



## Health in the context of martial arts practice

### Authors' Contribution:

A - Study Design  
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### Abstract

*One of the manifestations of physical activity are martial arts. Modern research also concerns the problem of treating martial arts not only as a means of self defence, sport or how one spends their free time, but also as a therapy. Therapy through traditional martial arts can help treat many medical disorders. It was acclaimed that participation in the traditional martial arts promotes mental health. It was noted that the sense of self-worth and self-esteem of competence is directly related to the time spent doing training. Current studies show that the traditional martial arts are largely effective, complementary strategy of medical care and rehabilitation of chronic diseases. By watching yet another MMA event on the TV, seeing players' faces being hit and blood flowing on their bodies, it is worth to be aware that it's just a spectacular event. The everyday life of people concerned with martial arts is different. Often times they undertake these exercises to improve their physical fitness and the quality of life. It is followed by taking responsibility for their health and not giving it exclusively to the doctor. This results in an active and rational fight against any disease.*

**Keywords:** martial arts, health, quality of life

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO, health is not only the total absence of disease or disability, but also a State of complete physical, mental, and social welfare (well-being) [1]. This means that in health related issues, we should not only concentrate on diseases and attempts to fight them, but we should especially focus on health itself and strengthening it. Therefore, the role of prevention seems to be very important. An element of the strengthening of such approach to health is, among other things: correct nutrition, way of thinking, ability to cope with negative emotions and physical activity.

One of the manifestations of physical activity are martial arts. Modern research also concerns the problem of treating martial arts not only as a means of self defence, sport or how one spends their free time, but also as a therapy [2,3]. Therapy through traditional martial arts can help treat many medical disorders. Contemporary scientific literature reports that martial arts are helpful in monitoring behaviour of children with ADHD, they provide controlled and less aggressive strategies and techniques than other sports [4,5], in assisting with mental health development and overcoming stress [6,7], in psychotherapy, where a man becomes more self-contained, and learns how to control aggression and the identification of problems and their resolution [8-10], in reduction and diagnosis of aggressiveness [11,12].

Traditional martial arts emphasize on self-discipline, self-control, mental strength and mental acuity, relaxation, balance of body and mind. The teaching process focuses on energy management, both physical and psychological [13]. It was acclaimed that participation in the traditional martial arts promotes mental health. It was noted that the sense of self-worth and self-esteem of competence is directly related to the time spent doing training [14]. Interestingly, the increase in one's perception of their confidence and competence is not accompanied by increase in arrogance and the growth of their own "ego" [15]. Martial arts gives the opportunity to discover the strengths and weaknesses of personality such as: courage-cowardice, bravery-aggressiveness, pride-vanity [2].

Therefore, traditional martial arts training can be a great method of psychotherapy. This process is more self-contained and provides opportunities for the development of well-being, aggression control, identification of problems and their resolution.

## ASSOCIATIONS OF MARTIAL ARTS WITH MEDICINE

Since the dawn of time people around the world have engaged in war and studied methods of defence against enemies. Keeping this kind of struggle has been associated with damages and injuries of warrior's body. Therefore, the ability to help people after or during the fight, was an essential element of knowledge. Perhaps this is why the summit of Hippocrates' activity, who is known as father of medicine, was at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War [16]. In East Asian countries, besides teaching of martial art techniques, practitioners' training involved elements of philosophical and spiritual medicine [17]. Many Kung-fu varieties, combined teaching of combat with techniques of acupuncture and herbal medicine. Medical knowledge, along with war strategy, was passed to higher ranking Samurai. They were taught the "ki" theory, acupressure, massage methods, resuscitation techniques as well as natural medicine.

Current studies show that traditional martial arts are largely effective, complementary strategy of medical care and rehabilitation of chronic diseases [18, 19].

## PREVENTION AS AN ELEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Wise and healthy people say that: a pinch of prevention is worth more than a handful of drugs. In ancient China and in Chinese medicine, the patient paid their doctor for being healthy; if they got sick, the doctor would not be paid [20]. That, of course, was a motivation for the doctor to keep their patients healthy. Therefore, China was a place in which preventative systems such as Tai Chi were developed. In old Chinese medical system, we can see very strong focus on active aspect of life; health as well-being and harmony is in the centre of all activities and health-related behaviour. We can increasingly see similar parallels in WHO (World Health Organization).

Hippocrates stressed the role of prevention. He introduced the diet and hygiene as measures to prevent the disease, he believed that based on one's appearance, their health could be determined [21].

The ethical codes of warriors who performed martial arts, were an important point of quality of life and health. They thought how to control emotions, which helped to keep moral harmony and healthy social relationships. These codes of conduct recommended hygienic and dietary lifestyle. Mental training helped with relaxation and concentration, which eliminated fear and aggression, enabling self-control of emotions. This has resulted in increased health and vitality (quality of life).

Prevention of body injuries is an important element of martial art teaching. Due to the formula (preventative) of this kind of training, the man is protected. Strike techniques do not need to target other people, they can be aimed at immobile objects. That allows for self-improvement in the martial art; although it is not in accordance with the general rule of combat. In that case, the individual measure of health (physical health) can for example, be the amount of broken boards.

## SUMMARY

The cause of amateur and recreational take of this case of exercise is simple. These are universal, all-purpose work-out exercises are great not only for self-defence training, but they also positively affect out physical and spiritual balance.

By watching yet another MMA event on the TV, seeing players' faces being hit and blood flowing on their bodies, it is worth to be aware that it's just a spectacular event. The everyday life of people concerned with martial arts is different. Often times they undertake these exercises to improve their physical fitness and the quality of life. It is followed by taking responsibility for their health and not giving it exclusively to the doctor. This results in an active and rational fight against any disease.

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