

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT IN THE SPECIAL ACTION SERVICES: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Șchiopu Costel-Gabriel¹

PhD student, State University of Physical Education and Sport, Republic of Moldova

Email adress ¹ gabriel07jason@yahoo.com

Popescu Veronica²

PhD, associate professor, "Al.I. Cuza" University of Iasi, Romania

Email adress² verapop@yahoo.com

Keywords: special forces, physical training, sports, problems, solutions

Abstract: The activity of the police officers of the Special Actions Service requires constant sports training, long resistance to effort and thorough learning of self-defence and intervention techniques. Most of the employees of the Iasi Special Actions Service are fighters, but they also practice other sports activities, than those required in the mandatory physical training courses. The present study is part of a confirmatory - ameliorative research, carried out on a group of 145 people, employees of the special forces of the Special Action Services Iasi, Suceava, Botosani, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud through the application of a questionnaire -survey of 13 questions between October 2020 and September 2022. The methods used in the research included: analysis of specialized literature and relevant legislation, questionnaire-survey, mathematical-statistical method. In the present study, the results will refer to the opinions of the military personnel regarding the physical training process, evaluation and what are the fighters' preferences for sports activities. At the same time, by applying the questionnaire, we aimed to identify, from the perspective of the employees, what are the proposals for improving the process of physical training and sports at the level of the Special Action Services.

Introduction: In our contemporary European society, the social ideal is represented by the fully prepared individual mentally, physically, intellectually, morally, aesthetically, technically and professionally. This individual is able to successfully and efficiently contribute to the economic and social recovery of Romanian society, which is an integral part of European society [10]. The Special Action Services (SAS) Iasi is the structure intended for the organization and execution of specific actions to combat crime and street violence, ensure a climate of normality and civic safety and temporary participation with complementary force, in cooperation with operative services and/or police subunits urban area and the police stations in Iasi, the actions and police raids for the capture of dangerous criminals, the appeasement of acts of serious disturbance of public order or open conflicts with violent evolution. Police officers must be physically, mentally, and tactically prepared to intervene promptly when the situation requires it. The physical

training of the special troops within the Romanian Police is organized and carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Order of the Minister of Internal Affairs no. 140 of September 2, 2016 regarding the human resources management activity in the military units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Order of the Minister of Administration and Internal no. 154 of 03.03.2004 regarding physical education and sports activities in M.A.I and the annual orders of the Inspector General of the Romanian Police - Service for Interventions and Special Actions for each year of professional training partly regarding the organization and conduct of physical education and sports within the structures and the intervention subunits subordinated to the General Inspector of the Romanian Police. General physical training ensures the development of the basic motor qualities and functional capacities of the body, enriching the general fund of motor skills and ensures the harmonious development of the morpho-functional indices that condition the development of those skills necessary for the Special Forces policeman [13]. Energy needs depend on gender, age, body weight and possibly the type of physical activity. Inadequate energy intake can lead to weight loss, fatigue, lack of concentration, and lack of athletic performance [12]. The general function that this type of physical training has is to ensure the positive transfer of the training to the specific area, at the same time constituting support for the subsequent content of the training [14]. Through the intense nature of the effort ("Citius, Altius, Fortius") and the close competition with the other participants, practicing sports contributes to the development of the young person not only physically, but also in terms of character traits. During practice, qualities such as willpower, determination, perseverance, self-confidence and overcoming personal limits emerge [16]. General physical fitness has different weightings in the training, depending on the policemen's sporting experience. In this sense, in the training of beginners, "its importance and the time allocated are much higher than in the training of performance athletes in which physical training is considerably specialized" [20]. The authors' opinion "Physical training is the basis of combat training, which ensures the capacity and availability of soldiers to successfully cope with combat missions, functional obligations in the military environment, ensures the development of resistance to physical effort and long stress, supports and develops self-confidence and team"[3]. The authors consider that "the forms of individual and collective practice of physical exercises, military physical education are at the basis of the training process, being the main means of improving and maintaining the physical and mental health of the Army personnel. Physical education in military educational institutions provides the quantitative and qualitative bio-psycho-motor support necessary for each soldier in order to fulfill at a high level the tasks of those who return to the first position of the post" [17].

Material-method:The purpose of the research consists in streamlining the physical training activity of the special police forces through diversified methods and

means, carrying out the training in specific intervention equipment and using tools that imitate the equipment and protection means.

Research objectives were the following: analysis of the opinions of the policemen from the special police forces regarding the current state and the need to improve the physical training process, the effectiveness of the quarterly evaluation tests and the material endowment; the justification of an experimental program specific to special forces to raise the degree of physical training of special forces within the special forces of the Police Inspectorate of Iasi. **Research methodology** included the following methods: analysis of specialized literature, questionnaire-survey, statistical-mathematical method. The experimental group was made up of 145 employees of the Special Forces from the Special Action Services in Iasi, Suceava, Botosani, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud, to whom the survey questionnaire was applied between October 2020 and September 2022 regarding the conduct of the training professional physicals and evaluation of special troops within the Special Actions Service.

Results: In order to achieve the purpose of the research, the questionnaire-survey of 13 questions was developed and applied to 145 members of the special forces, with different professional experience, from the Police Inspectorates of the counties of Iasi, Vrancea, Botosani, Suceava and Bacau and Bistrita. The questions had a mixed character with simple, easy-to-interpret answers provided. The use of this method was aimed at highlighting the opinions of special forces fighters regarding the organization of the service, the existing training base at the inspectorate's level, the effectiveness of the existing training program at the time of conducting the questionnaire, the needs and lack of certain means of training in their daily schedule, the efficiency evaluation tests from Order 154/2004 in the performance of daily missions [15]. Below we will reflect the most relevant answers obtained following the application of the questionnaire. Regarding the question: "Do you consider that sufficient time is allocated for professional physical training with the group within the daily schedule of the Special Action Service?", 90.34% (131 subjects) of the surveyed fighters gave a positive answer and 9.65% (14 subjects) - negative. The majority of respondents to this question answered affirmatively, indicating that time for professional physical training is not an obstacle for Special Forces to achieve better results in quarterly evaluations at the Special Actions Service level (Fig. 1).

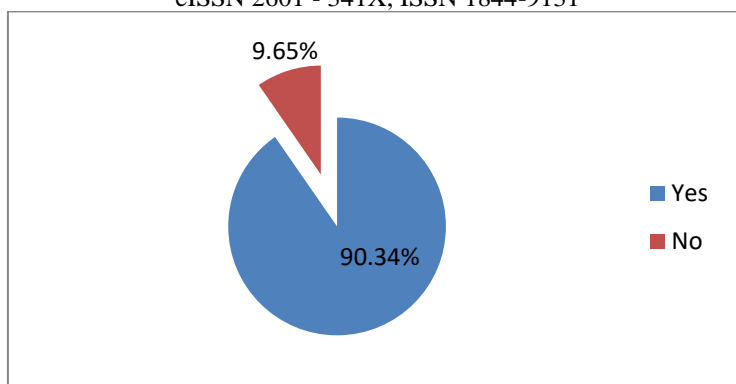


Fig. 1. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the time allocated for professional physical training with the group within the SAS daily program

From the answers to the question: "Specify what problems you encounter at the sessions of professional physical training with the group within the daily program of the Special Action Service?", the following was found: 48.96% (71 subjects) of the surveyed fighters answered that the problem would be stereotypical physical training, 42.75% (62 subjects) lack of motivation, 4.13% (6 subjects) lack of logistical support, 2.75% (4 subjects) lack of involvement of commanders/instructors and 1.37% (2 subject) have no problems in physical training sessions. Analyzing the answers to this question, it was found that there are real problems on professional physical training at the level of special forces, 98.63% encountering problems for various reasons (Fig. 2).

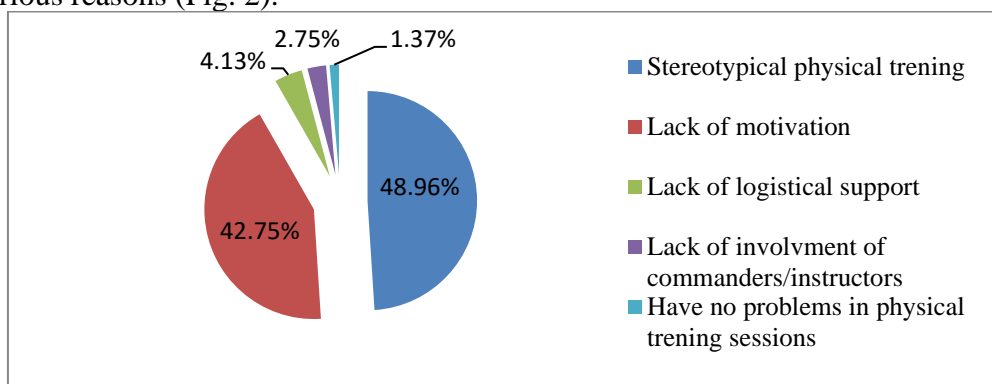


Fig. 2. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the problems encountered at the professional physical training sessions

To the next question: „What do you think should be improved about the Special Actions Service's daily professional group physical training program? ” the fighters of the Special Actions Services of the Police Inspectorates of Iasi, Botosani, Suceava, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud stated, in a proportion of 77.24% (12 subjects), that they want to improve the daily training program in terms of conditioning specific physical, 14.48% (21 subjects) in terms of self-defence and 8.27% (12 subjects) do

not want to improve the daily program of professional physical training. The responses to this question indicate that the majority of fighters in the service want a change in the daily training program at the structure level in terms of specific physical fitness (Fig. 3).

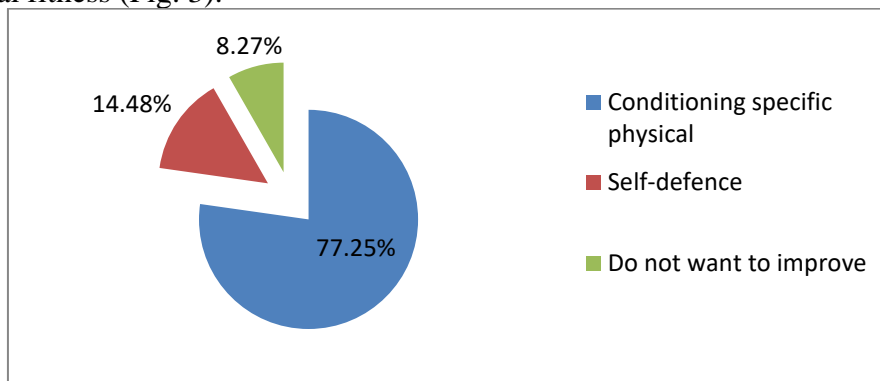


Fig. 3. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding ways to improve the daily professional physical training program with the SAS group

Regarding the question: "How do you consider the level of physical demand of the professional physical training sessions in the daily program of the Special Actions Service at the moment?", 69.65% (101 subjects) of the surveyed respondents answered that the level of current physical training is medium, 16.55% (24 subjects) answered that the level is weak, and 13.79% (20 subjects) of those surveyed declared that the level is high (Fig. 4).

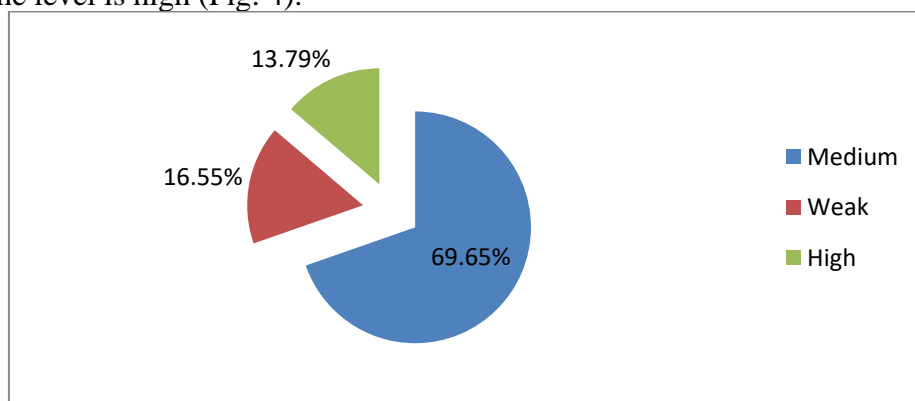


Fig. 4. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the current level of physical demand of the professional physical training sessions within the daily program of the SAS

The answers obtained to this question confirm the previous answers regarding the opinion of the collective that the level of training is not high for various reasons and needs to be improved. Regarding the answers to the following question: "Do you think that the way of professional physical training should be changed with the group within the Special Actions Service?", 87.58% (127 subjects) answered

affirmatively, and 12.41% (18 subjects) considered that the mode of professional physical training at the service level should remain the same (Figure 5).

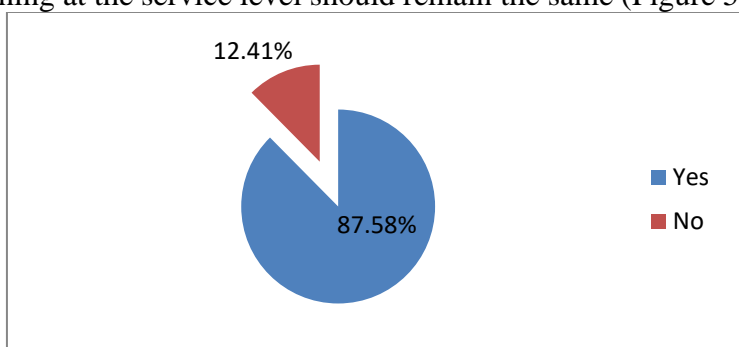


Fig. 5. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the need to change the way of professional physical training with the group within the SAS

The answers to this confirm the results obtained in question 3, the majority of the fighters of the Special Actions Services of the Police Inspectorates of Iasi, Botosani, Suceava, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud wanting a change in the way of professional physical training. To question number 6 in the questionnaire: "What do you think should be the sufficient number of hours for professional physical training in the daily schedule of the Special Actions Service?" it was found that the majority of responses 67.58% (98 subjects) answered that at least 5 hours, 26.2% (38 subjects) answered that at least 4 hours, while the remaining 6.2% (9 subjects) answered a minimum of 3 hours must be allocated to physical training (Fig. 6).

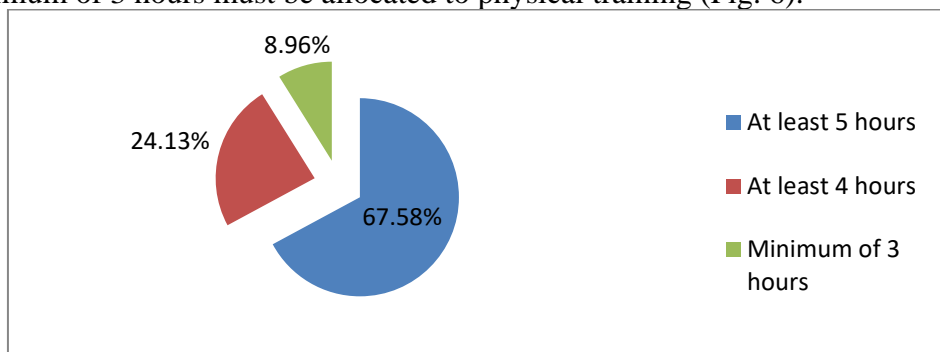


Fig. 6. Graphical reflection of the responses regarding the sufficient number of hours for professional physical training within the SAS daily program

Since the daily professional physical training program of the surveyed subjects is 6 hours, the answer to this question confirmed the previous answers in the sense that there is enough time for training. To question no. 7: "Do you consider that the tests from Order 154/2004 helps you in carrying out your daily tasks?" the answers highlighted the following: 66.89% (97 subjects) of those questioned state that promoting them helps to fulfil the missions but not enough, a percentage of 24.13% (35 subjects) states that promoting them does not help to fulfil the tasks missions and

8.96% (13 subjects) specify that by promoting them, help to fulfil the missions (Fig. 7). Analyzing the answers to this question, it is found that the promotion of evidence from Order 154/2004 is not enough to carry out missions in safe conditions for colleagues and to have successful missions.

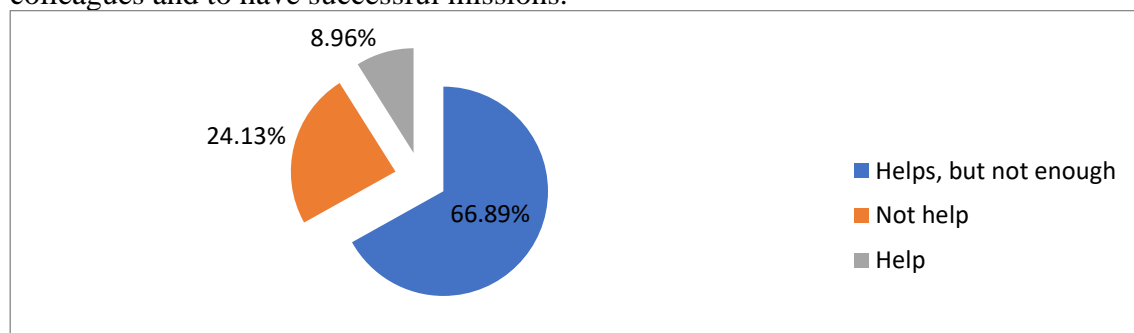


Fig. 7. Graphical reflection of responses regarding the level to which tests from Order 154/2004 helps in the performance of daily tasks

Respondents' answers to the question: "What do you think about the evaluation tests of the Special Actions Service staff in Order 154/2004?" indicates that: 53.79% (78 subjects) believe that the tests at the quarterly assessment are not conclusive, 29.69% (49 subjects) want some tests to be replaced by others at the quarterly assessment, 7.58% (11 subjects) believes that the number of tests during the evaluation are many and should be removed and 4.82% (7 subjects) state that the number of tests during the evaluation should be more by introducing other tests (Fig. 8).

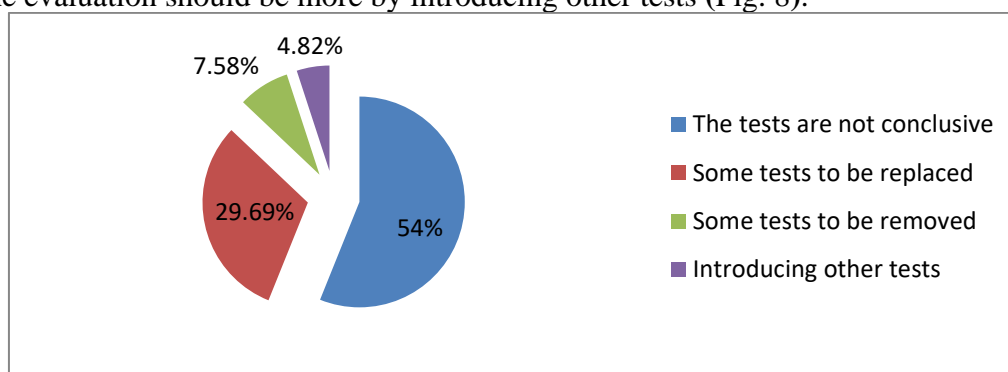


Fig. 8. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the evaluation tests of the Special Actions Service staff from Order 154/2004

From these answers it can be concluded that the tests from Order 154/2004 should be modified, replaced in order to increase the efficiency of a Special Forces fighter, a fact also highlighted in the answers to the previous question. Regarding the answers to question no. 9 "Which test from Order 154/2004 do you encounter the greatest difficulties?", it is found that 39.31% (57 subjects) of the respondents believe that they encounter the greatest difficulties in the endurance test difficulty, 24.82% (36 subjects) believe that speed gives them the most difficulty, 15.17% (22 subjects)

believe that they have the greatest difficulty in push-ups test, 11.72% (8 subjects) answered with the self-defense test, 4.82% (7 subjects) have the greatest difficulties in the abs test, 3.44% (5 subjects) in the squat test, 0.68% (1 subject) in the arm hanging test but in the standing long jump test subjects have no difficulty (Fig. 9).

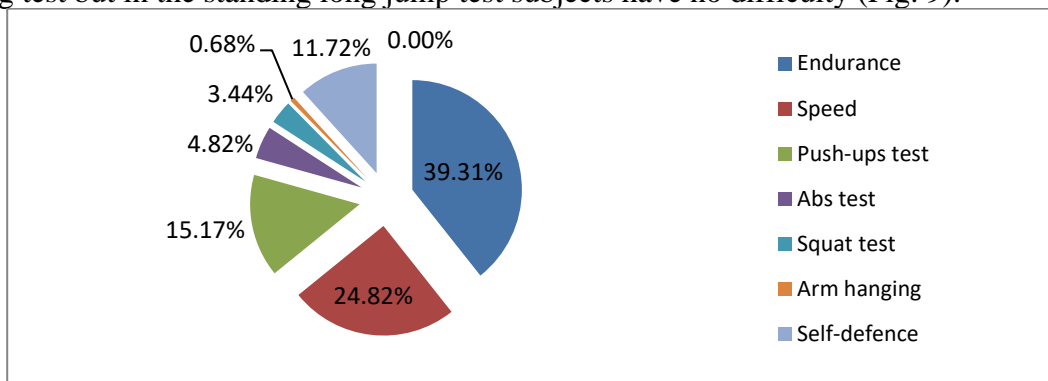


Fig. 9. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the test from Order 154/2004 where the greatest difficulties are encountered

The wide variety of answers is a result of the fact that Special Forces members practice different sports, which means that some have difficulty in some tests, but at the same time other tests are easy for them. It is observed that a very large percentage have difficulties with endurance and speed, and these answers must be corroborated with those from question number 4, wanting to change the way of professional physical training of the service, as well as in question no. 3 through which the majority of those surveyed expressed their desire to improve their daily training program along the lines of specific physical conditioning. To question no. 10: „What tests would you introduce when evaluating the staff of the Special Actions Service as an amendment to Order 154/2004”, shows that 65.51% (95 subjects) prefer the practical route test with elements of physical demand, 12.41% (18 subjects) answered the Cooper Test, 11.03% (16 subjects) answered pull-ups, 6.20% (9 subjects) with parallel push-ups and 4.82% (7 subjects) swimming (Fig. 10).

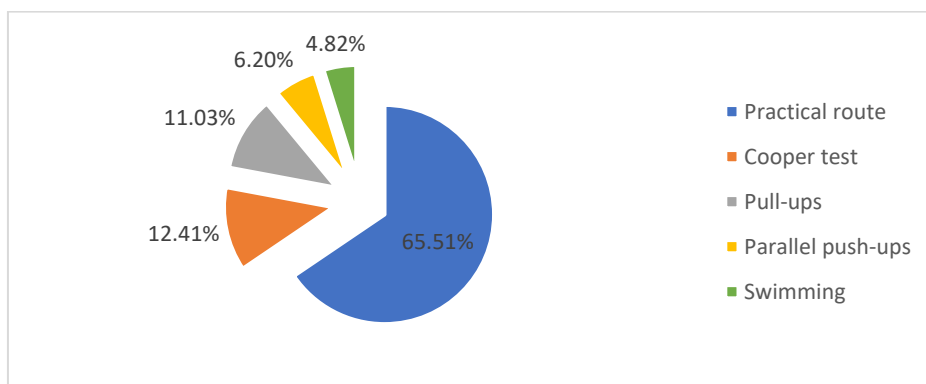


Fig. 10. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the evaluation tests of the Special Actions Service staff as an amendment to Order 154/2004

Obtaining this overwhelming percentage determines sports instructors responsible for physical training to approach clear strategies to diversify the means of action, taking into account the answers to questions number 3 and 5. Regarding the question: "Do you think it would be useful to use some tools (vest with sandbags, Bulgarian bag, etc.) that imitate means of protection or equipment (bulletproof vest, battering ram, etc.) during the daily physical training sessions with the group at the Service for Special Actions to improve the physical condition of fighters?", 87.58% (127 subjects) stated that it would be useful to use some tools, 12.41% (18 subjects) stated that it would not be useful to use such means in daily physical training (Fig. 11).

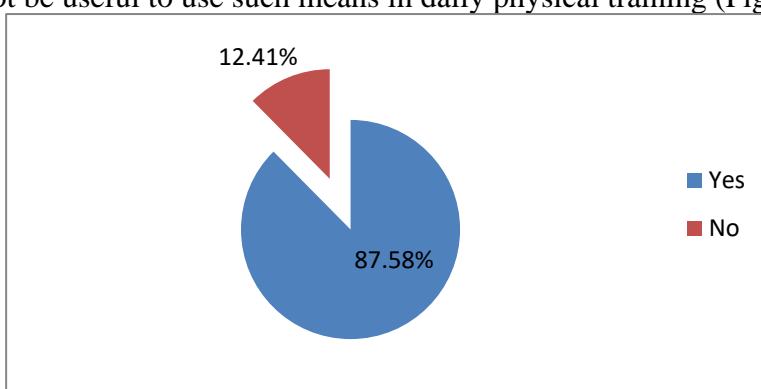


Fig. 11. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the introduction of tools that imitate the means of protection or within the daily physical training sessions with the group at the SAS in order to improve the physical condition of the fighters.

The answers to this question, in conjunction with the answers to questions 3, 5, 8 and 10, highlight the fact that the fighters of the Special Actions Services of the Police Inspectorates of Iasi, Botosani, Suceava, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud want to change the way of professional physical training of S.A.S. Iasi, improving physical training through physical conditioning and the use of equipment for making it difficult, since the current training method as well as the evaluation tests from Order no. 154/2004 do not lead to increased efficiency within the missions. The results of the answers to the question: "How do you consider the conditions at the training base of the Special Actions Service for carrying out physical and sports training?", the majority 53.1% (77 subjects) specified that the training base provides average training conditions, 20% (29 subjects) believe that the training base has very good training conditions, 17.24% (25 subjects) answered that the base provides good conditions, and 9.65% (14 subjects) consider the physical training conditions at the level of the Special Actions Services of the Police Inspectorates of Iasi, Botosani, Suceava, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud to be precarious one (Figure 12).

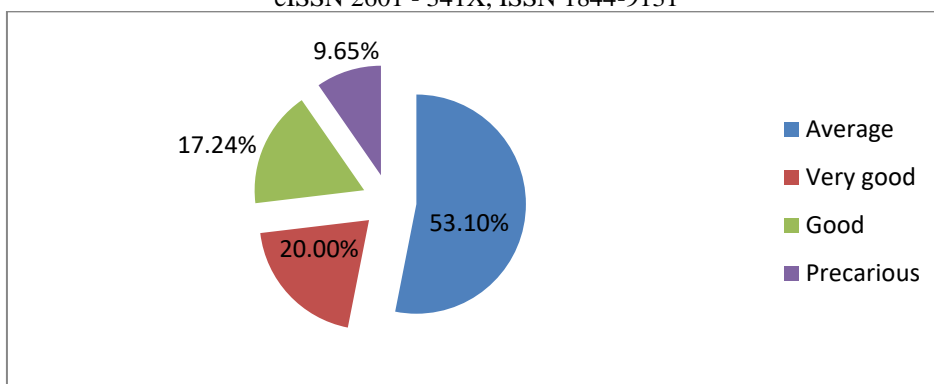


Fig. 12. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the conditions at training base of the SAS for physical and sports training

The answers highlighted the fact that most fighters are satisfied with the provision of training conditions, which means that their desire is to diversify training methods in order to increase the training level of the structure. To the question: "Which sports do you think would help improve the specific physical performance of Special Action Service fighters?", the majority - 35.75% (59 subjects) specified that the improvement of physical performance is done through cross fit, 35.86% (52 subjects) believe that athletics will lead to the improvement of sports performance, 12.41% (18 subjects) answered that practicing bodybuilding will improve physical performance, and the remaining 11.03% (16 subjects) consider contact sports important in terms of improving the specific physical performance of Special Action Service fighters (Fig. 13).

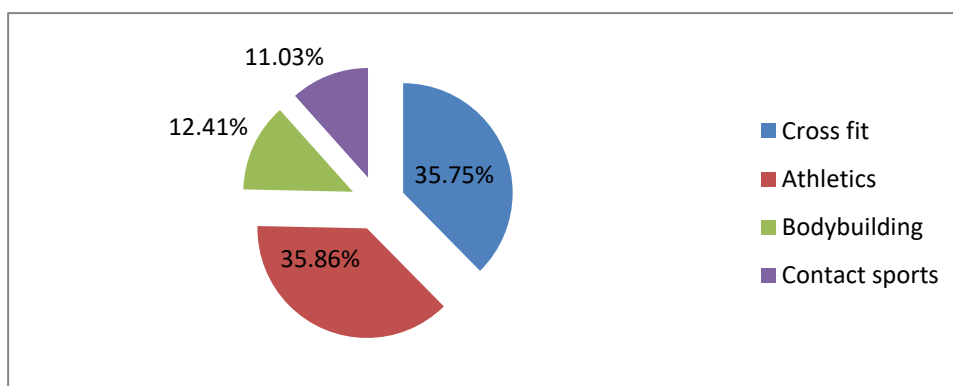


Fig. 13. Graphical reflection of the answers regarding the sports that would help to improve the specific physical performance of SAS fighters.

The answer to this question, in conjunction with the answers to questions 3 and 8, 10, highlights the fact that the fighters surveyed want to change the training program at the service level through physical conditioning and the use of equipment for weight training that leads to the improvement of physical training.

Discussions: The results of a study concluded that the main objective of professional physical training is to focus on developing effort capacity, adapting to the specifics of a particular branch of training, while professional special means play a determining role in the professional physical training of law enforcement and public security forces. They contribute to the consolidation and continuous improvement of professional skills for quick actions and reactions, in a short space of time [6]. The military physical education activity is characterized by several fundamental aspects: it is mandatory, integrated into the educational process and represents the basis both from a motor and mental point of view for the other categories of training; it is carried out continuously and systematically, with well-defined objectives; has a higher level of volume, intensity and complexity than other forms of physical education, due to the motor structures involved in military actions; involves an energetic and psychic consumption, sometimes almost at the limit of the adaptive capacities of the human body[5]. The authors believe that both physical and intellectual effort in professional activity are natural, as is the need for recreation and rest [4]. Another study concluded that "broadly speaking, almost all training systems focus on the two main components, respectively, general physical training and self-defense training." [8, 9] and motor skills are approached from the perspective of physiological and psychophysiological aspects [1,7].

Conclusions: We can say that the results of the survey highlight good assessments from the subjects regarding the training conditions within the sub-units of the inspectorate and also a need to change the training programs by using the means of the endowment in order to increase the level of physical training and change the tests of quarterly assessment for the physical demand category „special”. At the same time, the sociological study reflected the fact that the members of the Special Actions Services of the Police Inspectorates of Iasi, Botosani, Suceava, Bacau, Vrancea and Bistrita-Nasaud show a lack of motivation due to stereotyped training programs, and also identified proposals from those investigated regarding the modification of the evaluation method of the structure according to Order 154/2004 and regarding the use of the equipment in the daily physical training. The vast majority of sports specialists, as a result of their studies, have proposed various solutions to improve this process and have promoted modern methods and means. Thus, some installations, equipment and computer technologies were born that contributed more to improving the development of the training process [2, 11]. Scientific research in the field of sportive training, show that the process of obtaining excellent sports performances is closely related/ in close connection to the most favourable/ adaptable type of management of the multianual training relies on new principal conceptions that ensue/result from systems theory, cybernetics, information theory and, at the same time, from physiological conception and biological activities [18]. In the context of promoting a system of democratic values, training the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the level of current

requirements is a priority of the leadership of this ministry, focusing on the quality of police personnel, an objective that is given special attention [19].

References

1. A. Dragnea, A. Bota, (1999). Teoria activităților motrice. București: Didactică și Pedagogică, 1999. 282 p. ISBN 973-30-9721-7, p. 32- 46
2. Râșneac, E. Rață, D. Milici (2004). Utilizarea tehnicii de calcul în evaluarea performanțelor sportive. Brașov: Universitatea Transilvania, 2004, ISBN 973-635-382-6, p. 11- 50
3. C, L., Praoveanu, G. Alexandrescu (2014). Management of military physical education activities for improving the combat preparation for the land forces, Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I“, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „CAROL I“ București, p. 79-82
4. C. Voicu, S. Pruna (2007). Managementul organizitional al politiei, Fundamentele teoretice, Bucuresti, ISBN 9789738519947, p. 281
5. Ceasca, V. (2009). Universitatea Națională de Apărare„ Carol I“, Educația fizică militară, componentă a procesului instructiv-educativ în armata României, Educația fizică militară, componentă a procesului instructiv-educativ în armata României, Vol I • Nr. 2 • 2009, p. 122-127
6. D. Stoica, V. Jurat (2015) Some aspects of the professional -applicative physical training of the order force and public security, Știința Culturii Fizice, Numărul 24(4) / 2015 / ISSN 1857-4114 /ISSNe 2537-6438, p. 29-37
7. Epuran, M. (2011). Motricitate și psihism în activitățile corporale, Edit. FEST ISBN: 978-973-87886-7-1, ISBN vol. 1: 978-973-87886-8-8, p. 13-14
8. Gheorghe, G., C. (2015). Educatia fizica in alte sisteme de formare a personalului cu atributii politienesti, Revista de investigare a criminalitatii; Bucharest Vol. 8, Iss. 1, (2015): 279-283
9. G. Rață, B. C. Rață (2006). Aptitudinile în activitatea motrică. Bacău: EduSoft, 2006, ISBN 973-8934-36-2, p. 9-26
10. Ionescu, M. L. (2019). Impactul elementelor din artele marțiale asupra procesului de educație fizică extracurriculară în învățământul gimnazial, Teza de doctor în științe pedagogice, Specialitatea: 533.04 – Educație fizică, sport, kinetoterapie și recreație, Chișinău, p. 14
11. L. D., Milici, E. Rață, M. R., Milici (2007). Study of New Graphical Method for Sportman Evaluation, International journal of computers and communications, Issue 4, Volume 1, p. 99-107
12. M. Constantinescu, E. Vizitiu (2021). A comparative approach on the impact of diet and physical activity on young people between 19 and 26 years, Balneo and PRM Research Journal DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12680/balneo.2021.447> Vol.12, No.3 September 2021, p: 265–269

13. Metodica organizării și desfășurării pregătirii fizice a cadrelor din unitățile Ministerului de Interne. București, 1989, p. 45
14. O. Aftimiciuc, V. Aftimiciuc (2017). Teoria și metodologia fitness-ului. Chișinău: Editura Valinex, ISBN 978-9975-68-340-1, p. 247
15. Ordinul Ministrului Administrației și Internelor, nr. 154 din 03.03.2004, privind activitățile de educație fizică și sport în M.A.I. p. 89
16. Rață, E. (2001). Rolul formativ al exercițiilor atletice la vârsta studenției, Analele Universității Seria Filosofie și Discipline Socio-Umane, ISSN 1222 – 5584, Suceava, p.172
17. Smîdu, D. (2020). Optimizarea capacităților motrice și psihice prin modernizarea conținutului lecției de educație fizică din învățământul universitar militar, Rezumat teza de doctorat, București, p.15
18. Ș.G., Pentiuc, E. Rață (2006). Pattern recognition methods in physical training evaluation and planning, 8th International Conference on Development and Application Systems Suceava, Romania, May, 27-28, p. 499-504
19. Torje, D., C. (2005). Teoria și metodica pregătirii în domeniul educației fizice a personalului M.A.I., Editura Ministerului Administrației și Internelor, București, ISBN 973-8307-95-3, p.9
20. Zashiti, S. (2004). Bodyguard training. Russia: Minsk Publishing House, ISBN 985-13-2323-3, p. 93