

REVIEW ARTICLE

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF ECONOMIC MIGRANTS FROM UKRAINE IN WIELKOPOLSKIE VOIVODESHIP IN POLAND

Sytuacja zdrowotna i społeczna migrantów zarobkowych z Ukrainy w województwie wielkopolskim w Polsce

Krzysztof Stola¹, Marcin Cybulski², Bartosz Bilski³

¹Chair and Department of Health Prevention, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poland

²Department of Clinical Psychology, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poland

³Occupational Medicine Center, Labor Securus, Poland

ABSTRACT

Introduction

The study presents an analysis of the health situation of economic migrants from Ukraine in Wielkopolska, Poland. It was performed using an analysis of the social and legal situation of economic migrants from Ukraine in Poland. The results were compared with the available statistical data on the health situation of the population in Poland and the European Union.

Aim

The main purpose of the article is to present and analyse the health and socioeconomic situation of economic migrants from Ukraine in Wielkopolska, Poland.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in the form of a standardised survey on a sample of 793 migrants from Ukraine in 2017 and 2018. This research was done during preventive health medicine examinations with a focus on the physical and mental condition of employees and their fitness for work.

Results

The majority of the respondents described their health situation as good (78.31%) or very good (7.06%). According to the conducted research, Ukrainian migrants are at risk of cancer and smoking-related diseases since 9.71% of the surveyed people admitted to smoking. Additionally, a more in-depth survey on 330 immigrants from Ukraine showed that more than 40% of them are at risk of civilization diseases related to obesity or excessive body mass.

Conclusions

Our comparison of the data collected during the study with the publicly available statistics in Poland and the European Union suggests that economic migrants from Ukraine are not more susceptible to civilization diseases than the residents of Poland and European Union.

Keywords: Ukraine, migration, health, occupational and work-related diseases, healthcare

STRESZCZENIE

Wstęp

W pracy przedstawiono analizę sytuacji zdrowotnej migrantów zarobkowych z Ukrainy w Wielkopolsce. Przeprowadzono je na podstawie analizy sytuacji społeczno-prawnej migrantów zarobkowych z Ukrainy w Polsce. Uzyskane wyniki porównano z dostępnymi danymi statystycznymi dotyczącymi stanu zdrowia ludności Polski i Unii Europejskiej.

Cel

Głównym celem artykułu jest przedstawienie i analiza stanu zdrowia i sytuacji społeczno-ekonomicznej migrantów zarobkowych z Ukrainy w Wielkopolsce.

Materiał i metody

Badanie zostało przeprowadzone w formie wystandaryzowanej ankiety na próbie 793 migrantów z Ukrainy w 2017 i 2018 roku. Badanie zostało przeprowadzone podczas badań profilaktycznych z zakresu medycyny zdrowotnej, z naciskiem na kondycję fizyczną i psychiczną pracowników oraz ich zdolność do pracy.

Wyniki

Większość badanych określiła swoją sytuację zdrowotną jako dobrą (78,31%) lub bardzo dobrą (7,06%). Z przeprowadzonych badań wynika, że ukraińscy migranci są zagrożeni chorobami nowotworowymi i związanymi z paleniem, 9,71% badanych przyznało się do palenia. Dodatkowo pogłębione badanie 330 imigrantów z Ukrainy wykazało, że ponad 40% z nich jest zagrożonych chorobami cywilizacyjnymi związanymi z otyłością lub nadmierną masą ciała.

Wnioski

Nasze porównanie danych zebranych w trakcie badania z publicznie dostępnymi statystykami w Polsce i Unii Europejskiej sugeruje, że migranci zarobkowi z Ukrainy nie są bardziej podatni na choroby cywilizacyjne niż mieszkańcy Polski i Unii Europejskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Ukraina, migracja, zdrowie, choroby zawodowe i związane z pracą, opieka zdrowotna

Author responsible for correspondence:

Marcin Cybulski

Department of Clinical Psychology

Poznan University of Medical Sciences

Bukowska 70, 60-781, Poznan, Poland

email: cybulski@ump.edu.pl

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5492-9558>

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Introduction

Economic migration is one of the most interesting manifestations of social change. Migration is of particular interest for social, health and economic researchers. Therefore, it should not be surprising that there is considerable interest in this problem on the part of economists, sociologists, political scientists, linguists, health scientists and even cultural anthropologists. Due to the significance and impact of economic migration on the situation of both the receiving and sending country, this problem has been analysed by a number of researchers. The group of researchers who dealt with the health and social aspects of economic migration include, among others: Siegel (2012), Gushulak and MacPherson (2013), Buchan (2015), Montes (2020), Tutu and Busingye (2020). The analysis of the causes and effects of international economic migrations in both global and

local context is important due to the fact that international labour mobility plays an increasingly important role in the long-term economic prospects of any country. According to experts' calculations, about 3% of the world's population migrated at the beginning of the 21st century (Casteles and Miller 2011).

The issues related to the process of economic migration are also worth looking into in the context of Poland and Ukraine, as respectively the receiving and sending country of migrants. Poland has a long tradition of emigration throughout ages and only about twenty years of experience with immigration. Poland is one of the European countries where the society's aging process has been rapidly progressing. Some demographic forecasts predict that in 2060 Poland will become the *oldest* European country in terms of average age of the population (Okólski 2010). According to data from GUS (Eng. Central Statistical Office) people over 65 will constitute 31.5% of the population in 2050, which would be an increase by 12.6% compared to 2014 (Baranowska 2017). This phenomenon is caused by a drop in the fertility rate with a simultaneous rise in the number of the elderly and additional economic-related migration (Bałamut 2018).

Currently, the majority of migrants in Poland comes from Ukraine and Russian Federation (mostly from Chechnya) both of which are outside the scope of the EU relocation scheme (Brunarska 2012, Klimek 2016). Among the foreigners legally staying in Poland in the first half of 2018, the economic migrants from Ukraine were the biggest group, followed by the Islamic Cooperation Organisation (ICO), then Belarus, Vietnam, China and Russia (Wójcik 2018).

Aim

The aim of the study is to describe some examples of health and socioeconomic potential, and status of economic migrants in Poland, especially in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. Economic migrants in this study are defined as those who move for the purpose of employment in the host country.

Material and methods

The study on the socioeconomic situation was an analysis of data from open source materials and available literature. The study on the health situation was an analysis of the health status of a randomly selected population of Ukrainian economic migrants working legally through work agencies in Poland, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. The study was conducted on a sample of 793 economic migrants from Ukraine in 2017-2018 with a minimum statistical sample of 172,000 Ukrainians living in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, $\alpha = 0.95$ and a maximum error of 5% (minimum required number of people in surveys: 383). The data on their health status comes from medical records of occupational health surveys for employees. Majority of the respondents declared their place of residence as cities (71.52%) compared to villages (28.48%). The subjects were also diverse in terms of gender, the majority being male (54.10%) compared to female (45.90%). The study on the health situation was also deepened to include secondary data analysis from open source materials.

Economic migration in Poland

The current structure of migrants in Poland is connected to Polish migration policy (Figure 1). The Polish migration policy has changed significantly due to the EU's rapid economic growth (after Poland joined the Community), large economic migration of Poles

1.3 million Ukrainians in Poland and forecasts showed a possible growth up to 2 million in 2017 (Lubicz Miszewski 2017). According to data of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Affairs, only in 2017 PUP (Eng. District Employment Agencies) registered more than 171,000 declarations of work delegation issued to Ukrainians. Among all those declarations of work delegation issued to foreigners in 2017 as many as 94% were issued to Ukrainian nationals (Table 1).

Table 1. Status of economic migration in Poland.

Detailed list	Citizenship						TOTAL
	Belarus	Russia	Ukraine	Moldova	Georgia	Armenia	
Number of statements	58046	6150	1714891	31465	11126	2786	1824464
Out of which the number of statements for people already having a visa or stay permit	15527	1728	718621	13429	5798	797	755900
Declarations percentages	3,18%	0,34%	93,99%	1,72%	0,61%	0,15%	100,00%

According to the report of Związek Pracodawców Prywatnych (Eng. Private Employers Association) and statistics of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Affairs, a vast majority (more than 600,000) of Ukrainians, for whom the declarations were registered, were under 40 years old. The highest number of registered declarations was issued for work in the following areas:

- administrative and supportive roles (about 326,000 declarations);
- agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishery (about 210,000);
- construction (about 116,000);
- industrial processing (about 105,000).

More than 500,000 declarations expressed an intent to employ low- and mid-skilled workers. Little over 3,000 declarations were issued for experts and there were almost 40,000 declarations to hire an office employee. The majority of economic migrants from Ukraine are employed based on a contract of mandate (more than 470,000), and more than 210,000 on an employment contract basis (Bińkowski 2017). The influx of economic migrants who are eager to work, easily assimilate and bridge the employment gap is beneficial for the ageing Polish population that affects the Security Fund. Employing economic migrants is particularly beneficial for the industries which employ them the most. It is especially true for some niche and low-paid industries for whom it is difficult to find an employee in Poland, namely agriculture, construction, gastronomy, logistics, transportation and simple industry (Brunarska 2012). Foreigners who obtained work permits in Poland in 2017 filled the following positions (according to classification of occupations and specialisations): industry workers and craftsmen (30.6%), simple jobs workers (28.3%), operators, and machine and equipment fitters (21.5%). In all voivodeships the total percentage of permits for the aforementioned groups was more than 70% (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2017). For example, in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, according to data from Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców (Eng. Office for Foreigners), the number of foreigners legally staying in Poland tripled between 2014 and the beginning of

2018 (documents such as temporary stay permit or registered EU citizen stay). The number of Ukrainians surged most dynamically with an increase by about 11,000 (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2017).

Ukrainian economic migration in Wielkopolskie voivodeship

According to the data provided by the Voivodeship Labour Office in Poznań from 2017, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship is at the forefront of regions in Poland when it comes to accepting economic migrants from Ukraine. In 2017, Wielkopolskie Voivodeship ranked third in terms of the number of declarations of intention to employ foreigners registered in poviats (almost 10% of all declarations), following Mazowieckie (less than 23%) and Dolnośląskie (almost 12%). In 2017, 172,424 declarations of the intention to entrust work to Ukrainian citizens were issued in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. Economic migrants from Ukraine also prevail in terms of work permits issued in 2017. As many as 19,124 of them were issued in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship in 2017, which accounts for 90.6% of all permits issued.

The interest in employing foreigners among Wielkopolska employers has not diminished for several years. In particular, employees are sought for simple work, production, agriculture, construction and services as well as work which requires specific qualifications. According to the data of the Voivodeship Labour Office in Poznań, the prevailing age group is 26-40 with 44.3% of declarations. In terms of numbers, the next age group is people aged 41-65 accounting for 29.3% and under 26 years old (26.3%). People over 65 years of age constitute 0.2% of foreigners employed based on declarations. Age structure on the scale of the voivodeship is similar to the structure on the national scale. These data indicate the young face of labour migration: every fourth foreigner is young. Men dominate among foreigners who were entrusted with short-term work in 2017; women constituted 34.9% on the national scale and 31.9% in the region. Most declarations (84.3% in the region) were issued for the longest permissible period, i.e. from 3 to 6 months. The lowest number, i.e. 1.9%, of declarations was issued for a period of less than 1 month (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Poznaniu 2017).

Employment in short-term work (on a simplified basis) in 2017 in the region in individual sectors was as follows (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Poznaniu 2017):

- 69,353 declarations were registered in “administrative services activities” (most of them are work services agencies), (38.1% of the total);
- 33,874 declarations were registered in industry (18.6% of the total);
- 21 589 declarations were registered in construction (11.8% of the total);
- 17,083 declarations were registered in agriculture (9.4% of the total);
- 9,839 declarations were registered in transportation (5% of the total);
- 9,148 declarations were registered in trade (5% of the total);
- 5,532 declarations were registered in water distribution (3% of the total);
- less than 5,000 declarations were registered in professional, science and technical activities (2% of the total).

Among foreigners who are entrusted with work based on declarations, in 2017 the majority of employees in simple work dominated both in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship and the country with 50.5% and 54.5%, respectively. Further professional groups include qualified craftsmen. Among the registered declarations, 24.1% and 18.9% concerned industrial workers and craftsmen respectively, and 10.5% and 11.5% – operators and assemblers of machinery and equipment. In Wielkopolska, 5.8% of the declarations

concerned professions within the service employees and salesmen group, and the lowest number of declarations (9) was recorded in the Armed Forces professional group.

In Wielkopolska, foreigners with various levels of education also take up physical work, including those with university diplomas. For employers, professional qualifications do not matter much and the willingness to provide work is often the decisive factor in employing a foreigner. Foreigners usually come to Poland for economic reasons. Bad economic situation in Ukraine, lack of work and low wages are the reasons for a large influx of foreigners (the average wage per person is PLN 1,060 and the minimum wage is PLN 480). In Poland, the minimum wage is PLN 2,100. The average gross wage in the enterprise sector, according to the Central Statistical Office, at the end of 2017 amounted to PLN 4,530) (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Poznaniu 2017).

According to the data from the study 'Meet the Neighbour! Citizens of Ukraine in the Poznań Metropolis' conducted by the Social and Cultural Association in Poznań in November 2018, Ukrainians viewed Poland, Poznań and Wielkopolskie Voivodeship definitely positively – as a good place to live, space for creativity, development, culture and opportunities. The European Union appears to be a "land of dreams", a community of law, opportunities and wealth, united around common goals. Over half of them claim that they have many good friends among Poles. Unfortunately, half admit that Poles do not always have friendly relations with Ukrainians, and a large percentage has come across dislike from Poles. Ukrainians residing in Poland have contact with various institutions and companies that are building Poland's image as a place of life and work. The most satisfying are the services of such institutions as: parishes/churches, banks, schools, kindergartens, Honorary Consul of Ukraine in Poznań, insurance companies and social organizations. The worst rated were: Voivodeship Office - Department for Foreigners, National Labour Inspectorate, Powiat Office and health centres. The most frequently mentioned problems during a stay in Poland are: difficulties in dealing with official matters, obtaining a permanent residence/work permit, longing for loved ones, lack of daily contact with children, family, weakening family ties, family breakup, loneliness, difficulties in communicating in Polish, lack of free time and work fatigue, bad opinion about Ukrainians abroad and reluctance on the part of Poles and finally a sense of strangeness (Stowarzyszenie Społeczno-Kulturalne Polska-Ukraina w Poznaniu 2018).

Results

The migrants' health status and access to public healthcare system in Poland

Adult foreigners with a legal stay status can use the healthcare system on a basis similar to Poles, which means on the grounds of paid healthcare insurance contribution, a proof of healthcare insurance or documented right to public services. Non-documented migrants have the right to free-of-charge access to emergency healthcare, HIV tests, antiretroviral treatment after exposure and mandatory treatment of infectious diseases. Other forms of care require a full payment (Cianciara et al. 2012).

The Act on Healthcare Benefits Financed from Public Funds of the 27th August 2004 constitutes legal grounds to grant publically funded healthcare services (Ustawa z 27 sierpnia 2004 r. o świadczeniach opieki zdrowotnej finansowanych ze środków publicznych 2004). The Act provides a wide catalogue of persons who are entitled to use healthcare services on the same grounds as Polish citizens, as well as the requirements foreigners need to fulfil in order to get services free of charge. The law enumerates the following groups (among others):

- persons holding an European Union/The European Free Trade Association (EU/EFTA) country citizenship, living in the EU/EFTA territory;
- citizens of non-EU/EFTA countries who reside in Poland on the grounds of a work visa, permanent or temporary stay permit etc.;
- people who have been granted a refugee status or supplementary protection or are under temporary protection in Poland;
- non-EU/EFTA citizens who legally live in an EU/EFTA country other than Poland under mandatory insurance or voluntary insurance;
- EU/EFTA citizens not living in those countries, if they are required to obtain mandatory insurance in Poland and they are covered by a retirement plan and work disability insurance or insurance for farmers.

Also the following are entitled to use healthcare services:

- students and PhD students doing full time programmes in Poland and graduates doing their mandatory internship who are non-EU/EFTA citizens;
- members of monasteries and theological seminaries;
- family members of people living in the EU/EFTA who are not covered by a mandatory healthcare insurance and are not entitled to healthcare services on the grounds of other provisions of the law.

Economic migrants who work in Poland while staying here based on a tourist visa or under visa-free movement do not have a legal stay status. This issue concerns mainly people in the territory of Poland on the grounds of the visa-free movement of a non-member state of the EU/EFTA which does not have a bilateral agreement regulating the issue between the countries. Third country citizens with a non-documented stay status (among others nationals of the Russian Federation or Ukraine), as a general rule, should show the service provider a proof of healthcare insurance as defined in the law on healthcare benefits funded from public funds, or of a travel medical insurance (private healthcare policy) with a minimum coverage of 30,000 euro. The Schengen rules and the Act on foreigners require traveling visitors to provide a proof of medical insurance. If a foreigner does not present such a proof (policy) he/she has to pay the full costs of healthcare (Pytlarz 2016). Those stipulations are applicable also to the foreigners who obtained a visa on the basis of a declaration of work delegation but they are unemployed or do not start work with the employer who issued this document for them. Different rules are applicable to minors, although children of non-documented migrants have the so-called "limited access" to free-of-charge medical care. A prerequisite for the children is to be enrolled in the mandatory education system (public school) and they are granted access to preventive healthcare in school, including vaccinations. Lack of healthcare access for a child or pregnant woman is considered a breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (which was signed by Poland) as well as Article 32 of the Polish Constitution (Cianciara et al. 2012).

The status of healthcare for migrants and particular nationalities has not been diagnosed well enough. Until now in Poland there has been no broad-scope research on migrants' healthcare. However, taking into consideration the increase in immigration to Poland in recent years, the immigrants' healthcare has become an important social issue. According to previously conducted studies on reasons for migrants' hospitalisation in Poland, the migrants, compared to Poles, were more often treated for injuries and poisoning, stayed shorter in the hospital, however, they were admitted more often without a doctor's referral. Furthermore, two trends were noticed, i.e. more births from

non-Polish women and an increase in cardiovascular diseases among men admitted to hospitals (Cianciara et al. 2012).

The health situation of Ukrainian economic migrants in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship in Poland

As a result of a study conducted on a sample of 793 economic migrants from Ukraine in 2017-2018 there is more information available on the healthcare situation of Ukrainians in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. This research was done during preventive health medicine examinations with a particular focus on the physical and mental condition of the patients and their fitness for work (Figure 2).

The survey involved 793 respondents, economic migrants from Ukraine. Among the respondents, men (54.1%) were more numerous than women (45.9%). Over 70% of the respondents declared that their place of residence was a city, the others indicated their place of residence was a village. The age structure of respondents indicated an even distribution of surveys among people under 25 years of age (18.03%), between 25 and 35 years old (34.68%), between 35 and 45 years old (24.09%), between 45 and 55 years old (18.28%), over 55 years old (4.92%).

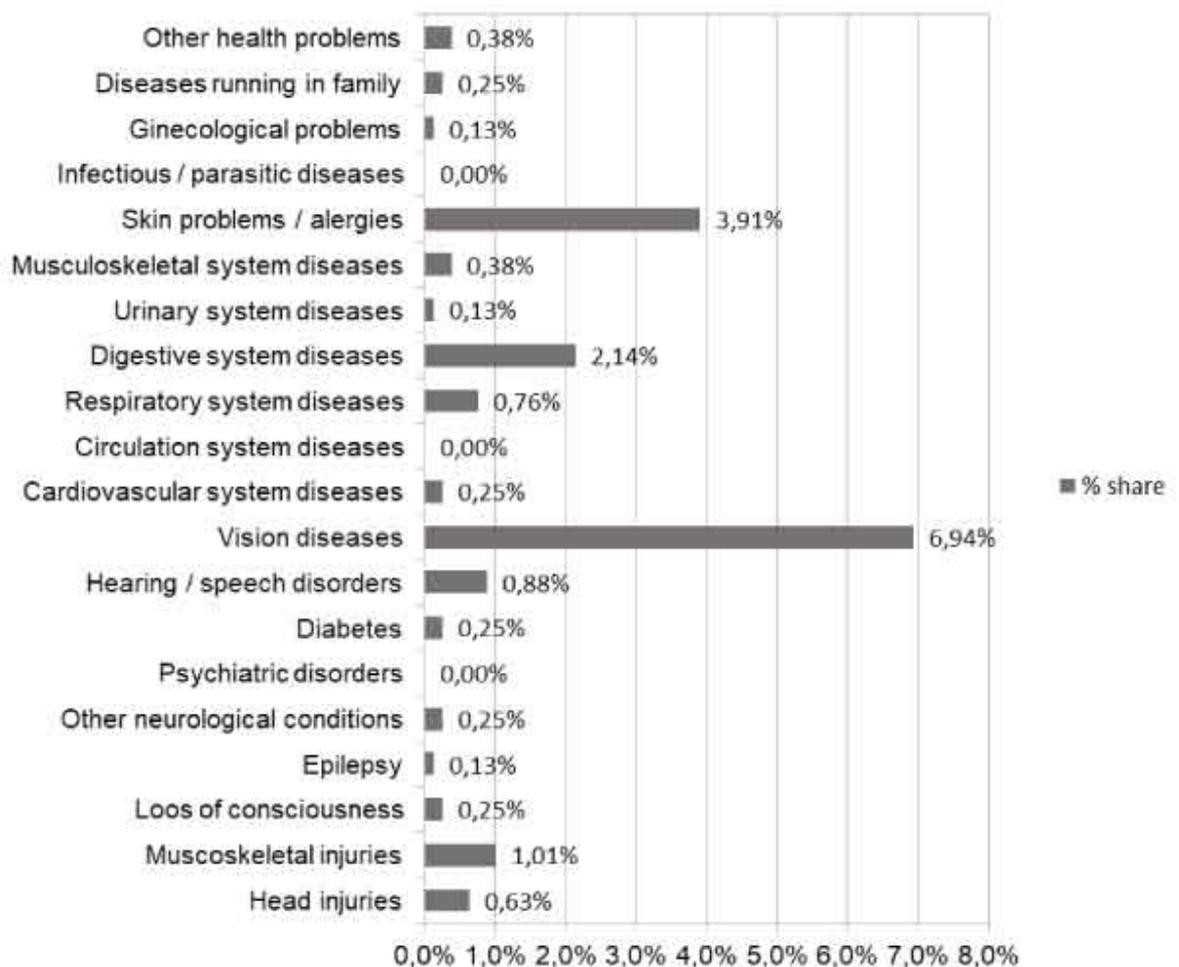


Figure 2. Health problems in studied population.

Majority of the respondents declared their health is good (78.31%). The preventive examinations show that the health of the economic migrants from Ukraine is good. The preventive examination results presented in Figure 2 clearly show that not many economic migrants from Ukraine suffer from illnesses, injuries or discomforts and this probably does not negatively impact the health of migrants population. In contrast, it is noticeable that economic migrants from Ukraine are particularly prone to civilization diseases. This group is at risk of cancer and smoking-related diseases since 9.71% of the surveyed people admitted to smoking. Additionally, a more in-depth survey on 330 economic migrants from Ukraine showed that more than 40% of them are at risk of civilization diseases related to obesity or excessive body mass. According to the conducted research the health of economic migrants from Ukraine can be described as good, however, they are still at risk of civilization diseases.

Discussion

In order to compare the health situation of the analysed population of economic migrants from Ukraine living in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, a comparative analysis was carried out with the data for Poland and the European Union. Based on the open source data, the three groups were analysed.

Table 2. Summary of discussed observations.

		Migrants	Poland	EU
Smoking				
	Smokers	26,01%	21,00%	26,00%
BMI				
	Pre obese	29,70%	39,10%	36,90%
	Obese	7,58%	16,90%	14,90%

The comparative analysis results presented in Table 2 clearly show that the health situation of economic migrants from Ukraine living in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship in terms of the risk of civilization diseases does not differ significantly from that of the inhabitants of Poland and the European Union. In the case of smoking addiction, according to the conducted comparative analysis, 26% of economic migrants from Ukraine declared themselves smokers, compared to 21% of Poles and 26.01% of residents of the European Union, which shows that despite the prevailing opinion about the popularity of smoking among Ukrainian citizens, the percentage of smoking economic migrants does not differ from the percentage of smokers among residents of the European Union, slightly exceeding the percentage of Poles smoking. Analysis of the data in Table 2 concerning the percentage of overweight and obese population, points to a clear difference between the studied groups. Economic migrants from Ukraine living in the Wielkopolska region were

characterized by the proportion of 29.7% of overweight people compared to 39.1% of overweight people in Poland and 36.9% in the European Union. Similarly, in the case of obesity, among the analysed group of economic migrants obesity affects 7.58% of the population, while in Poland obesity affects 16.9% of the population, and in the European Union - 14.9%. The presented data show that economic migrants are less exposed to civilization diseases related to overweight and obesity than residents of both Poland and European Union.

Research limitations / implications

The collected data among the researched group of economic migrants from Ukraine in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship have methodological flaws due to the declarative nature of the research. For this reason, we are aware that in this situation, further in-depth analysis using more objective indicators is advisable.

Summary and conclusion

There is still much to be done in Poland so that the immigration from Ukraine is not only a temporary trend, and the current influx to Poland is maintained. Even more so as we are at risk of losing the Ukrainian staff to Western Europe and to other countries of our region e.g. the Czech Republic and Hungary. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a uniform absorption policy for all migrants and abolition of those employed illegally, and simplify the work permits procedures. There are a few options promoting long-term migration for people aiming at settling in Poland and in the future granting Polish citizenship to those who decide to stay permanently here with children (Jaroszewicz and Myłanowska 2018). There are a lot of challenges for the Polish healthcare system, which currently is not adjusted, legally and organizationally, to cater to the increasing number of Ukrainian economic migrants. In order to keep and attract new economic migrants from Ukraine and other countries it is necessary to make in-depth systemic social, economic and legal changes and modify the healthcare system.

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