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## Bet on Health – conference review

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### ABSTRACT

The goal of the International Conference Bet on Health was to unite the leading researchers and practitioners so that the chief subject of this conference could be the problems related to sports, well-being, and health, and the role that local authorities/communities have when it comes to planning, implementing, and evaluating policies and practices connected to public health issues. It also served as a further interdisciplinary meeting for researchers, practitioners, and educators to present and discuss the latest trends and innovations, but also the issues and practical challenges and solutions accepted in the area of health promotion and well-being, sports, and local politics.

### KEYWORDS

Health; sport; well-being;  
local community

The International Conference Bet on Health took place on 29 and 30 October 2020. It was organised by the Faculty of Tourism, University of Maribor, Slovenia.

During the very first day of the event, details of the whole Bet on Health project were provided, and there was also a webinar. Various topics were opened at the webinar: the municipality as a driver of tourism development and well-being at the local level, organisation of stakeholders in the field of sports that supports health and well-being goals, intertwining tourism and health care at the local community level, examples of outdoor tourism in Finland and Slovenia.

Four main speakers attended the conference, and they gave speeches on different topics, e.g. legal responsibilities of municipalities when it comes to sports and health, healthy nutrition and active life; they also reflected on sport and tourism during a health crisis, the significance of sports for disabled individuals, etc. Their chief points will be summed up below.

The current pandemic has turned us into less active individuals who are more inclined to use technology. Digitalisation of schools through quarantine and online lessons and passive lifestyle at home along with playing computer games and using smartphones will decrease the amount of energy we spend and increase to individuals becoming obese, thus having an adverse effect on their body. In order to approach this issue as a community, we are to open new arenas and present sports and exercises that don't

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necessitate sports facilities and groups. Applications related to having a healthier life and exercising among young people could serve as encouragement. (Malinen, 2020).

It goes without saying that having an active lifestyle and engaging in sports activities have an immense impact on our physical and mental well-being. It's also a fact that tourism generates jobs, as well as running numerous economies of the world. Also, it has a positive effect on the social and environmental problems of a large number of countries, for which it is beneficial. It is imperative to act in order to ensure the protection of the sports and tourism industry during these difficult times (Slak Valek, 2020).

The essential needs of the people that the municipality is required to deal with entail primary education; primary health care, provision of essential utilities; postal and banking services; library; some sort of public transportation and public space maintenance and use. Since sport and well-being are not mentioned among the tasks considered mandatory, municipalities are allowed to take on policy activities concerning their preferences. Nevertheless, primary health care is a part of municipal jurisdiction, and proactive municipal control and leadership might lead to a promotion of activities that decrease the emphasis on health care service (e.g. sports, preventive measures) (Bačlija Brajnik, 2020).

Sports clubs, as the agents of sports activities, most frequently carry out activities for kids and the youth, and less often or almost never for older people, and for those who are disabled in particular. It is paramount to think about all the differences that happen as regards the level at which sports and its promotion are available, particularly the part focused on disabled individuals. Since differences are reflected by social action, how the nation approaches the issues is extremely significant (Romanov, 2020).

During the second day of the conference, three panels were organised:

Panel 1 – Sport and health promotion

Panel 2 – Selected issues in active and sport tourism

Panel 3 – Tourism in the context of health and well-being

The main subject of the first panel concerned sport as seen in the context of the promotion of health. Numerous studies have been carried out on the subject of taking part in sports so as to maintain health. This resulted in a great number of conclusions. For instance, one research indicates that physical activity can have a positive impact on our self-esteem. One interesting finding suggests that if physical health becomes a part of our everyday life and a routine, it will not be changed or ceased even during difficult times involving health problems caused by the pandemic. Concerning the encouragement to do sports, it has been established that a monetary or material reward can only be a temporary means of motivation to take part in sports activities, while the stimulation from within is imperative for being motivated in the long term (Toth Kostevc, 2020).

The second panel concerned concrete trends and phenomena in sports tourism. All the papers from this panel show tourist products that are based on taking part in outdoor sports activities. For instance, a mixture of yoga and rural tourism is seen as an entirely new concept in sports tourism (Rodrigues & Vieira, 2020). The Rural Olympics were also regarded as promoters of old folk sorts, which could be a relevant component when it comes to getting more tourists to take an interest (Ćurčić et al., 2020). An additional

instance of an interesting mixture of various activities in the mixture of wine and active tourism, where it is stressed that consuming wine isn't obligatory when tackling wine tourism. This mixture of wine and active tourism could be a perfect way to accomplish well-being (Petek & Potočnik Topler, 2020). Opportunities related to developing mountain biking tourism in Brežice were also a main part of the presentation. It has been established that the listed possibilities are real, but certain concrete issues need to be dealt with first (Pozvek & Božinovski, 2020).

The subject of the third panel concerned tourism in the context of health and well-being. What the research suggests is that the arrivals and departures of tourism have short-term and long-term effects on the health and well-being of the locals. The development of tourism has a negative short-term impact on the health of the people living there and a positive long-term effect on a destination and local community (Godovykh et al., 2020). When it comes to tourism seen in the context of health, health resorts present an extremely significant role. Health resorts are in general regarded as the main areas for health improvement. Nevertheless, they aren't necessarily seen as the main areas for physical activity. The findings indicated that self-paying visitors of health resorts are more likely to leave out their physical activity during the time they spend at the resort in an active way with a great number of sports activities (Kokot & Turnšek, 2020). The fact that the significance of wellness and well-being in the lives of visitors has become more prominent than before was followed by the attempt to focus on research even more by academics, and thus resulted in a greater number of wellness tourism research items being published (Rančić Demir & Zečević, 2020).

Wellness tourism is the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health. They require a comprehensive service package comprising physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/ diet, relaxation/meditation, and mental activity/education (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). The International Conference Bet on Health has just managed to connect all the previously mentioned elements of wellness tourism in one place and to show that they are mutually linked. The current problems of the wellness industry were the subject of the conference (which were, for the most part, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic) and the possibilities of overcoming those problems. Also, new ideas were brought up, as well as potential future collaborations on projects for the developments and enhancement of this area.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributor

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