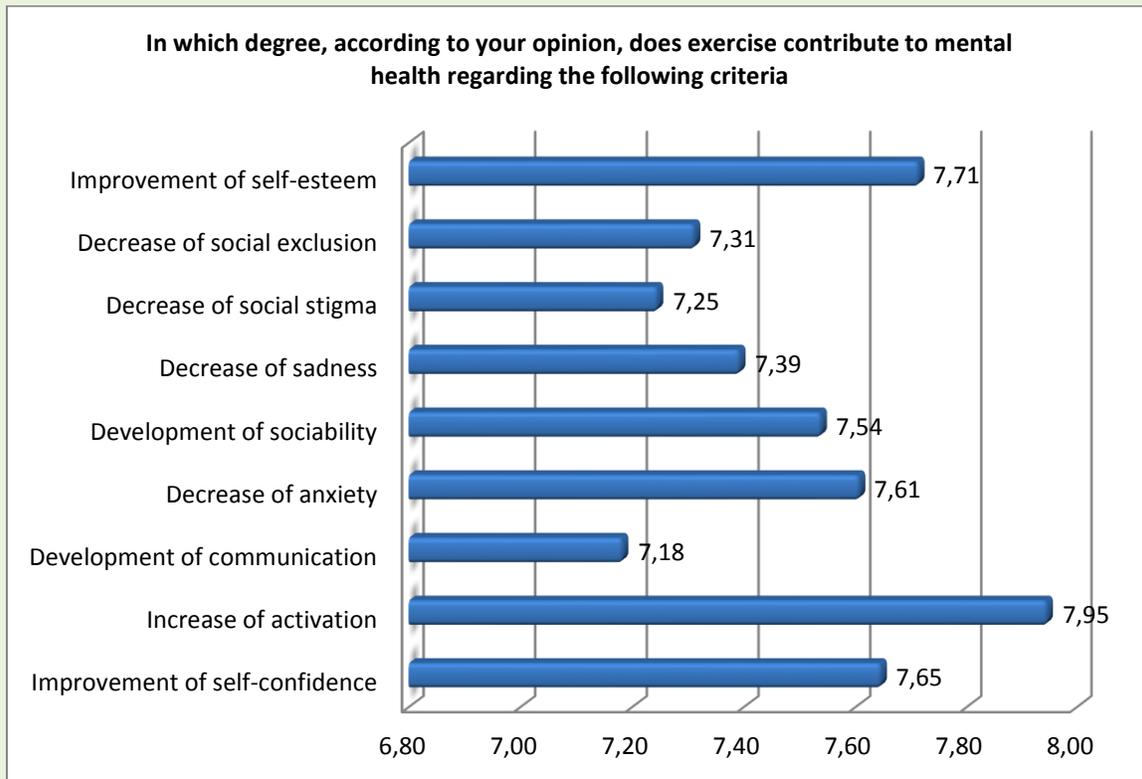


Indicative of the above conclusion is the fact that 88% of the sample agrees that the exercise assists in the therapeutic treatment of mental disorders. 42% of the sample estimates that it helps a lot and 41% that helps moderately.

90% of the sample declares positive to include exercise in the treatment process. Western Europe countries had significantly lower percentage (77%). Only 31.5% of mental health organizations have facilities, or the possibility of using facilities, the time, and the staff that could implement such an intervention though. Significant infrastructure shortfalls are observed in eastern European countries.



Regarding the effect of physical exercise, experts estimate it contributes in increasing of activation, improvement of self-esteem, improvement of self-confidence and decreasing of anxiety. At the same time they recognize the contribution to reducing the risk of CVDs and body fat.



General Public.

The survey involved a total of 1473 people, of whom 63.5% were women and 36.4% were men. The mean age of the sample was 35.7 years.

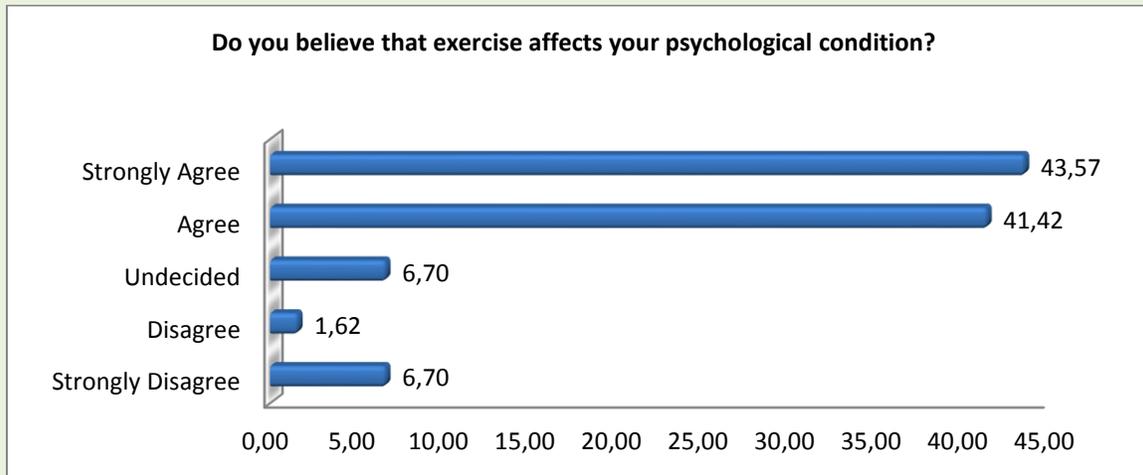
The overwhelming majority of the sample (96.8%) agrees that participation in sport - exercise programs is beneficial for mental health. Light physical activity and team sport are the most beneficial according to the majority's opinion. At the same time, they acknowledge that physical exercise primarily affects the Improvement of physical condition and the promotion of physical health.

73.7% of the sample stated they exercise.

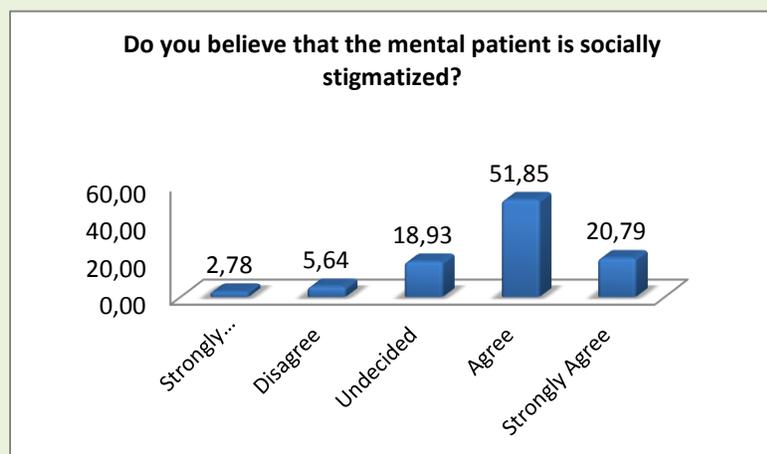


On a daily basis exercise 16.8% of the sample while 46% exercises are 1 to 3 times a week. Regarding the type of exercise, muscle strengthening is the most popular type (28.6%) according to the respondents, followed by group exercise (16.9%).

At the same time, respondents estimate that physical activity has a positive effect on their psychological condition. Specifically, 41% agree and 43% strongly agree.

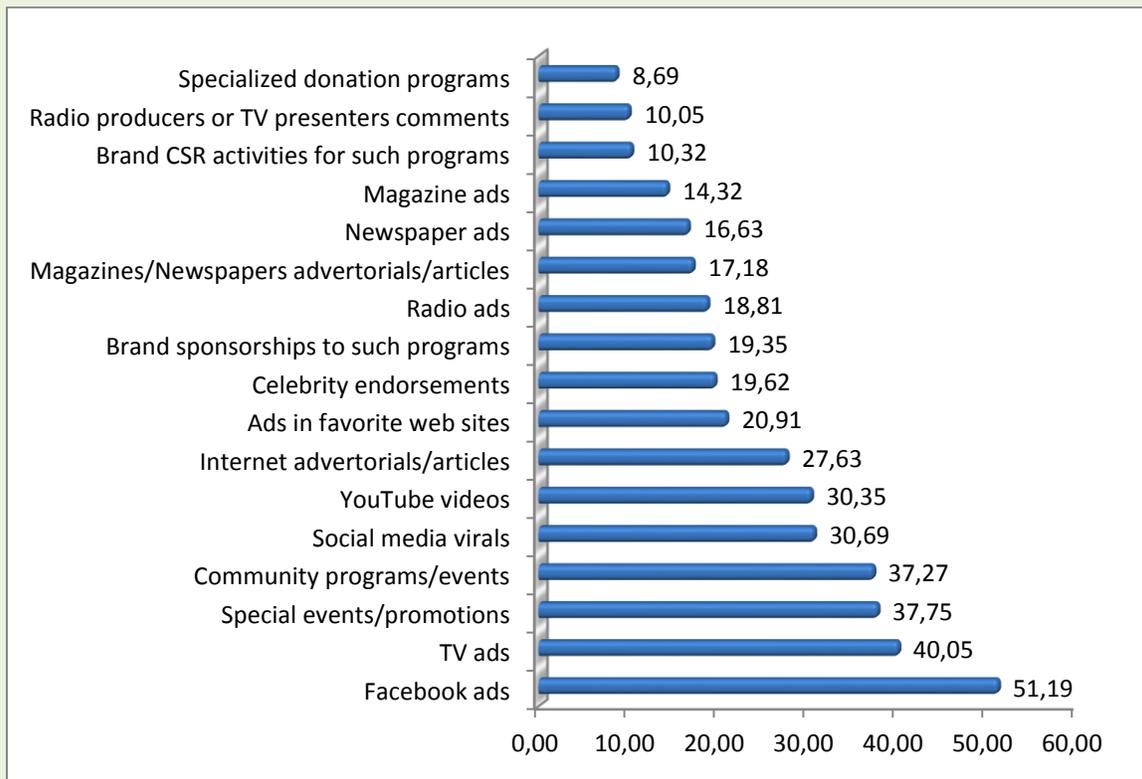


In the case of respondents who do not exercise, the shortage of time is the most important factor (55%) followed by the lack of mood (21.4%). However, in this case, 85% of those who do not exercise agree that the exercise would be positive to their psychological condition.



71% of the sample considers that mental patients are stigmatized. At the same time they consider that participation in sports events could address the social stigma problem. Team program, freestyle exercise and team sport would be the most appropriate way according to their opinion.

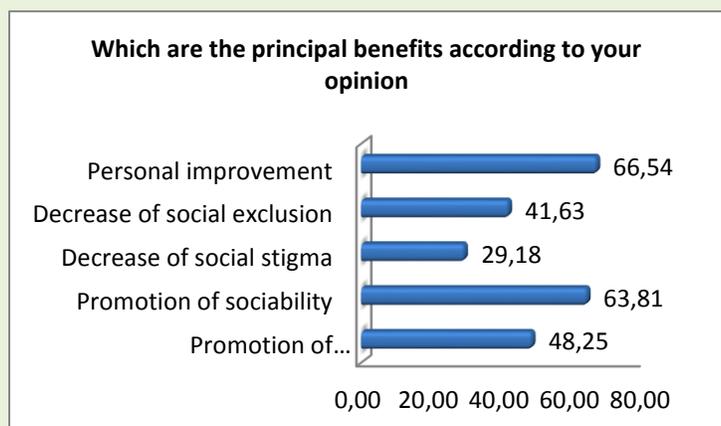
Facebook ads and TV ads are the most effective ways to inform and motivate the public.



### Sport Organizations.

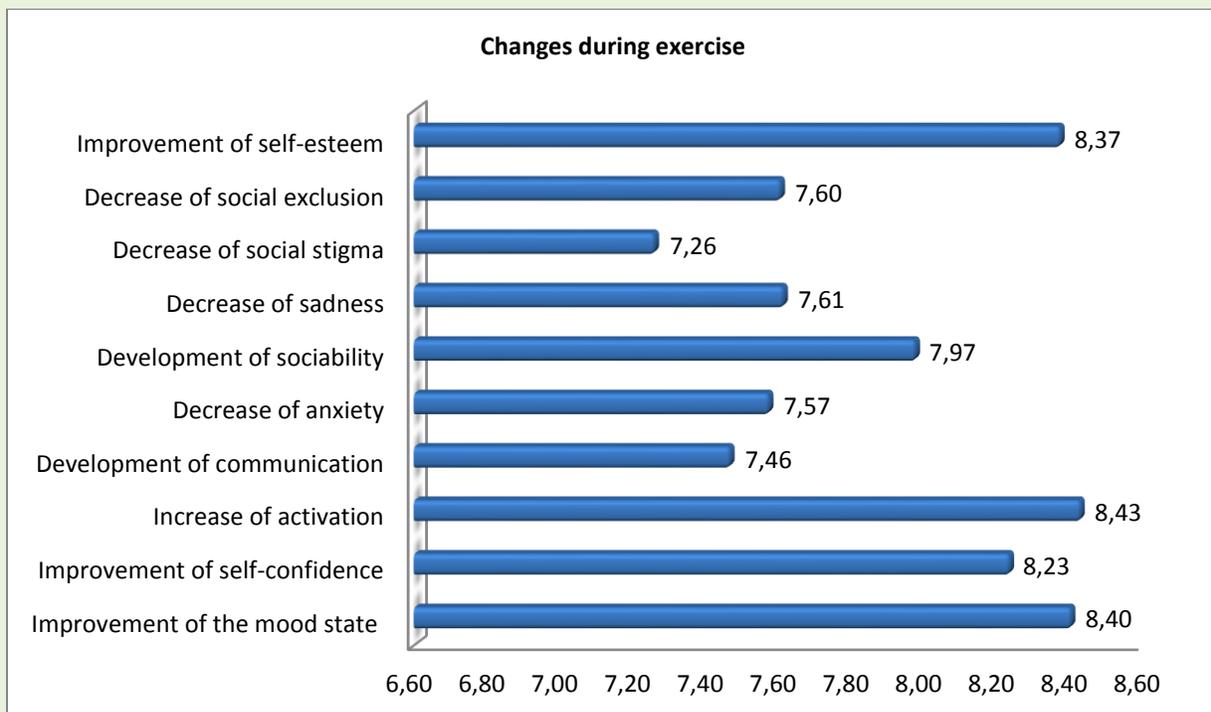
The survey involved a total of 257 sports organization representatives, of which 52% were men and 48% women. The average age was 38 years and the average work experience was 15.2 years.

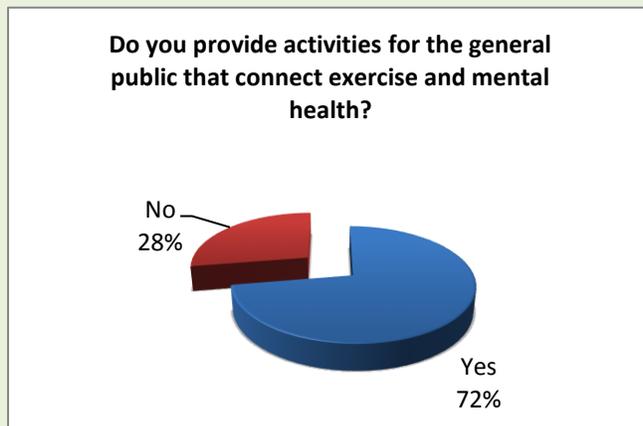
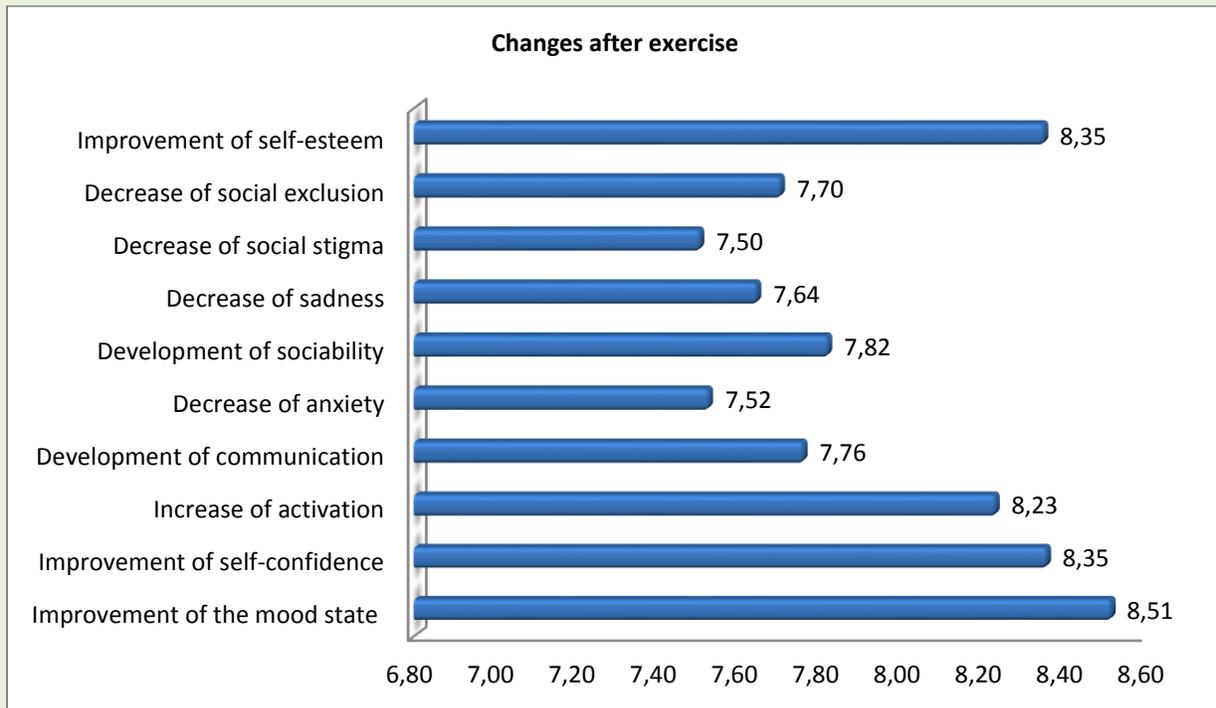
98% agree that participation in sports and exercise activities is beneficial to mental health. The main benefits include personal improvement (66%), promotion of sociability (63.8%), promotion of



communication (48) and decrease of social exclusion (41%).

Representatives of sports organizations notice major changes in the psychological condition either during or after exercise regarding the mood state, self-confidence, activation, self-esteem and sociability.

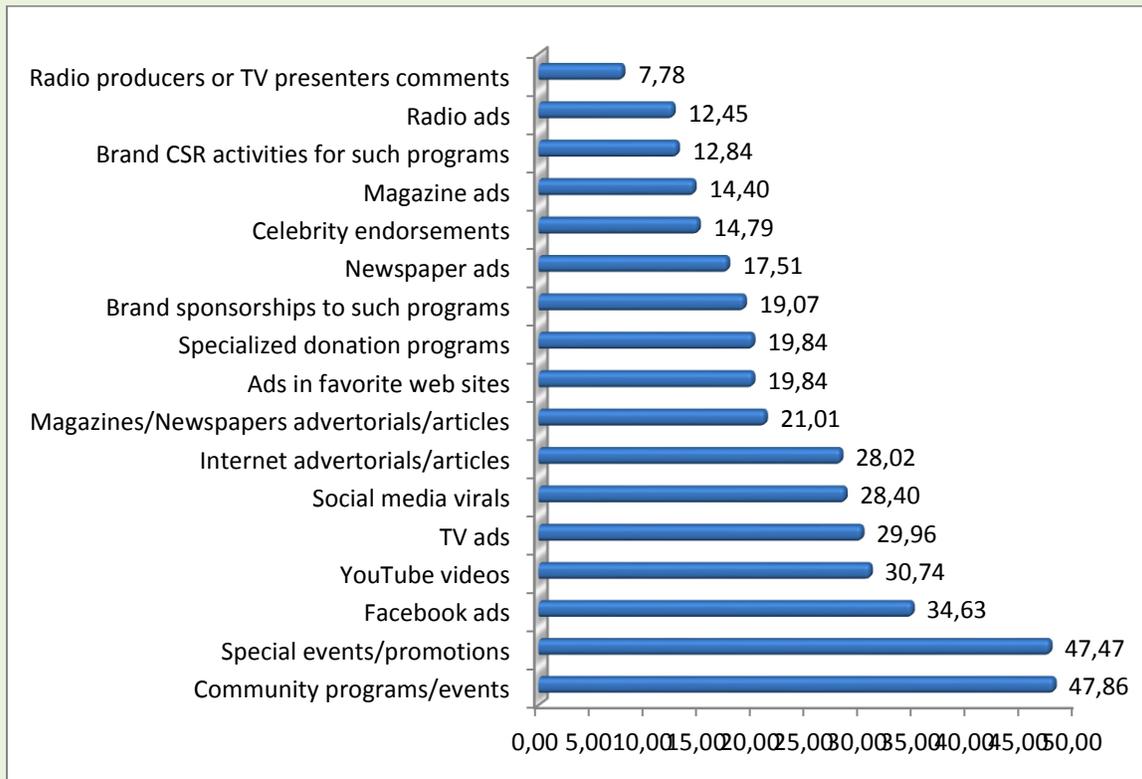




72% of the sport organizations provide activities to the general population linking mental health and physical activity. Where this is not the case, 65% declare willing to do so in the future. At the same time, 86% consider that physical activity contributes sufficiently or greatly to psychological condition.

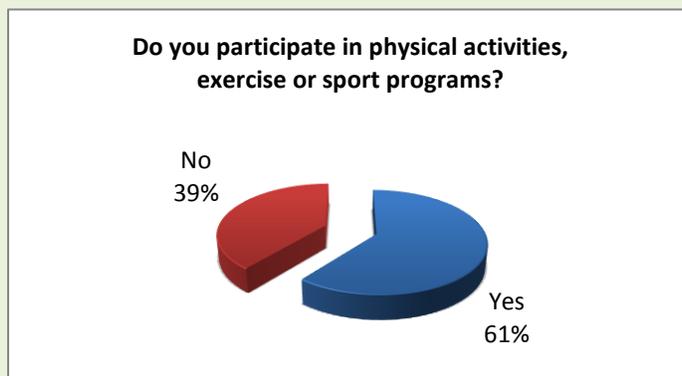
A significant percentage of the sample (48%) had previously collaborated with mental health organizations while 60% of non-cooperated organizations state their willingness to cooperate in the future.

According to the sport organization's view, community programs / events and Special events / promotions are the most effective ways to inform and motivate the public.



### Mental Health Users

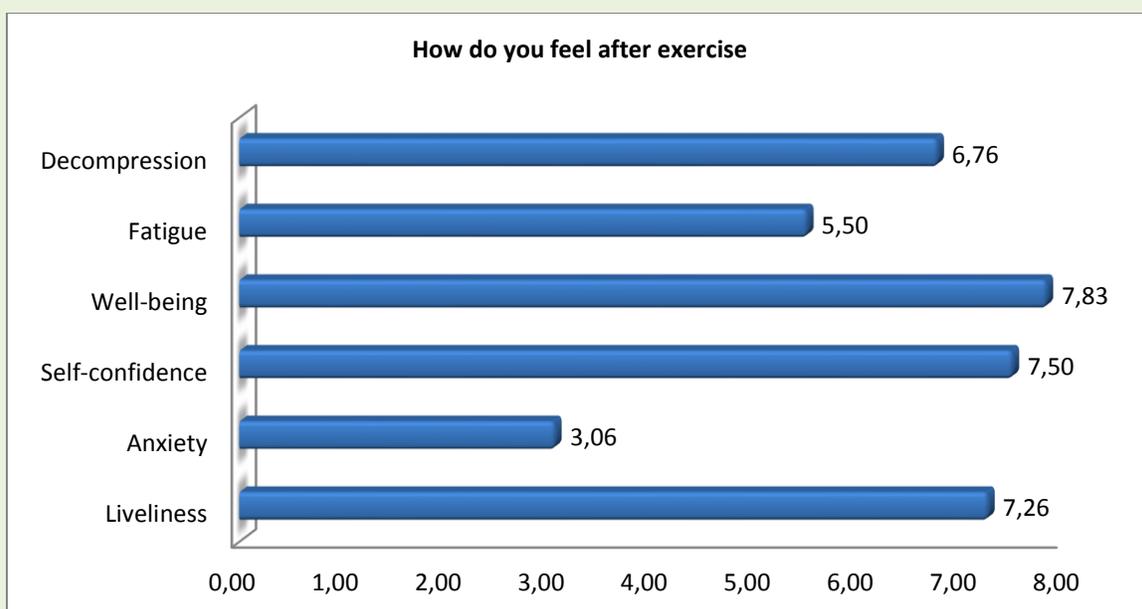
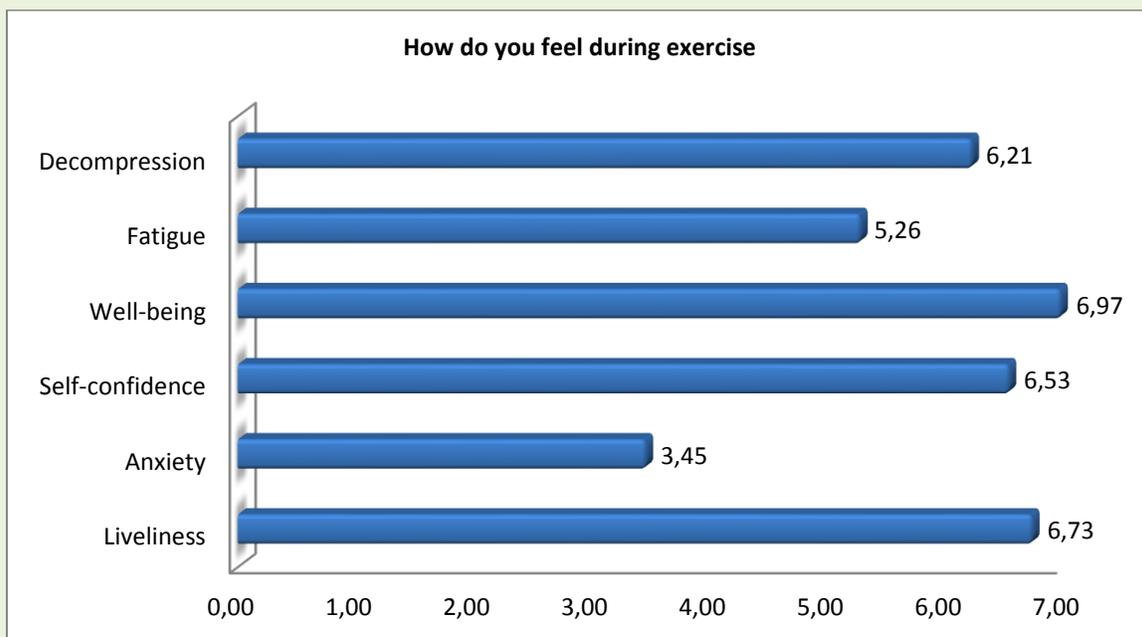
The survey involved 468 mental health users, of whom 51% were men and 49% women.



60.8% of the sample participates in sport activities. In the case of non-participation, the lack of mood and time are the most important factors.

Regarding the frequency of physical exercise, on a daily basis exercises the 25.4% while 41% is exercises 2-3 times a week. Organized program in the gym selects 26% of the sample followed by the individual exercise at home 16%.

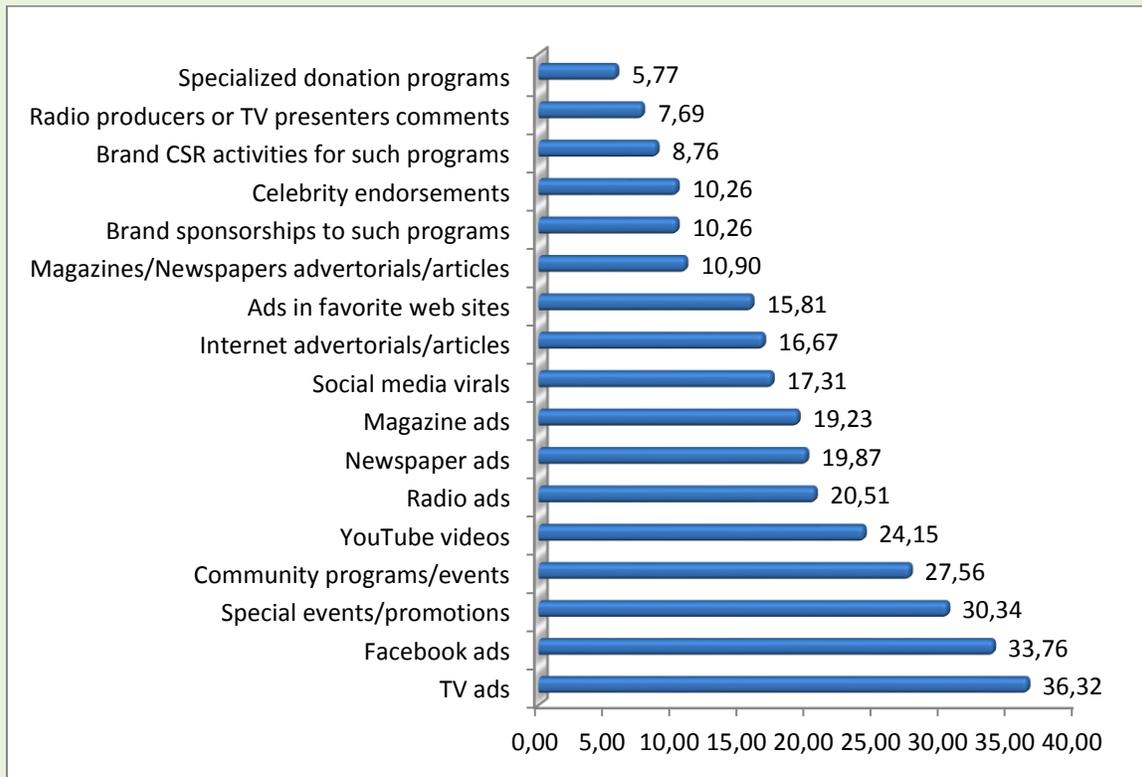
Significant improvement in liveliness, well-being and self-confidence notice the respondents either during or after physical activity. The overwhelming majority of the sample agrees that exercise has a positive effect on their psychological condition.



40% of the sample prefers to exercise with others while 20.7% alone. 38% stated that there is no difference. At the same time, 75% would like to include physical activity as part of their therapeutic program.



Facebook ads and TV ads are the most effective ways to inform and motivate the public.





**MENS Research**  
Connecting Sport &  
Physical Exercise  
with Mental Health

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