

## ACCESSIBLE SZCZYRK HOTELS' FEATURES FOR DISABLED TOURISTS

**Irena Szewczyk**

Received 23 March 2015

Revised 12 April 2015

17 April 2015

### **Abstract**

Due to socio-demographic changes related to aging society, adapting the buildings – including hotels – to the needs of elderly and disabled persons become more and more vital

**Purpose** – The aim of this paper is to evaluate an availability of hotels for the segment of elderly people and people with disabilities. The nature of disability and the requirements of the external and internal adaptation of hotel facilities for disabled are described in subsection chapter 1 and chapter 2.

**Methodology** –The research part of the study is an attempt to assess the availability of the services for elderly and disabled in hotels, recreational resorts and guest houses in Szczyrk. The survey was based on the pre-established criteria and was conducted in the hotels in one of the most known skiing resorts of Poland the town of Szczyrk. To achieve the intended results, the diagnostic survey was supplemented with additional polling covering a group of 100 respondents of various levels of disabilities.

**Findings** – Travel and leisure of people with disabilities are limited by various factors, including financial, social and architectural ones. Research shows that only higher category hotels have facilities for disabled. The lower category hotels are partly designed for people with disabilities

**Contribution** – Adaptation of environment to the needs of people with disabilities includes also proper preparation inside of the buildings, altering of the area around the hotels and the appropriate equipment to facilitate the activities of daily living, for people with mobility issues and for people with other disabilities.

Hotel industry must be adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. While wheel chair accessibility is the main and most common priority for a disabled traveller, many hotels neglects other needs. Apart from mobility access the customers would often require specific furniture and room equipment, facilities for hearing impaired or partially sighted.

**Keywords** disability, accessible feature; accommodation, disabled tourist

**Irena Szewczyk**, PhD, Assistant Professor  
The University of Bielsko-Biala, Faculty of Management and Transport  
ul. Willowa 2, 43-309 Bielsko-Biala, Poland  
Phone: +48/338279231  
E-mail: iszewczyk@poczta.onet.pl, iszewczyk@ath.bielsko.pl