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# ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMAND FOR SPA & WELLNESS SERVICES AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE SUWAŁKI REGION

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The study aimed to assess the demand for SPA & Wellness services among residents of the Suwałki region and to identify factors influencing their interest in health-oriented leisure.

**Material and Methods:** A descriptive study was conducted using an anonymous questionnaire survey among 135 residents of the Suwałki region. The survey included 15 closed and open-ended questions concerning the use of SPA services, preferred treatments, motivation for participation, and sources of information. Data were analyzed descriptively, identifying dominant patterns and tendencies in the responses.

**Results:** Although 61% of respondents had never used SPA facilities, 81% recognized the need for establishing such a center in the region, and 95% expressed willingness to use its services. The most desired forms of relaxation included massages, hydrotherapy, and peat mud baths. The majority of participants declared they would recommend SPA services to others (92%) and would consider offering them as gifts (96%). Internet sources were the most frequently indicated means of obtaining information.

**Conclusions:** The findings indicate a high potential for the development of the SPA & Wellness sector in the Suwałki region. Growing public awareness, natural environmental resources, and limited market competition create favorable conditions for establishing a modern wellness center promoting holistic health and relaxation.

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## KEYWORDS

Spa Therapy, Wellness, Health Promotion

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## CITATION

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## Introduction

In recent years, the SPA & Wellness industry has experienced dynamic growth both in Poland and worldwide. Changes in lifestyle, rising income levels, and increasing awareness of health and prevention have contributed to the development of health-oriented tourism [1,2].

The philosophy of wellness is based on striving for harmony between body, mind, and spirit through active self-care and emotional balance [3]. The modern lifestyle of many individuals has led to the emergence of civilization diseases such as stress, cardiovascular disorders, fatigue, and even depression [4]. Consequently, people increasingly seek methods of physical and mental regeneration, and a stay at a SPA facility has become an integral part of this lifestyle.

In Poland, health and wellness tourism is developing particularly in mountain and coastal regions; however, there are still areas with significant, yet economically underutilized potential—one of them being the Suwałki region [5].

This area is characterized by a unique landscape, clean air, and the presence of natural resources such as peat mud and sulfur waters, which form the basis of balneotherapy [6,7,8]. The combination of natural and therapeutic values predisposes this region to the development of wellness services and recreational tourism.

## Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to determine whether there is an actual demand for SPA & Wellness services among the residents of the Suwałki region and to identify the factors influencing their interest in this type of offer.

## Material and Methods

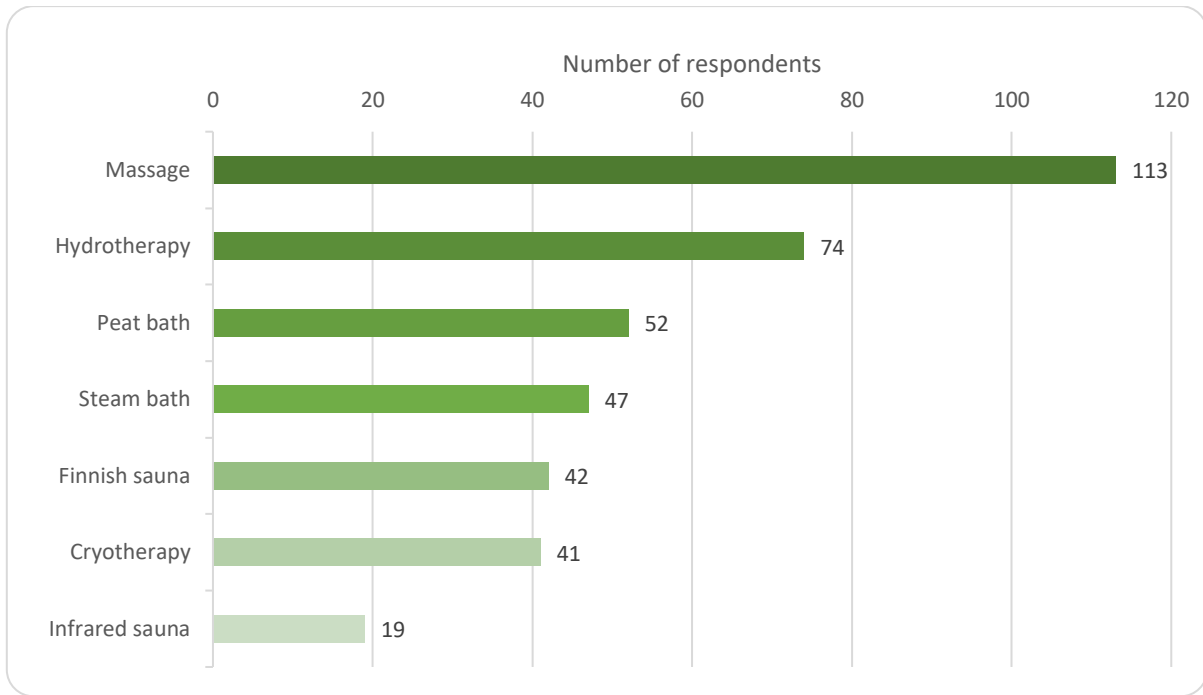
The study was descriptive in nature and conducted using an anonymous diagnostic survey among 135 residents of the Suwałki region. Its purpose was to assess the demand for SPA & Wellness services and to identify the preferences of potential clients.

The questionnaire, designed by the author, consisted of 15 closed and open-ended questions, as well as a demographic section. It included issues related to the use of SPA services, awareness of existing facilities, preferred treatments, motivations for using such offers, and sources of information about wellness services. Women constituted the majority of respondents (86%), while men accounted for 14%. The participants represented six age categories: under 25, 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, 56–65 and above 65 years. The largest group included individuals under 25 years of age (42%), followed by those aged 26–35 (33%), and the smallest group—respondents over 55 years old. All participants were residents of the Suwałki region, mainly the city of Suwałki (70%) and nearby towns such as Sejny, Raczki, Szurpiły, Gawrych-Ruda, Sobolewo, and Wizajny. The collected data were analyzed descriptively, identifying the most frequently repeated responses and dominant trends among the surveyed population.

## Results

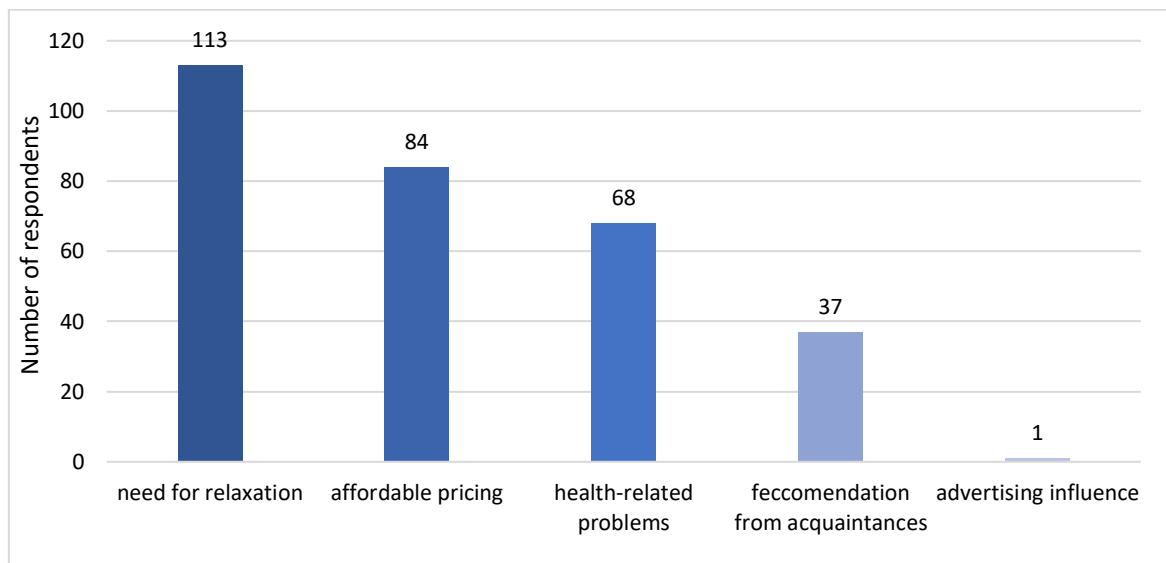
The conducted research made it possible to assess the degree of interest and awareness of the inhabitants of the Suwałki region regarding SPA & Wellness services. The analysis of 135 responses showed that despite limited personal experience with such services, the vast majority of residents recognize the need for the establishment of a SPA facility in their area.

Most respondents (61%) declared that they had never used a SPA facility; however, as many as 81% saw the need to create one, and 95% expressed willingness to use such services personally. This indicates high developmental potential for the region and growing awareness of the benefits of active rest and body regeneration. Among the preferred services, relaxation and regenerative treatments were dominant. Massage was indicated as the most desirable form of relaxation. Hydrotherapy and peat mud baths were also highly rated, confirming the importance of natural methods of care and biological renewal. Finnish saunas and steam baths were somewhat less popular, while infrared saunas were the least chosen option (Fig 1.).



*Fig1. Services most frequently chosen by respondents in a SPA center*

Most respondents declared that they would recommend SPA services to their relatives (92%), and as many as 96% would consider offering a SPA voucher as a gift, which confirms the positive perception of this type of service among residents. This also reflects growing social acceptance of the wellness culture in the local community. When asked about sources of information on SPA facilities, the vast majority indicated the Internet (121 respondents), followed by recommendations from people who had previously used such services. This demonstrates that online communication and word-of-mouth marketing play key roles in promoting new wellness centers. The study also revealed that most participants would prefer to visit a SPA with an accompanying person, suggesting that the offer should include services for couples and families. The main motivations that would encourage potential clients to visit a SPA included the need for rest, affordable prices, and health problems (Fig 2.).



*Fig 2. Factors encouraging respondents to use SPA services*

In summary, the results indicate that the Suwałki region has significant potential for the development of the SPA & Wellness sector. Residents are aware of the benefits of such services, yet lack access to adequate infrastructure. This creates favorable conditions for establishing a modern wellness center based on local natural resources and the philosophy of holistic health care.

### **Discussion**

The obtained results are consistent with trends observed in the literature. The SPA & Wellness sector in Poland is developing dynamically, and sources emphasize the growing importance of health tourism as part of the luxury leisure market [1,9]. Increasing health awareness, stressful lifestyles, and the need for recovery foster the growth of health-oriented tourism and the search for relaxation-oriented leisure. Respondents from the Suwałki region demonstrated a strong readiness to use wellness services, indicating untapped potential in this area.

The data show that residents prefer natural methods of regeneration, such as massages, peat mud baths, and hydrotherapy. The alignment of these results with previous studies confirms a sustained interest in treatments with documented relaxation and therapeutic effects [6,7].

The high level of health awareness among respondents and their positive attitude toward the wellness concept suggest that such services are gradually transforming from luxury offerings into elements of everyday health prevention [10,11]. A crucial factor determining the development of wellness centers is location. Studies indicate that facilities situated in areas with high natural value and low urbanization are increasingly sought after [1,12]. The Suwałki region, with its clean environment, tranquility, and availability of natural therapeutic resources, fits this trend and may become a competitive destination for health tourism [13,14]. The comparison of this study's findings with the literature suggests that the development of the SPA & Wellness market requires further promotion of holistic health approaches and education on prevention and psychophysical balance. Growing social awareness and the search for health-promoting forms of recreation create favorable conditions for the expansion of this industry in smaller regions of Poland [10].

### **Conclusions**

The study demonstrated that there is a real demand for SPA & Wellness services in the Suwałki region. Residents expressed interest in using such services while noting insufficient availability of facilities in their area. The most popular treatments included relaxation procedures, particularly massages, peat mud baths, and hydrotherapy, confirming the growing need for regeneration and relaxation. The main motivations for using SPA services were rest, improved well-being and health, and affordable pricing. The Internet was identified as the key source of information about wellness services, highlighting the importance of online promotion for the sector's growth. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Suwałki region—with its natural assets, clean environment, and low market competition—constitutes a favorable location for developing health tourism and establishing a SPA & Wellness center with strong local and national potential.

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