THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT AND THE DEGREE OF IMPROVEMENT OF PARAPLEGIC PATIENTS IN THE REGION OF CRACOW*

By A. PACHALSKI, M.D., M.B., M. KUZAK PACHALSKA, Ph.D., C.C.C. and
T. MEKARSKI, MR.

*Institute of Motor Rehabilitation at the Academy of Physical Education, Cracow,
Poland.*

In the region of Cracow 50 paraplegics are under constant care of the Polish Society for Combating and Preventing Disability. The aim of social rehabilitation of paraplegics is to adapt them to the requirements of everyday life, and this is usually possible in Poland.

Twenty-three patients participated in light athletics and swimming (Group A). Twenty-seven paraplegics did not take part in sport and were found to be less physically proficient (Group B). Considering these two categories:

(1) *Age of patients*

Those in Group A were younger than those in Group B.

(2) *Age when became paraplegic*

Before the age of 20 years: Group A = 21; Group B = 2.

(3) *Sex of patients*

Group A: 15 males, 8 females;

Group B: 17 males, 10 females.

(4) *Marital status*

Group A: 6 married

Group B: 6 married.

(5) *Education*

	Group A	B
Primary	—	12
Professional	1	6
Incomplete secondary	4	—
Secondary	7	5
Incomplete university	3	2
University	1	—
No information	1	2

(6) *Professional Work*

The success of rehabilitation of those with paraplegia is the ability to undertake work, and is the aim of all rehabilitation activities in our country. Economic independence is a necessary condition for participation in normal life.

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	Group A	B
Full time work	16	3
Half time work	—	13
Preparing for work		
Professional school	5	—
Studying	2	1
Receiving a pension	—	10

(7) *The monthly income of patients*

The income of patients in Group 'A' is over 2000 zł. In the majority of cases, 73.9 per cent it is over 3000 zł. In group 'B' 77.8 per cent patients have less than 3000 zł and among them some receive less than 15000 zł: 22.2 per cent of all patients in this group.

The financial situation of patients in Group A is much better than those in group B among whom 22.2 per cent do not receive a 'social minimum'. It is stressed that all the examined paraplegics reviewed are at an age that they can either work or learn to work.

(8) *Occupation*

	A	B
Manual work	14	15
Non-manual work	4	1
Student	3	1
Pupil	1	—
Others (have not learned to work)	1	10

(9) *Living standard*

Group A: 14 Group B: 15.

Thus, one requirement of rehabilitation is not fulfilled, that each paraplegic should have his own room. This situation can be partially explained by the very difficult housing problem in the region of Cracow.

(10) *Means of transport*

All used a wheelchair as the basic means of transportation, and in addition, 11 patients in Group A had a motor car, and eight in Group B.

Sixteen patients in Group A were unable to drive, and 19 in Group B.

(11) *Adaptation to the environment*

All patients in Group A and the majority in Group B work in co-operatives, so they have managed to solve the problem of transport. In Group A only one person could not go out without assistance.

(12) *Frequency of social contacts*

This was quite frequent in 16 patients in Group A; but zero in Group B.

(13) *Vacation*

Going abroad is very popular among patients in Group A. They go mainly to sports competitions; five took part on ten occasions, the others on several occasions. In Group B, 18 persons have not travelled abroad, the others have been abroad one to three times.

(14) *Self-dependence (patients evaluation)*

In Group A all the patients considered themselves to be self dependent.

In Group B 20 of the 27 persons considered that they were self dependent. In Group A only 4 persons expected other people to help them, mainly in carrying their wheelchair.

In Group B, 18 persons expected help in such situations as shopping, cleaning, climbing stairs etc.