

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS TO 'START TO RUN' PROGRAMME. COMPARISON BETWEEN MAINTENANCE AND DROP OUT GROUPS

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BACKGROUND. 'Start to run' is a 10 weeks programme designed to people who want to resume physical activity. **AIM.** This study aimed to identify initial characteristics differing among people who continue to run and those who stop. **METHODS.** 229 subjects attending to the first lesson (W0) of the autumn session organized in 20 communities of Wallonia (French speaking part of Belgium) fulfilled a questionnaire aiming to identify their characteristics. At W10, 180 of them answered to another questionnaire (68.5% of them achieved the programme). 12 weeks after the end of the latter (W22), 54 subjects who participated to the previous step and achieved the programme answered to a third questionnaire (71.1% were still running). **FINDINGS.** Few differences ($p \leq .05$) were identified. At W10, MG subjects started with a lower BMI, had a better perception of their economical situation, a higher confidence to run during 10 weeks, a better perception of their health status, a lower consumption of alcohol. On the other hand, it was surprising to notice that they had lower perception of the neighbourhood's safety, representation of physical activity's effects on health and about its advantages. At W22, MG comprised more women. Subjects of this group had a higher consumption of vegetables and tried to decrease their fat consumption in the last 2 years. They considered themselves as physically active and motivated by expectations of others, perceived a higher family and children support and saw running as reassuring and rewarding. Nevertheless, they felt to meet more stray dogs in their environment. Most of the differences correspond to the literature. Moreover, among the subjects in the DG, almost 40% were injured meaning that they would have been active without this situation. **DISCUSSION.** Effective physical activity resumption seems to be linked to a general health climate without overestimation of one's competences and expectations. Recommendations are proposed for sport instructors.

Sport educators should yet improve the participants' safety as well as focus more on motivational aspects than on performance itself.