

Abstract

Title of thesis: Benefits and risks of Parkrun

The thesis dealt with the Parkrun project, which can be classified as outdoor activity. The aim of the thesis was to assess the health and social benefits and risks of Parkrun. This is a research paper, the main sources of information of which were the electronic database EBSCO and the official website of the Parkrun organization, together with electronic articles and reports about Parkrun.

When assessing the health benefits and risks of Parkrun, the thesis reached the following conclusions: Parkrun brings physical health benefits in the form of general improvement and maintenance of physical fitness. In particular, it helps to reduce the level of cholesterol in the blood, reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, and thus represents the prevention of the occurrence of civilization diseases. In addition, it can dampen the symptoms of asthma and help reduce the inflammation of the airways. Risks for physical health can be extreme manifestations of the weather – especially heat or cold. Another risk may be the load on the joints in the case of incorrect technique and the predominant hard surface. Parkrun also brings benefits in the field of psychological health in the sense of a general feeling of satisfaction, happiness, joy, self-confidence, as well as a sense of belonging and usefulness. No risks were identified in the area of mental health.

In the socio-economic and environmental field, the most significant benefits include the positive influence on building and maintaining social ties, along with reducing the degree of isolation and exclusion of certain social groups. Other benefits appear to be the support of tourism along with increased respect and consideration for nature and cultural heritage. On the other hand, a possible risk of burdening the natural and cultural environment due to increased tourism was also identified.

Overall, Parkrun brings significant health benefits and these benefits significantly outweigh the risks. Furthermore, Parkrun has a positive impact on social ties. Finally, the positive influence of Parkrun on tourism and, in connection with it, partially on nature and culture was also identified. However, tourism itself can also pose a risk to nature and culture at the same time.

Keywords:

Outdoor activities, green exercise, running, walking, physical and mental health, society, nature, culture, economy.