



Participation in Sport and Physical Activities Among Secondary School Students



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**Participation in Sport and Physical Activities Among
Secondary School Students**

**Report
by**

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Executive Summary

Young people can build healthy bodies and establish healthy lifestyles by including physical activity in their daily lives. However there is evidence to suggest that young people are not physically active on a regular basis and physical activity declines dramatically during adolescents (C.D.C 1997). The study aimed to establish baseline information on the involvement of post-primary school students in sport and physical activity, and the factors influencing participation and nonparticipation.

A self completion questionnaire and an activity diary was distributed to 821 post-primary school students, first and fourth year students (aged 12-17 years), from the eight secondary schools in Galway city.

The findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

- €# The majority of adolescents use inactive modes of transport to travel to and from school each day, preferring to travel by bus or by car.
- €# The activities most popular among male adolescents include soccer, football and swimming. The activities most popular with female adolescents include walking, swimming and cycling.
- €# Adolescents spend on average 12 hours per week participating in sport and physical activities, with the majority participating in light-moderate activities.
- €# Female adolescents are less physically active than male adolescents. Females spend less time being physically active and are active at a lower intensity level than male adolescents.
- €# Nearly three quarters of male adolescents feel they take enough exercise, while less than half of the female adolescents feel they take enough exercise.
- €# 97% participate in sport and physical activity outside of school hours.
- €# Both males and females participate more often in individual sports as opposed to team sports.
- €# The vast majority received less than 60 minutes of P.E. per week at school, 37% do not participate in P.E.
- €# “Fun and enjoyment” and to “improve and maintain health” are cited as the main reasons for participating in sport and physical activities.
- €# “Not enough time” and “too much homework” are perceived to be the main barriers to participation in sport and physical activities.
- €# Adolescents spend on average 11 hours 14 minutes watching T.V. per week and spend approximately three hours per week playing with the computer/games console.
- €# Adolescents spend almost three hours on average per week reading for pleasure, eight hours per week doing homework and five hours working.

The study recommended that consideration be given to the following in encouraging increased participation in sport and physical activity among adolescents:

1. Efforts should be made to increase awareness among young people of the benefits of participation in sport and physical activities.
2. Adolescents should be encouraged to increase the intensity of the exercises they undertake.
3. Programme planners and school authorities should liaise with adolescents to aid in identifying and providing for the sporting and recreational needs and interests of young people.
4. Enjoyment is perhaps the most powerful psychological influence in encouraging participation in sport and physical activities, therefore fun and enjoyment should be seen to be the fundamental elements to successful physical activity programmes.
5. Schools should aim to provide extracurricular physical activity programs that offer diverse, developmentally appropriate activities, both competitive and non-competitive, for all students.
6. Youth centres, community groups and leisure centres should provide a range of developmentally appropriate community sports and recreation programmes that are attractive to all young people.
7. Schools should be encouraged to view P.E. as an important and integral part of the school curriculum.
8. The physical patterns of young people should be monitored and all interventions that have been implemented evaluated.
9. Counselling programs and referral systems should be in place for at risk children e.g. obese children, to direct them towards appropriate physical activity programmes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Sport and physical activity

Sport has been defined as “*an activity which offers the individual the opportunity of self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being (Sports Council, London 1994)*”.

Physical activity has been defined as “*bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that substantially increase energy expenditure above the basal level. Physical activity can be categorised in several ways, including type, intensity and purpose. The physical activity of a person or a group is frequently categorised by the context in which it occurs. Common categories include occupational, household, leisure-time,(including competitive sports, recreational activities, exercise training) or transportation (National Health Committee, New Zealand 1998)*”.

As the above definitions show, physical activity encompasses a number of different types of activities in a variety of environments. Such activities are generally believed to hold a number of physiological and psychological benefits for the individual.

1.2 The physiological benefits of physical activity

Physical activity constitutes one of the major components of a healthy lifestyle and general health promotion and protection. Extensive evidence including information from the Surgeon General’s Report on Physical Activity and Health (Centres For Disease Control And Prevention, 1996), has documented the health benefits of regular physical activity. The report stated that regular physical activity improves health in the following ways:

- ⚡ Reduces the risk of dying prematurely.
- ⚡ Reduces the risk from dying from heart disease.
- ⚡ Reduces the risk of developing diabetes.
- ⚡ Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure.
- ⚡ Helps reduce blood pressure in people who have high blood pressure.
- ⚡ Reduces the risk of developing colon cancer.
- ⚡ Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.
- ⚡ Helps control weight.
- ⚡ Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- ⚡ Helps older people become stronger and better able to move about without falling.

Certain types and amounts of physical activity contribute differently to health. For example, rhythmic activity (such as walking, swimming, or cycling) is beneficial in preventing coronary heart disease and stroke. In addition, physical activity in which

the body bears its own weight (for example walking but not swimming) is helpful in preventing osteoporosis. Isometric exercises (such as weight-lifting) contribute to muscle strength and possibly to the prevention of osteoporosis (Health Education Authority, 1994).

There is concern across all levels of Irish society at the lack of general fitness and the low level of involvement in sport and physical activity among the general population. Inactive adults have twice the mortality of adults who are at least somewhat active (Blair and Connelly, 1996). Increasing the level of involvement in sport and physical activity may have a significant impact on reducing childhood obesity, and chronic disease and ultimately, adult mortality (ERIC, Clearing House on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1998).

1.3 The psychological benefits of exercise

The US Surgeon General Report (1996) states that 'physical activity promotes psychological well-being'. People who exercise vigorously appear to benefit from a 'feel good factor' with a lift in mood and self-esteem. Some studies have shown that physical activity improves mental performance in children and elderly people (Health Education Authority, 1994) and it is believed that physical activity may be beneficial for people who suffer from depression or anxiety (North et al, 1990).

Why does exercise improve mental health? Folkins and Sime (1981) give the following reasons:

- €# The increase in body temperature may reduce muscle activity leading to decreased anxiety.
- €# The temperature increase may also affect levels of brain monoamines causing mood changes.
- €# Exercise increases the levels of catecholamines (transmitters in the central nervous system affecting movement, mood, attention, endocrine, cardiovascular and stress responses) which lead to alterations in mood.

Physical activity has been associated with improved academic performance, self-concept, mood and mental health. It may also lead to an improvement in overall quality of life (ERIC, Clearing House on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1998).

1.4 How much physical activity is enough?

Health benefits can be derived simply from becoming more physically active, but the greatest benefit comes from engaging in planned and structured exercise. Cardiovascular risk factors can be reduced and physical fitness enhanced with low to moderate levels of physical activity (40-60% of a person's maximal aerobic capacity) (Blair and Connelly 1996).

A review of studies has concluded that moderate amounts of activity can protect against several diseases. A greater degree of protection can be achieved by increasing the amount of activity, this can be accomplished by increasing the intensity, frequency

or duration of the activity. Most importantly, a regular pattern of physical activity is necessary to sustain the physiological changes that are responsible for health benefits (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997).

The Department Of Health (1997) set the following targets in relation to physical activity:

- €# To achieve a 30% increase in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over who engage in an accumulated 30 minutes of light physical exercise most days of the week
- €# To achieve a 20% increase in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over who engage in moderate exercise at least 20 minutes three times a week.

The Department of Health have not set targets for adolescents, however the Centres For Disease Control And Prevention, (1997) state that “*all adolescents should be physically active daily, or nearly every day, as part of play, games, sport, work, transportation, recreation, physical education or planned exercise, in the context of family school and community activities, and that adolescents engage in three or more sessions per week of activities that last 20 minutes or more at a time and that require moderate or vigorous levels of exertion*”.

The Cardiovascular Health Strategy Group (1999) also emphasise the importance of regular physical activity in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. The group state that the proposed message in relation to physical activity for the general public is that **any** physical activity is worthwhile, building in stages to at least 30 minutes per day.

1.5 Overall trends in participation in sport and physical activity

Over the past 25 years there has been an impressive accumulation of scientific evidence showing the benefits of physical activity (Health Education Authority, 1994). However, whilst participation in sport and physical recreation has increased, overall physical activity has decreased. Obesity levels are increasing and there are major health concerns about the effects of physical inactivity. Increases in mechanisation in the workplace and home, the popularity of home-based leisure activities such as watching television/videos and increased use of motorised transport are some of the factors which have contributed to a decline in the amount of physical activity undertaken by people in recent decades (Department Of Health, London, 1995).

These global trends also apply to Ireland. The Kilkenny Health Project (Shelley et al, 1991) found that when activity from work and leisure is combined in a physical activity index, only 29% of males and 22% of females had a high physical activity index. Less than one quarter participated in ‘heart healthy’ activity more than once a week. The National Survey Of Involvement In Sport And Physical Activity (Department of Health and Education, 1996) showed that 16–18 year olds are the most active and 55–75 year olds the most inactive. Married men tend to be more involved in sport than married women, and the lower socio-economic groups were less likely to exercise than the general population. The study concluded that in general

adults in Ireland do not participate in appropriate exercise frequently enough to confer a health benefit.

The recent National Health and Lifestyle Surveys (Friel et al, 1999), which measured health related behaviours among adults and school going young people, found that overall 42% of adult respondents engaged in some form of regular physical exercise. Just under a quarter reported participating in mild exercise three times per week for at least 20 minutes; 31% did moderate exercise three times per week and less than one in ten people did strenuous exercise three times per week. The study found that these rates declined markedly with age. Nearly one third of those over 55 years took no exercise at all in a typical week. The study also found that more males than females engaged in strenuous exercise especially in the younger age group (18 - 34 years) and 21% of respondents reported doing no exercise at all.

Some factors have been identified which help to distinguish between physically active and physically inactive adults. It has been found that the more active a person was in early life the more frequently they continued with or returned to sport and recreation later (Health Education Authority 1997). It appears that exercise habits need to start early, preferably in childhood/adolescence, as this would increase the chances of people exercising in later years.

1.6 Trends in participation in sport and physical activity among young people

There is also evidence to show that children are becoming less active. As a result of increasingly inactive lifestyles, they are becoming more prone to obesity and physical inactivity in later years. Results from the National Health and Lifestyle Surveys (Friel et al, 1999) found that while two thirds of boys aged between 9 and 11 years reported participating in vigorous exercise four or more times per week, this had declined to just over half the boys in the 15-17 year old age group. In the case of girls in the same age category, only a quarter reported taking vigorous activity four or more times per week.

The Report of the Surgeon Generals on Physical Activity and Health (1996) states that, nearly half of young people aged 12-21 years do not engage in vigorous physical activity on a regular basis. Participation in all types of physical activity declines rapidly as children and adolescents get older (e.g. regular participation in vigorous physical activity has been reported by 69% of young people aged 12-13 years but only 38% of those aged 18-21 years).

Results from the Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey, UK (1992), indicates that the number of children between 7-11 years who walk to school fell from 81% in 1971 to 63% in 1990. A survey of second level students conducted by the South Eastern Health Board (1992) shows that fewer than half of 14 year old boys and just under 20% of girls take vigorous daily exercise. At 16 years of age only 14% of boys and 8% of girls take daily exercise. From 16 years of age onwards even fewer girls (2%) continue to take regular vigorous physical exercise. Almost half of fifteen-year-old girls exercise once or less a week.

Not only do children play less sport in school and outside formal school hours, but they also appear to be less active in daily living. This may be due to an increase in sedentary activities, such as watching T.V., videos and computer games. A study conducted by Anderson et al (1998) to assess US children's participation in vigorous physical activity and television watching habits and their relationship to body weight and fatness, found that approximately 20% of children reported fewer than three bouts of vigorous activity each week (with higher rates of infrequent activity among girls), whereas 26% of children watched four or more hours of television per day. Boys and girls who watch four or more hours of T.V. each day had greater body fat ($p < 0.001$) and had a greater body mass index ($p < 0.001$) than those who watch less than two hours per day.

These findings are alarming for the future health of the population in particular when decreasing levels of activity in teenagers could be a precursor to a sedentary adulthood.

1.7 Rationale for research

Young people can build healthy bodies and establish healthy lifestyles by including physical activity in their daily lives. However there is evidence to suggest that young people are not physically active on a regular basis, and physical activity declines dramatically during adolescence (Centre For Disease Control And Prevention, 1997).

It is uncertain what is being done at a local level to promote physical activity among adolescents, and to alleviate the dramatic decline in physical activity during adolescence. It is therefore necessary to examine the physical activity patterns of post-primary school students at a local level, prior to establishing interventions and programmes targeted at adolescents. It is also appropriate to examine the type of sport and physical activities that they are participating in. Little is known about psychological reasons for participation and in particular non participation in sport and physical activity, these therefore warrant attention and should be addressed in intervention programmes. It is also necessary to quantify the amount of time adolescents spend in other activities, such as watching television and playing computer games and the relationship between time spent on these activities and time spent exercising. This information would help determine whether interventions should attempt to decrease the amount of time students spend on these activities.

It is hoped that the results from this study will be of value, for future research, in providing baseline information on the level of involvement in sport and physical activity of secondary school students in Galway City. It is also hoped that the study will be of value in aiding the planning of interventions and programmes aimed at increasing the activity levels of post-primary school students.

1.8 Aim and objectives

1.8.1 Aim

The aim of the survey is to establish baseline information on the involvement of post-primary school students in sport and physical activity, and the factors influencing participation and non-participation.

The study will;

1. Provide data on levels of physical activity.
2. Assess factors influencing participation in sport and physical activity.
3. Assess barriers to participation.

1.8.2 Objectives:

The study has been designed to meet the following objectives;

1. To assess how much sport and physical activity post-primary school students are participating in.
2. To identify the types of sports and physical activities post-primary school students are participating in.
3. To assess the level of intensity at which they participate in these sports and physical activities.
4. To assess the psychosocial factors influencing participation and nonparticipation in sport and physical activities.
5. To find out about other activities that post-primary school students participate in and the relationship between these and levels of exercise.
6. To assess age and gender differences in levels of participation in sport and physical activities.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The research methodology of the study comprised the following;

1. Questionnaire.
2. Activity Diary.

2.2 The sample

A total of 821 pupils; 418 boys and 399 girls from first and fourth year, 629 first year pupils and 192 fourth year pupils, of the eight post-primary schools in Galway city, participated in the survey. The following schools participated in the survey;

- €# Colaiste Iognaid
- €# Colaiste Mhuire
- €# St. Joseph's College
- €# Colaiste Einte
- €# Dominican College
- €# Presentation Secondary School
- €# Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Salerno Secondary School
- €# Mean Scoil Mhuire

The principals of the eight secondary schools were approached by post (letter in appendix 1) and when positive responses were received a copy of the questionnaire (appendix 2) and activity diary (appendix 3) were sent to the principals to review. This was followed by a telephone call to the principals to arrange a time and a date to meet with the pupils.

The researcher asked the students if they were willing to participate in a study on sport and physical activity. No students refused to participate. Students were assured that all answers would be strictly confidential and reminded of the importance of giving honest answers.

The questionnaire was distributed to the pupils. The students completed the questionnaire (which took five to ten minutes) and returned them to the researcher.

The activity diary was then distributed to the students, the written instructions on the diary were read to the students. The students were asked if they understood what they were being asked to do and questions were answered. The pupils were asked to complete the diary over the following week and were also asked to return the completed diary to the researcher at the same time next week. A total of 372 activity diaries were returned for analysis giving an overall response rate of 45%.

2.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed to elicit the following;

- ⊘ How much sport and physical activity post-primary school students are participating in
- ⊘ The types of sport and physical activities in which post-primary school students participate
- ⊘ Psychosocial factors influencing participation and nonparticipation in sport and physical activities
- ⊘ Other activities in which post-primary school students participate
- ⊘ Age and gender differences

2.4 Activity diary

Students were asked to complete an activity diary over a period of seven days. The activity diary consisted of a page for each day of the week, Monday to Sunday. Each day was subdivided into various sections (e.g. travel to school, lunch break, after school club etc.) to aid the student in completing the diary. Each page also included a section for “other activities”. This section was subdivided into reading, watching T.V., playing computer games, homework and work. The layout of the diary pages changed for Saturday and Sunday, with one section for physical activities and another section on other activities (as with the weekdays).

Activities were categorised into the type of sport or physical activity (e.g. gaelic football, aerobics, soccer) and the context in which the sport or physical activity was undertaken (e.g. team sport, individual sport). Students also recorded the time spent on each activity as well as the intensity level of each activity.

When students were asked about the level of intensity/effort of each activity the Borge Scale of Reference was used (appendix 4). The Borge Scale was proposed in the 1950's by physiologist Gunnar Borge. The scale is a popular and tested method of measuring effort/intensity and has been used in numerous studies (e.g. National Survey Of Involvement In Sport And Physical Activity, 1996), as it facilitates reliability and comparison. On the Borge Scale, numbers run vertically from 6-20. A 6 represents no exertion, while 20 represents the hardest possible work. Descriptive phrases are also included to help users choose the number that best reflects their perception of exercise intensity (e.g. seven means ‘very, very light’).

The activity diary was designed to elicit;

- ⊘ The level of intensity at which post-primary school students are participating in sport and physical activities
 - ⊘ The variety of sports and physical activities in which post-primary school children participate
 - ⊘ Time spent on sport and physical activities each day
- The time spent on a range of activities other than sport and physical activities

3. Questionnaire Results

3.1 Travel to school

Table 3.1 shows that over three quarters of all respondents use modes of transport that require little physical activity to travel to and from school each day. Almost half (47%) travel by car and 30% by bus. Under a quarter of students use modes of transport that require physical activity, 15% walk and 8% cycle.

Table 3.1 Main mode of transport usually used

Mode of transport	Male		Female		12,13 yrs		14,15 yrs		16,17 yrs		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Car	171	44	213	51	281	50	39	40	64	44	384	47
Bus	111	28	132	32	172	30	33	34	39	27	244	30
Walk	61	16	67	16	82	14	14	14	32	22	128	15
Cycle	55	14	10	2	45	8	11	11	9	6	65	8

The majority of students live under three miles from the school (64%) with over a quarter (27%) living under a mile and over a third (37%) living between two and three miles from the school (figure 3.1). It takes less than twenty minutes for the majority of students to travel to school each day (table 3.2). On average students spend 17 minutes travelling to school.

Table 3.2 Travel time

Time (mins)	Male		Female		12,13 yrs		14,15 yrs		16,17 yrs		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-5	45	11	55	13	70	12	15	16	15	10	100	12
6-10	86	22	93	23	127	22	11	12	41	29	179	22
11-20	179	45	157	38	240	42	45	47	51	35	336	42
21-30	59	15	80	20	99	18	15	16	25	17	139	17
31-60	25	6	26	6	30	5	10	10	12	8	51	6

Figure 3.1 Distance from home to school.

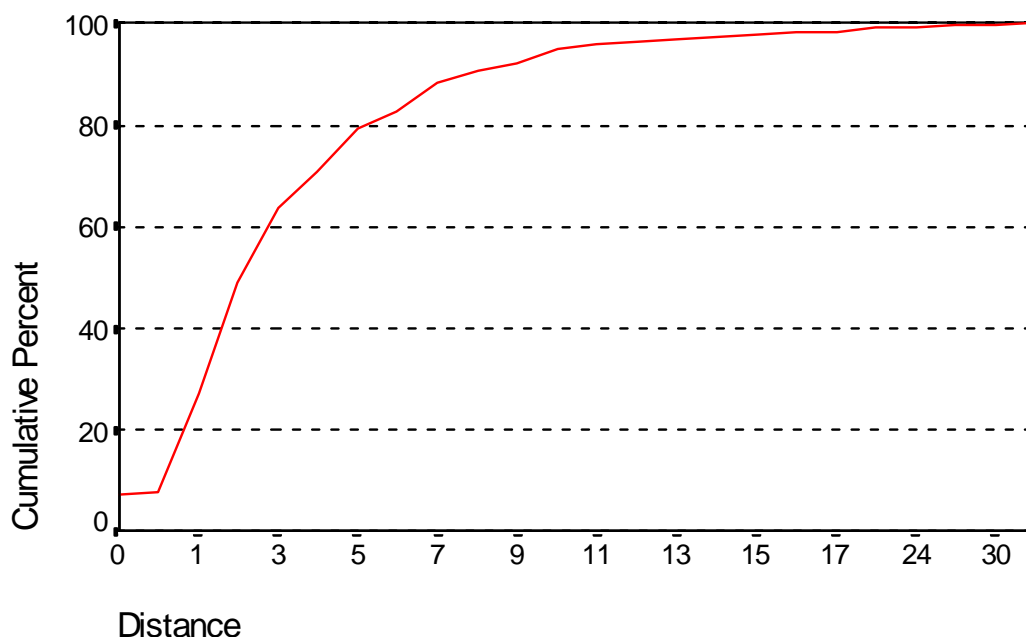


Table 3.3 shows that the greater proportion of students (59%) living under a mile from the school use active modes of transport to travel to school (45% walk and 14% cycle). However as many as 42% living under a mile use inactive modes of transport to travel to school. The majority of students living between 1-2 miles (77%) and 2-3 miles (94%) use inactive modes of transport to travel to and from school.

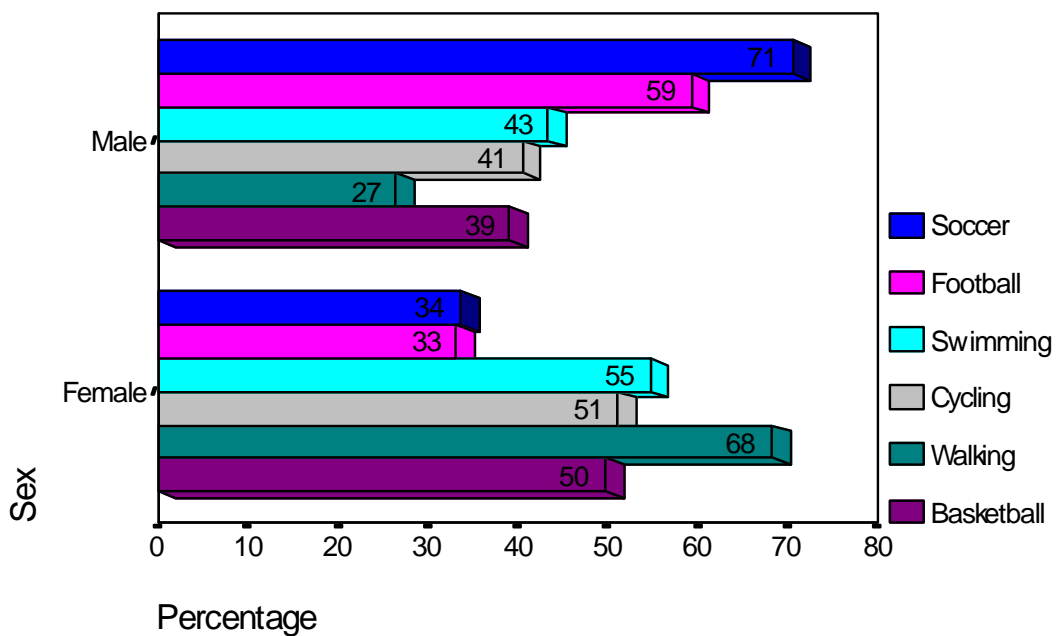
Table 3.3 Travel and distance

Miles	Car		Bus		Walk		Cycle	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
up to 1	76	36	13	6	95	45	29	14
1-2	98	58	32	19	20	12	22	13
2-3	68	60	39	34	1	1	8	7

3.2 Activities students participate in

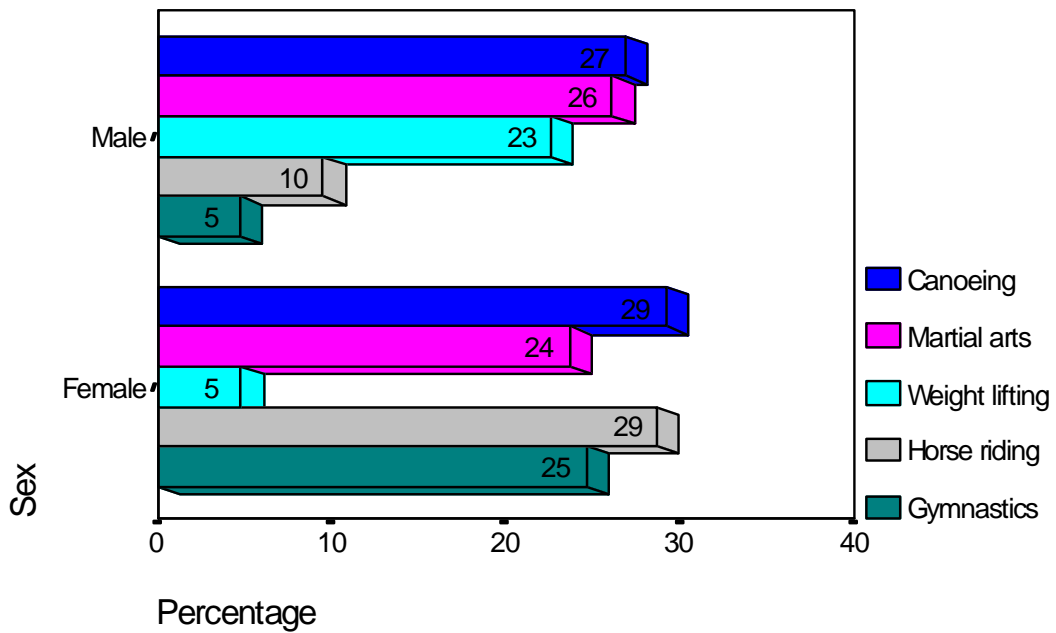
Figure 3.2 shows that the four most popular activities that boys participate in were soccer (71%), football (59%), swimming (43%) and cycling (41%). The activities in which the majority of boys did not participate were aerobics (2%) and volleyball (2%). The top four most popular activities that girls participate in were walking (68%), swimming (55%) cycling (51%) and basketball (50%). The activities in which the majority of girls did not participate were rowing (2%) and weight lifting (3%). Overall, the most popular activities were soccer (52%), swimming (49%) and walking (48%).

Figure. 3.2 Activities students participate in



It can be seen from figure 3.3 that male respondents indicated that the top three activities they would like to participate in (but do not get the opportunity to) are canoeing (27%), martial arts (26%) and weight lifting (23%). Canoeing (29%), horse riding (29%) and gymnastics (23%) are the top three activities that the female respondents would like to participate in. Overall canoeing (28%), martial arts (25%) and horse riding (19%) are the top three activities that both male and female students would like to participate in.

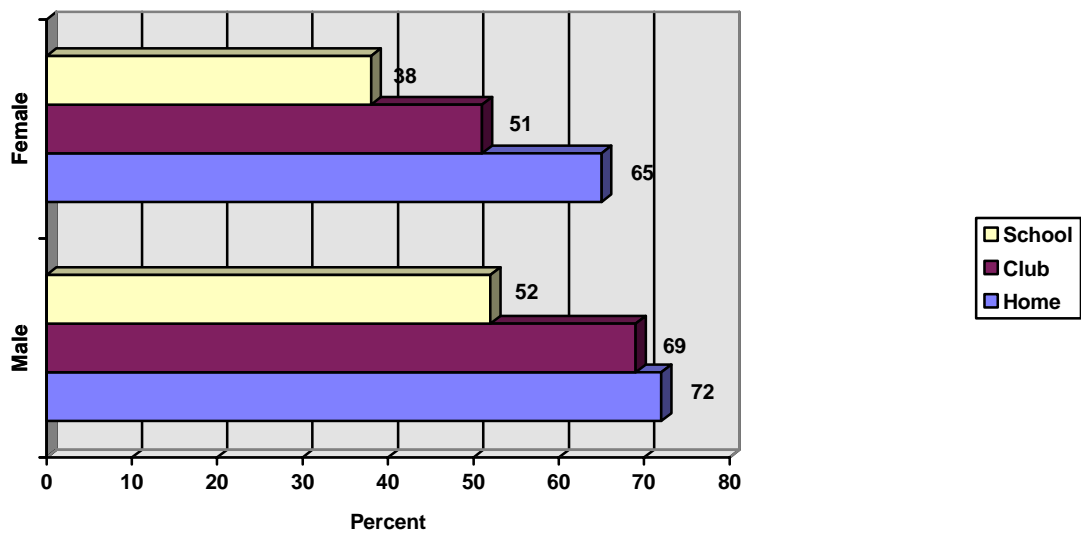
Figure 3.3 Activities students would like to participate in



3.3 Locations in which students get the opportunity to participate in their favourite activities

Students were asked how often, if ever they got the opportunity to participate in their favourite activities at school, at home or at a club. Figure 3.4 shows that the majority of students get the opportunity to participate in their favourite activities at home (68%). Girls get less of an opportunity to participate in their favourite activities at home, at a club and also at school (e.g. 38% girls get the opportunity at school in comparison to 52% boys). Figure 3.4 also illustrates that students get fewer opportunities to participate in their favourite activities at school in comparison to at home or at a club.

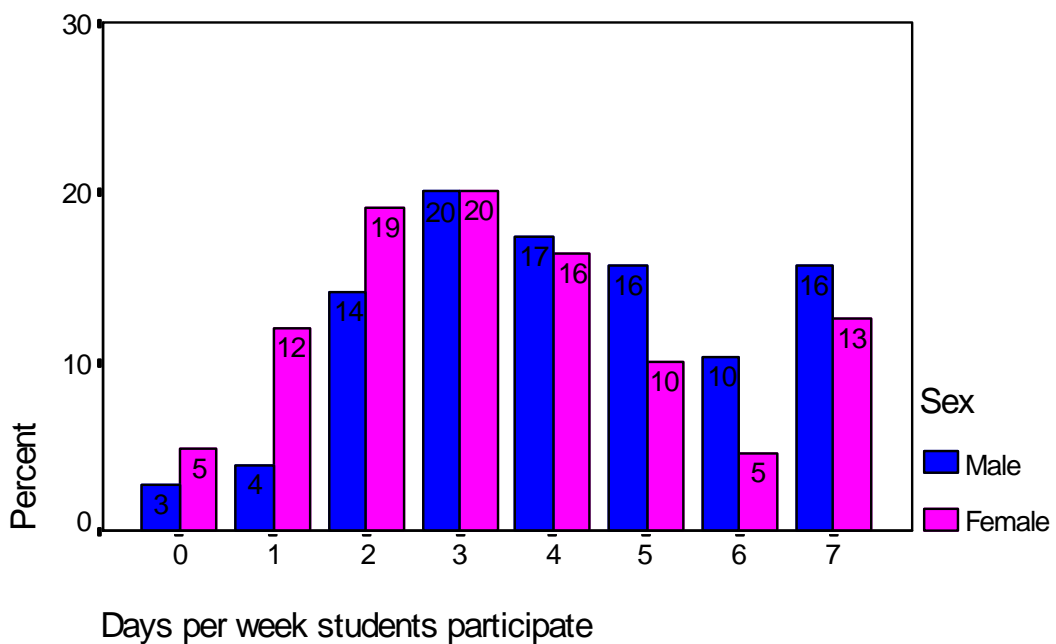
Figure 3.4 Locations in which students get the opportunity to participate in their favourite activities



3.4 Participation in sport and physical activities outside of school hours

The vast majority of post-primary school students (92%) participate in sports and physical activities outside of school hours. Figure 3.5 shows that over half (51%) of both males and females participated in sport and physical activities outside school hours on four or more days of the week. Boys spend an average of four days per week participating, compared to three days for girls. These differences are statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

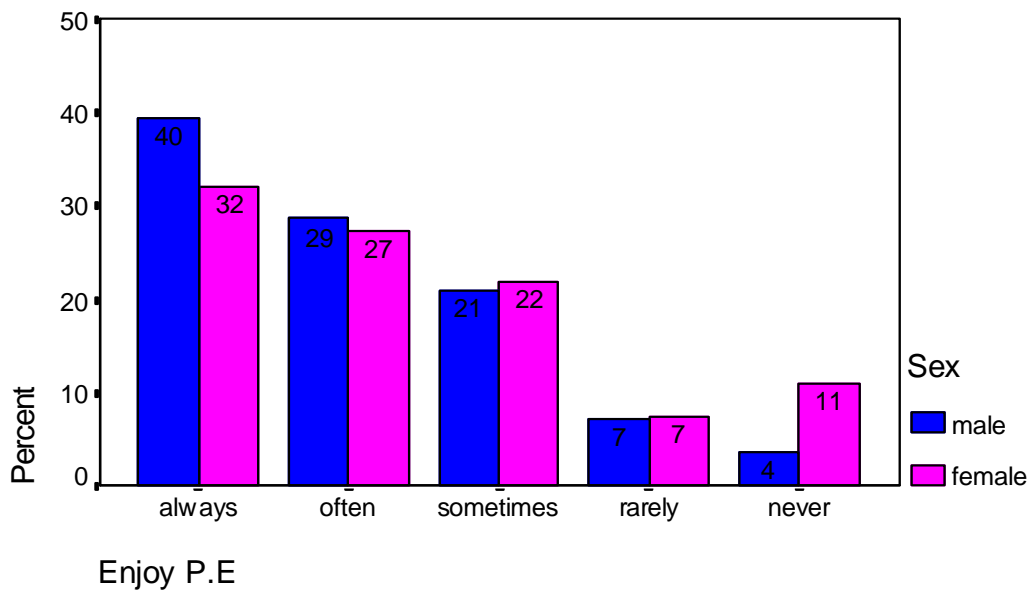
Figure 3.5 Number of days per week participating in sport and physical activities



3.5 Physical education at school

Figure 3.6 illustrates that the majority of students (64%) always or often enjoyed P.E. Girls (11%) were significantly more likely than boys (4%) to never have enjoyed P.E. The gender difference is statistically significant (Mann-Whitney test $p < 0.05$). As the students get older the amount of students that never enjoy P.E increases.

Figure 3.6 How often students enjoy P.E.



Students who rarely or never enjoyed P.E. were asked to give the main reasons were for not enjoying P.E. As table 3.4 illustrates students claimed that “not liking the activities” (66%), “poor changing facilities” (31%) and “not being good at sport” (24%) were the main reasons for not enjoying P.E.

Table 3.4 Reasons why students do not enjoy P.E.

Reason	Male		Female		12,13 yrs		14,15 yrs		16,17 yrs		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Don't like the P.E. uniform	6	7	22	16	22	16	4	15	2	4	28	13
Not good at sport	16	19	36	27	29	21	7	27	16	30	52	24
Too competitive	7	8	16	12	16	12	2	8	5	9	23	11
Don't like the activities	58	68	86	65	91	66	15	58	38	72	144	66
Not competitive enough	18	21	14	11	17	12	6	23	9	17	32	15
Poor changing facilities	12	14	56	42	37	27	9	35	22	42	68	31
I get teased at P.E.	4	5	5	4	6	4	0	0	3	6	9	4

≠# Multiple response, therefore percentage may not add up to 100%

3.6 Reasons for participating in sport and physical activities

Table 3.5 shows that the most popular reason for participation in sport and physical activities was “for fun and enjoyment” (30%). The second most popular reason indicated by both male (23%) and female (19%) respondents was “to improve and maintain health”. “To feel in good shape” (14% male and 17% female) was also an important reason. These patterns are similar between both male and females and across the various age groups.

Table 3.5 Reason for participation in sport and physical activity

Reason	Male		Female		12,13 yrs		14,15 yrs		16,17 yrs		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
To improve and maintain health	245	23	214	19	321	21	58	21	80	20	459	21
To relax	44	4	39	3	49	3	13	5	21	5	83	4
To feel in good shape	148	14	188	17	228	15	43	17	65	17	336	16
For fun and enjoyment	310	30	324	29	464	30	73	28	98	25	635	30
To meet new people	46	4	68	6	90	6	8	3	16	4	114	5
To lose weight	32	3	111	10	81	5	19	7	43	11	143	7
To mix with friends	130	12	152	13	207	14	26	10	50	13	283	13
Don't have a choice	7	1	11	1	11	1	3	1	4	1	18	1
To win in competition	88	8	28	3	82	5	16	6	18	5	116	5

≠# Multiple responses, therefore percentage may not add up to 100%

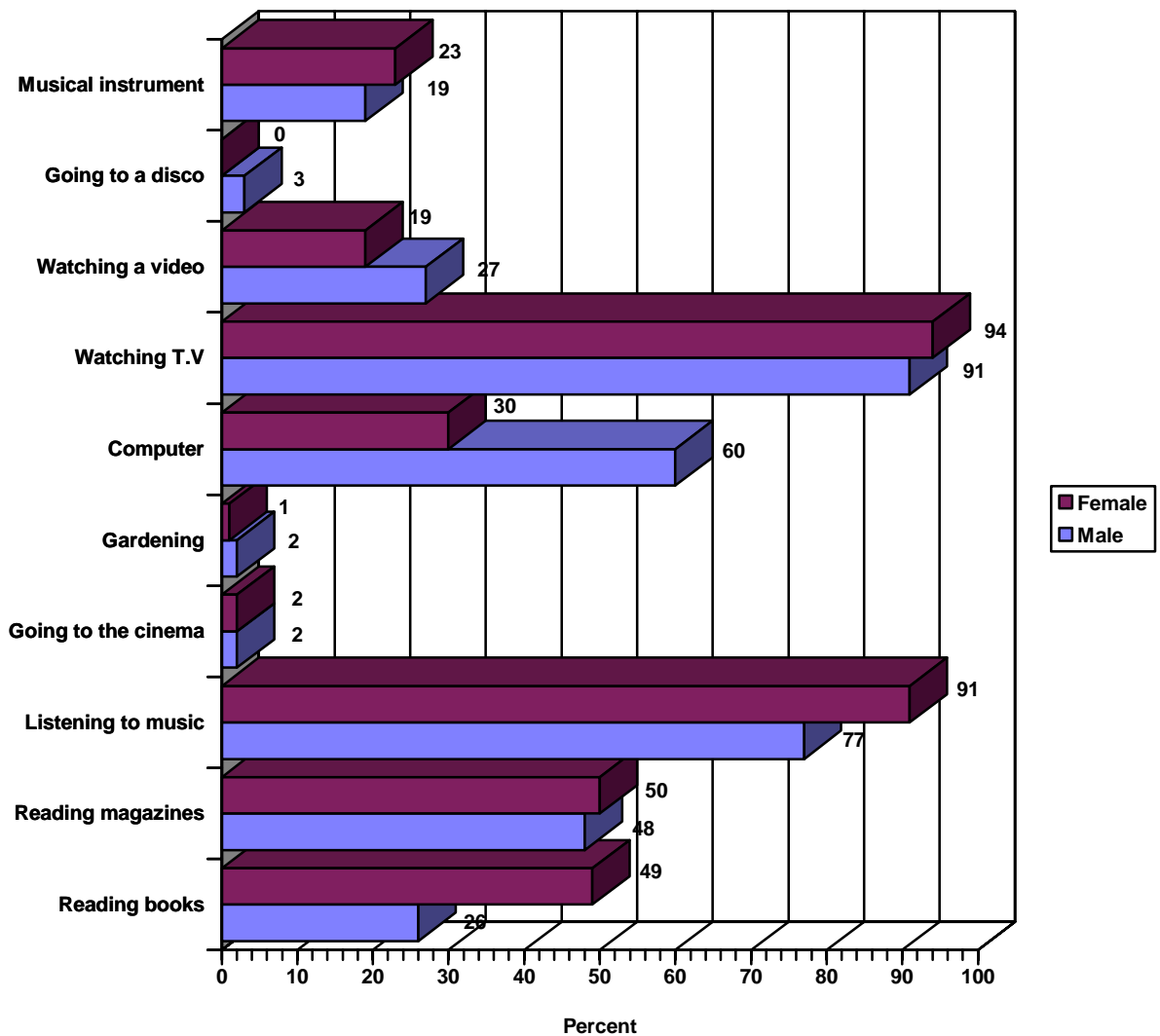
3.7 Other activities in which students participate

Figure 3.7 shows that the activities that the respondents most frequently participate in are watching T.V. (92%) and listening to music (84%). Figure 3.7 also shows that twice as many boys (60%) than girls (30%) play with the computer/games console and nearly twice as many girls (49%) than boys (26%) read books for pleasure.

A negative relationship was found between time spent reading and time spent on sport and physical activities; as time spent reading increased, time spent on physical

activities decreased (Spearman rank correlation's $p < 0.05$). A relationship was also found between time spent watching T.V. and time spent on sport and physical activities; as time spent watching T.V. increased, time spent on physical activities decreased (Spearman rank correlation's $p < 0.05$).

Figure 3.7 Other activities students participate in



3.8 Do students think they take enough exercise?

It can be seen from table 3.6 that under three quarters (73%) of male and less than half (49%) of the female respondents felt that they took enough exercise. These gender differences were found to be statistically significant (Chi-Square $p < 0.05$). It is also clear that as age increases fewer felt they take enough exercise, e.g. in the 12,13 age group 65% thought they took enough exercise, in the 16,17 less than half (46%) thought they took enough exercise. These differences were also statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

Table 3.6 Students who feel they take enough exercise

	No	%
Gender		
Male	291	73
Female	203	49
Age Groups		
12,13 years	371	65
14,15 years	57	59
16,17 years	66	46

Respondents who felt that they do not take enough exercise were asked to give the main reasons for not taking enough exercise. Students indicated that “not enough time” (24%) and “too much homework” (24%) are the main reasons for not taking enough exercise.

Table 3.7 Reasons why they do not take enough exercise

Reason	Male		Female		12,13 yrs		14,15 yrs		16,17 yrs		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Not the sporty type	28	12	53	10	45	10	11	12	25	12	81	11
Not enough time	49	20	136	27	106	23	28	31	52	25	185	24
Not enough energy	18	7	28	5	25	5	8	9	13	6	46	6
Need to rest/relax	12	5	15	3	16	3	4	4	7	3	27	4
Too expensive	6	3	16	3	11	3	1	1	11	5	22	3
Do not enjoy exercise	9	4	11	3	16	2	1	1	3	2	20	3
Too much homework	57	24	116	25	116	23	21	23	37	18	173	24
Don't want to get injured	3	1	5	2	7	1	0	0	1	0	8	1
Too heavy	11	5	20	4	20	4	3	3	8	4	31	5
Not attractive in sports wear	5	2	15	3	14	3	2	1	5	2	20	3
No need to	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	1
Not fashionable	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
My parents	3	1	5	1	4	1	2	2	2	1	8	1
None of my friends exercise	11	5	14	4	19	3	1	1	5	3	25	4
Not enough facilities	29	12	76	14	63	15	8	9	35	17	105	14

Multiple responses, therefore percentage may not add up to 100%

4. Activity Diary Results

The following information represents results obtained from the activity diaries. A total of 821 diaries were distributed, the students were asked to complete the diaries over a one week period and were also asked to return them to the researcher on the same day the following week. A total of 372 activity diaries were returned for analysis giving an overall response rate of 45%.

4.1 Travel

Table 4.1 illustrates the vast majority of respondents who use physically active modes of transport prefer to walk (36%) as opposed to cycle (9%). These results are similar to those found in the questionnaire (section 4.1 Travel)

Table 4.1 Physically active modes of transport

Activities	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Travel walk	60	16	75	20	135	36
Travel cycle	24	6	10	3	34	9

4.2 Activities

4.2.1 Activities participated in

Table 4.2 shows that soccer (30%), walking (17%) and basketball (13%) are the most popular physical activities for the male respondents. The most popular activities among female respondents are walking (30%) jogging (14%) and basketball (13%). As one would expect some sports are mainly undertaken by males (e.g. weight lifting and rugby) while others are mainly undertaken by females (e.g. volleyball and aerobics).

Table 4.2 Activities participated in

Activities	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Aerobics	1	0	22	6	23	6
Badminton	5	1	13	3	18	5
Basketball	49	13	77	21	126	34
Camogie/Hurling	26	7	16	4	42	11
Canoeing	1	0	1	0	2	1
Cycling	29	8	29	8	58	16
Dancing (Irish)	3	1	11	3	14	4
Dancing (disco, street)	2	1	10	3	12	3
Gaelic football	44	12	18	5	62	17
Golf	17	5	1	0	18	5
Gymnastics	24	6	4	1	28	8
Hillwalking	0	0	1	0	1	0
Hockey	1	0	24	6	25	8
Horse riding	2	1	16	4	18	5
Jogging	15	4	52	14	67	18
Martial arts	8	2	5	1	13	3
Rowing	3	1	4	1	7	2
Rugby	27	7	1	0	28	8
Soccer	113	30	48	13	161	43
Squash	2	1	2	1	4	1
Swimming	30	8	13	3	43	12
Table tennis	5	1	0	0	5	1
Tennis	9	2	20	5	29	8
Volleyball	0	0	23	6	23	6
Walking	64	17	113	30	177	48
Weight lifting	5	1	0	0	5	1
Athletics	18	5	48	13	66	18

4.2.2 Type of activity

As table 4.3 illustrates, both males and females participate in more individual sports than team sports (59% males and 57% females).

Table 4.3 Type of activity

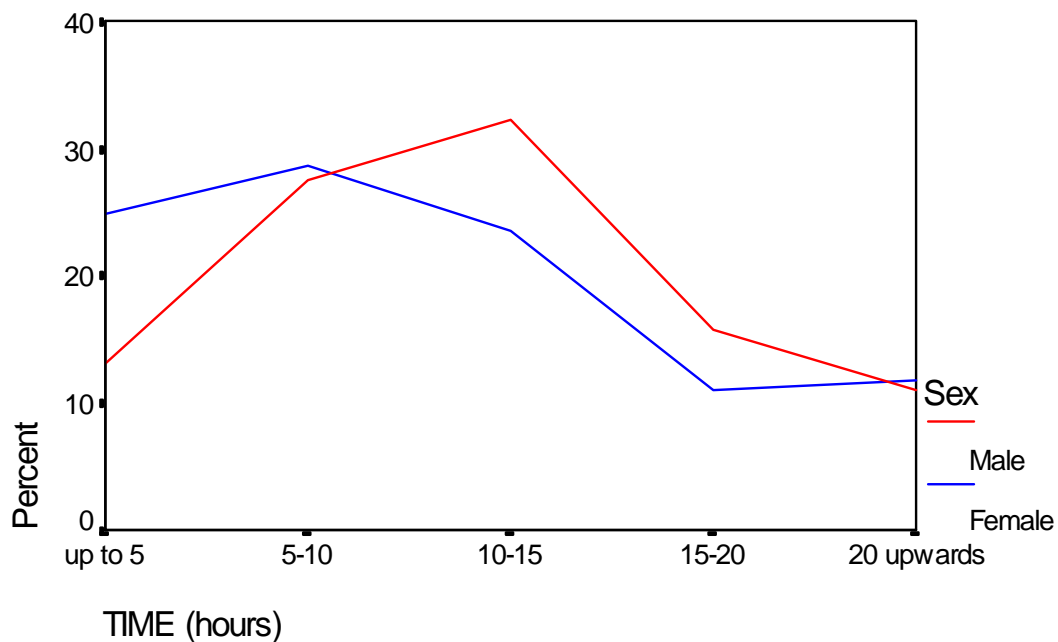
Activity type	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Team Sports	276	53	247	47
Individual Sport	310	59	412	57

∅# Multiple responses, therefore percentage may not add up to 100%

4.2.3 Frequency and Intensity

Time spent on activities varied according to gender (figure 4.1). In general male students spent more time being physically active per week than female students. Over half (59%) of the male respondents spent more than 10 hours per week being physically active, in comparison to less than half (47%) of female respondents. The average time spent on physical activity for males was 11 hours 52 minutes compared to 10 hours 39 minutes for females. These differences were statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$)

Figure 4.1 Time spent on activities



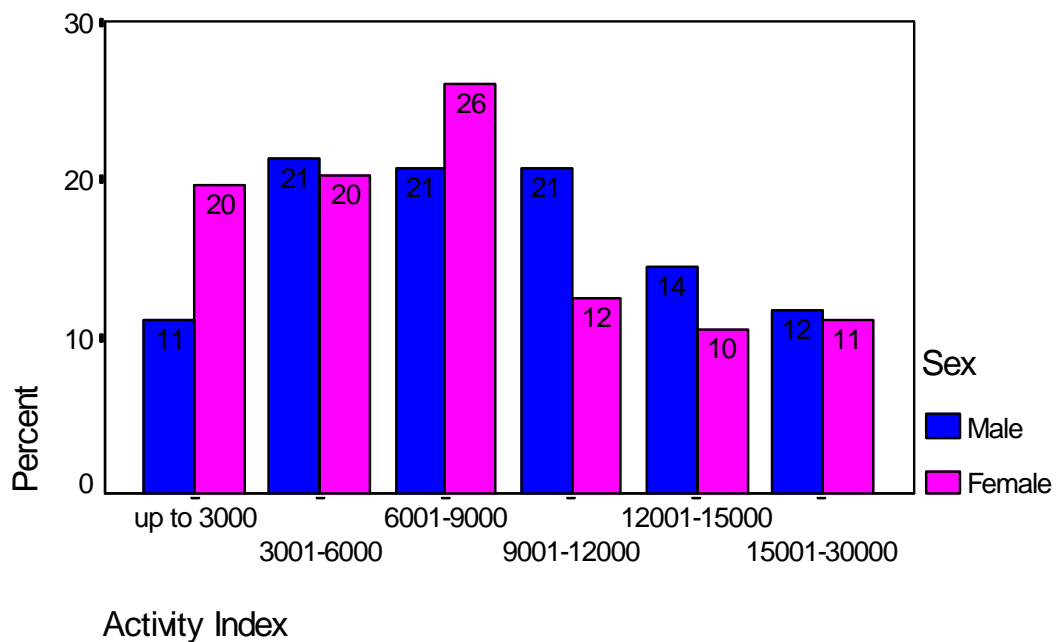
When the students were asked about the level of intensity/effort of each activity the Borge Scale Of Reference was used (appendix 4). This is a popular and tested method of measuring effort, it facilitates reliability and comparison. Students were asked to choose a point on the scale which best reflects the amount or degree of effort they put into to each activity. Table 4.4 illustrates that males participated more vigorously in activities than females, females participate at a lower level of intensity than males. The majority of students (67%) scored between 10-14 on the scale. 15% of both male and female respondents scored between 15 - 18 on the scale. More females (19%) than males (15%) averaged a score between 6 - 10 (very, very light - fairly light).

Table 4.4 Intensity of activities

Intensity (6 = very, very light, 19 = very, very hard)						
Intensity	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
6-10	22	15	29	19	51	17
10-14	102	70	101	66	202	67
15-18	22	15	22	15	44	15
18 upwards	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is important to consider both the time spent being active and also the intensity level of the activities participated in, in order to accurately estimate how active a person is. It is for this reason that an activity index was established; the activity index considers both time and intensity. The activity index was calculated by multiplying time by intensity (**time x intensity**). Figure 4.2 illustrates that males scored higher on the activity index than females. The majority of respondents (52% male and 66% female) scored between 3000 and 9000. Of those who scored between 9000 and 15000, 36% were male and 23% female. The average score for males was 9153 compared to 8142 for females. These differences were statistically significant (Kruskal-Wallis, Anova $p < 0.05$).

Figure 4.2 Activity index



4.3 Physical education

Figure 4.3 clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of students (78%) receive less than 1 hour of P.E. per week. The greatest proportion of respondents, 63% male and 40% female receive between 30 minutes- 1 hour of P.E. per week. More females (28%) than males (17%) receive 1 hour upwards of P.E. per week, however of those who do not participate in P.E. the majority are female (22%) in comparison to male (15%). Students who do not participate in P.E. have indicated (in the questionnaire) that they participate in an alternative subject which clashes with the time allocated to P.E. Typical comments included the following;

“It clashes with my art class”.

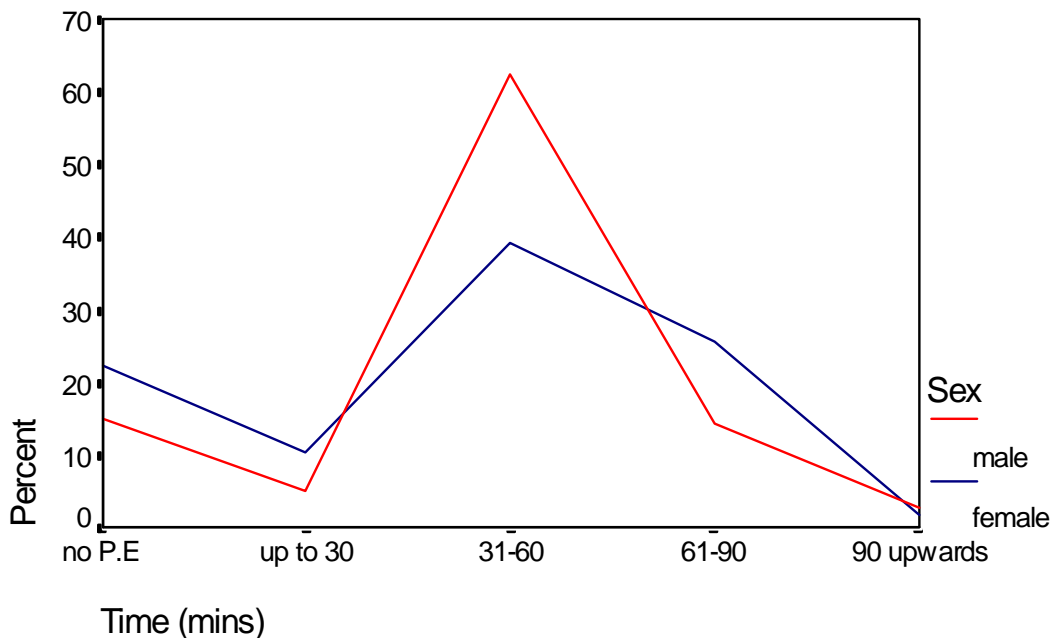
“I chose a course in computers instead”.

The average time boys spent on P.E. per week was 44 minutes compared to 42 minutes for girls. These differences were not statistically significant. The lack of time allocated to P.E. was a major issue with the students, typical comments (in the questionnaire) included the following;

“I feel that not enough P.E. time is given to the students”.

“We don’t get enough - P.E. time is 15 minutes, C’mon”.

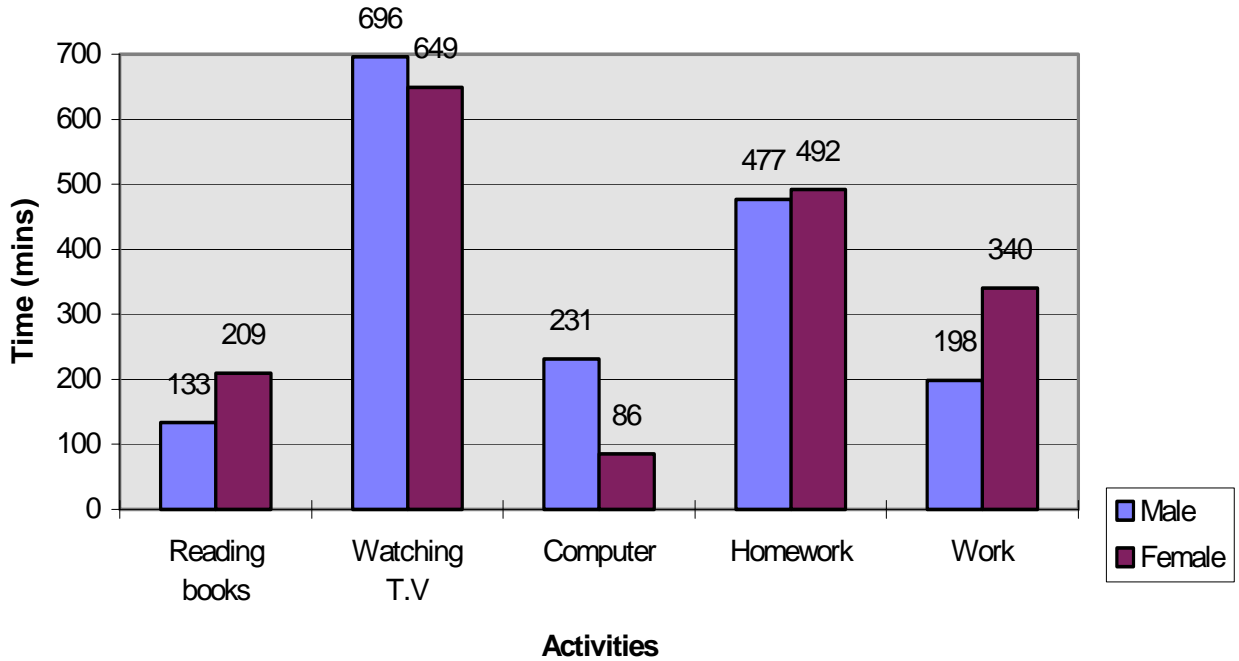
Figure 4.3 Time spent on P.E.



4.4 Other activities students participate in

Figure 4.4 provides a summary of the average time students spent on other activities. Each activity will be dealt with separately.

Figure 4.4 Average time spent on other activities



4.4.1 Time spent reading for pleasure

As table 4.5 illustrates 27% of students spent 1-3 hours reading per week. Over one quarter (26%) female and 16% male respondents spent between 3-6 hours reading per week. Twenty seven percent of male and 15% female respondents did not read at all. In general more female respondents read than male and of those who did read female respondents spent more time reading than male respondents. On average male respondents spent 2 hours 13 minutes reading for pleasure compared to 3 hours 29 minutes for females. These differences were statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.5 Time spent reading for pleasure

Time (hours)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	36	27	22	15	59	21
up to 1	30	22	17	11	47	16
1-3	37	27	42	28	79	27
3-6	22	16	38	26	60	21
6-9	10	6	19	13	29	10
9 upwards	3	2	11	7	14	5

4.4.2 Time spent watching T.V./video

All respondents watched T.V./video at some stage during the week (table 4.6). Over half of respondents (52%) spent over 10 hours watching T.V. per week. More males (28%) than females (18%) watched over 15 hours of T.V. per week. On average males spent significantly more time watching T.V./video than females (11 hours 36 minutes compared to 10 hours 49 minutes, Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.6 Time spent watching T.V./video

Time (hours)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
up to 2	8	6	2	1	10	3
2-5	15	10	20	13	35	12
5-10	41	29	55	37	96	33
10-15	40	28	44	30	84	29
15-20	24	17	17	11	41	14
20 upwards	16	11	11	7	27	9

4.4.3 Time spent playing with the computer/games console

Table 4.7 shows that the greater proportion of respondents (35%) did not play with the computer/games console at any stage during the week. Of those who played with the computer/games console over a quarter (26%) spent up to two hours playing. Males spent more time playing with the computer than females. The average time males spent playing with the computer/games console per week was 3 hours 51 minutes compared to 1 hour 26 minutes for females. These differences were statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.7 Time spent playing with the computer/games console

Time(hours)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	32	23	69	47	101	35
up to 2	30	22	46	31	76	26
2-5	40	29	20	13	60	20
5-10	22	16	10	7	32	11
10 upwards	15	11	4	3	19	6

4.4.4 Time spent doing homework

Nearly half of all respondents (49%) spent between 5 - 10 hours per week doing homework. It can be seen from table 4.8 that males spent less time doing homework than females. On average male respondents spent 7 hours 57 minutes per week doing homework compared to females who spent 8 hours 12 minutes. These differences were not however statistically significant.

Table 4.8 Time spent doing homework

Time (hrs)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
up to 2	14	10	8	5	22	8
2-5	27	19	28	19	55	19
5-10	72	50	72	48	144	49
10-15	22	15	29	20	51	17
15 upwards	9	6	12	8	21	7

4.4.5 Time spent working (in the home e.g. house work, or paid work e.g. in a shop)

Table 4.9 shows that over a quarter (26%) of all respondents spent between 1 - 3 hours per week working. Female respondents worked longer hours than male respondents (72% of female respondents worked over 3 hours in comparison to 61% for males). Males spent on average 3 hours 18 minutes working per week compares to 5 hours 40 minutes for females. These differences were statistically significant (Independent t-test $p < 0.05$).

Table 4.9 Time spent working (in the home e.g. house work, or paid work e.g. in a shop)

Time (hours)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	26	19	13	9	39	14
up to 1	28	20	11	8	39	14
1-3	29	21	45	31	74	26
3-5	30	22	27	19	57	20
5-10	20	14	23	16	43	15
10-15	2	1	10	7	12	4
15 upwards	4	3	15	10	19	7

A negative relationship was found to exist between time spent watching T.V., playing with the computer/games console, reading for pleasure, working and time spent on physical activities. This relationship suggests that the more time students spend watching T.V., playing with the computer/games console, reading and working the less time they spend participating in sport and physical activities. It may therefore be necessary to encourage children to spend less time involved in sedentary activities and more time being physically active.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to establish baseline information on the involvement of secondary school students in sport and physical activity and the factors influencing participation and non-participation. The results from both the questionnaire and activity diary will be discussed in conjunction with each other.

5.2 Travel

The vast majority of students travel to school by bus or by car. Under a quarter travel to school in an active manner preferring to walk as opposed to cycle. The majority of students live less than three miles from the school. Students living under three miles from the centre of Galway (post office, Eglington Street) are not entitled to a school bus service, and are therefore expected to walk, cycle etc. The greater proportion of students living under a mile from the school use active modes of transport however as many as 42% travel in an inactive manner. The majority of students living between two to three miles from the school use inactive modes of transport. The large volume of students who travel to school by car or bus is perhaps indicative of the fact that students who live close to the school and could probably walk or cycle to school choose not to. Adolescents should be encouraged to use active modes of transport to travel to school, however issues relating to safety and parental concern about road and personal safety need to be considered. There is potential for health boards to address these concerns. Health boards should perhaps liaise and work in partnership with other relevant bodies in developing a transport policy with emphasis upon safety and independent mobility of children and adolescents, which could in turn encourage our children to be more physically active as part of their daily routine.

5.3 Activities students participate in

Lifetime habits are formed in childhood and there is little doubt that children and teenagers who have not developed the habit of regular exercise are very likely to be unhealthy and inactive as they grow older, acquiring all the related health hazards (Harvey and Brierley 1991). The results that this study provides are relatively positive in that the vast majority of respondents participate in sport and physical activities outside of school hours, with the majority participating at least three days per week. However physical activity declines with age during adolescence, in particular among females. Older adolescents participate less often in activities outside of school hours in comparison to younger adolescents. The activities popular among all respondents are soccer, swimming, and walking. Most physical activity among adolescents occurs outside of the school setting. Thus community and sports programs are integral to

promoting regular physical activity among young people. Community and sports programs should therefore be accessible and readily available to young people, (both male and female, of all age groups) in the community.

Both male and female students participate more often in individual sports as opposed to team sports. Among those who participate in team sports the majority are males. It is therefore necessary to ensure that a variety of individual and team sports are offered to young people of all ages.

Students get less of an opportunity to participate in their favourite activities at school in comparison to opportunities available at home or at a club. It is necessary that schools provide opportunities for students to participate in their favourite activities as the school can positively influence students' attitudes towards sport and physical activities. Schools that promote physical activity may have a significant impact on reducing childhood obesity, chronic diseases and ultimately, adult mortality (ERIC, Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, 1998).

The physiological impact of activity depends on the length, in time, of the activity and the intensity of effort of the activity. The majority of students felt that they take enough exercise. The results show that in general they are spending an acceptable amount of time being active. However in terms of intensity the proportions participating in vigorous activities are very low. There may be a need for adolescents to increase the intensity of the exercise they undertake to obtain the maximum physiological benefit.

The results have indicated that females are spending less time being active and are participating at a lower level of intensity than males. This imbalance needs to be addressed perhaps by providing a variety of sports for school-going girls and by increasing the number of sporting clubs and school based activities specifically targeted at female students. The results also indicate that the activities both male and female students would like to participate in (but do not get the opportunity) are individual sports. It may therefore be necessary to promote activities that can be participated in individually as it is generally believed that there is perhaps an over-emphasis on team sports and physical activities (Trippe, 1996).

5.4 Physical education

The aim of physical education at secondary school level is 'to contribute to the development of the individual through the medium of selected physical activities and related cognitive and social experiences' (P.E. Association of Ireland 1992). Physical education is the only subject which can develop the necessary human movement skills, knowledge, attitudes and values pertaining to physical activity, which allow a child to participate in all recreational pursuits. However physical education is widely regarded, as a peripheral subject at secondary level as it is not one of the core subjects in the second level curriculum (Physical Education Association Of Ireland, 1992). Many schools therefore offer additional subjects or study times as an alternative to P.E. or else provide a maximum of 60 minutes of P.E.

Results of the study shows that as many as 37% of respondents do not participate in P.E., choosing to participate in alternative subjects on offer. The results also demonstrate that the greater proportion of students receive less than one hour of P.E. per week, with an average of 43 minutes of P.E. per week. This lack of time allocated to P.E. was obviously a major issue with the students.

Of those who do participate in P.E. the majority of students (64%), always or

sometimes enjoy P.E. showing a very positive outlook of P.E. Not liking the activities was seen to be the main reason why students' do not enjoy P.E. There is therefore scope in increasing student's enjoyment of P.E. by merely consulting with students and perhaps compromising on the activities to be participated in during P.E. time.

The primary characteristic of school sport is that it is highly organised and dominated by competition (Hendry et al 1992). This emphasis on highly organised, competitive sports may act as a deterrent of young people's involvement in sport. There is therefore a need for less competitive activities and a variety of recreational activities with an emphasis on fun and enjoyment; this could in turn increase involvement in P.E. by reducing the proportion not liking the activities.

5.5 *Reasons for participating in sport and physical activities*

The greater proportion of students have indicated that the main reasons for participating in sport and physical activity is for fun and enjoyment and to maintain and improve health. Both these reasons demonstrate the physical and psychological benefits of exercise. However lack of time and too much homework are seen to hinder their opportunities to participating in sport and physical activity on a regular basis. The results indicate that watching T.V. and reading have a negative impact on time spent on physical activities i.e. the more time spent reading and watching T.V. the less time spent on physical activities. These sedentary activities are now increasing in popularity and the time students spend on these sedentary activities is also increasing, (Department of Health, London, 1995) thus leaving less time to be physically active. It is therefore necessary to be more creative in promoting physical activity and sports programmes to adolescents, emphasising the fun and enjoyment aspects of the activities and also offering a variety of programs incorporating a range of different activities in order to be able to compete with the T.V. and the computer games.

5.6 *Other activities students participate in*

The popularity of sedentary activities, such as watching T.V. and playing with the computer, has dramatically increased in the past decade (Department of Health, London, 1996). With increased popularity of activities that require little physical activity comes an increase in the sedentary population bringing with it all the illnesses and ailments related to sedentary lifestyles. Television watching and playing with the computer/games console are activities that have dramatically increased in popularity among school aged children and those of this study are no different. The vast majority of respondents (68%) watch T.V. everyday of the week and spend on average 11 hours 20 minutes watching T.V. per week, which is similar to the U.S. average (Hillary Commission, 1996). In relation to the computer the majority of respondents play with the computer less than three days per week and only spend an average of 2 hours 60 minutes per week playing with the computer. The time spent playing with the computer/games console is lower than expected and would not greatly prohibit the time spent being active.

Too much homework and lack of time have been cited as the main reasons why respondents do not get enough exercise. However, on average respondents spend a little over eight hours per week doing homework and a little under five hours working per week. From these findings it may be fair to say that the amount of time spent on

homework and work in isolation is not excessive and therefore should not pose a huge barrier to increased participation in sport and physical activity.

Health services have an important role to play in promoting physical activity among young people. As a routine part of care, health care providers should assess the physical activity levels of their young patients. Young people and their families should be counselled about the importance of physical activity and be provided with information that enable young people to initiate and maintain regular, safe and enjoyable participation in physical activity. Young people who are already active should be encouraged to continue their physical activity. Health care professionals should work with inactive young people and their families to develop exercise prescriptions and should refer these young people to school and community physical activity programs appropriate to the individuals needs and interests (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

- ⊘# The majority of adolescents use inactive modes of transport to travel to and from school each day, preferring to travel by bus or by car.
- ⊘# The activities most popular among male adolescents include soccer, football and swimming. The activities most popular with female adolescents include walking, swimming and cycling.
- ⊘# Adolescents spend on average 12 hours per week participating in sport and physical activities, with the majority participating in light-moderate activities.
- ⊘# Female adolescents are less physically active than male adolescents. Females spend less time being physically active and are active at a lower intensity level than male adolescents.
- ⊘# Nearly three quarters of male adolescents feel they take enough exercise, while less than half of the female adolescents feel they take enough exercise.
- ⊘# 97% participate in sport and physical activity outside of school hours.
- ⊘# Both males and females participate more often in individual sports as opposed to team sports.
- ⊘# The vast majority received less than 60 minutes of P.E. per week at school, 37% do not participate in P.E.
- ⊘# “Fun and enjoyment” and to “improve and maintain health” are cited as the main reasons for participating in sport and physical activities.
- ⊘# “Not enough time” and “too much homework” are perceived to be the main barriers to participation in sport and physical activities.
- ⊘# Adolescents spend on average 11 hours 14 minutes watching T.V. per week and spend approximately three hours per week playing with the computer/games console.
- ⊘# Adolescents spend almost three hours on average per week reading for pleasure, eight hours per week doing homework and five hours working.

In conclusion the study has shown that adolescents participate in sport and physical activities on a regular basis. However with regards to time spent being active and the intensity level of the activity improvements are greatly needed. The study also clearly demonstrates that female adolescents are less physically active than male adolescents, this imbalance needs to be rectified.

Following this study a number of recommendations can be made:

1. Efforts should be made to increase awareness among young people of the benefits of participation in sport and physical activities.
2. Adolescents should be encouraged to increase the intensity of the exercises they undertake.
3. Programme planners and school authorities should liaise with adolescents to aid in identifying and providing for the sporting and recreational needs and interests of young people.
4. Enjoyment is perhaps the most powerful psychological influence in encouraging participation in sport and physical activities, therefore fun and enjoyment should be seen to be the fundamental elements to successful physical activity programmes.
5. Schools should aim to provide extracurricular physical activity programs that offer diverse, developmentally appropriate activities, both competitive and non-competitive, for all students.
6. Youth centres, community groups and leisure centres should provide a range of developmentally appropriate community sports and recreation programmes that are attractive to all young people.
7. Schools should be encouraged to view P.E. as an important and integral part of the school curriculum.
8. The physical patterns of young people should be monitored and all interventions that have been implemented evaluated.
9. Counselling programs and referral systems should be in place for at risk children e.g. obese children, to direct them towards appropriate physical activity programmes.

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Appendix 1

22 February 1999

Dear Mr Canavan

The Department of Public Health at the Western Health Board is planning research into post primary students' involvement in sports and physical activity. We hope to examine students' level of involvement in sport and exercise as well as the factors influencing participation. The research will be undertaken by a placement student, Jackie Ni Mhuirheartaigh under the supervision of myself and Dr David Evans (Senior Research Officer). We would like students from your school to be involved in this project.

Studies have shown that children who are physically active bring these good habits into adulthood and are at lower risk from a variety of conditions such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Results from this study would help us make plans to reverse the worrying trend among young people towards inactivity and obesity.

To this end I am writing to enquire about the possibility of visiting your school in March and administering the study questionnaire to some of your students. At this stage we wish to access a sample of students from first year and transition year (or fourth year); the questionnaire would take 5-10 minutes to complete. We would also like to ask some students to complete an 'activity diary' which we would call to collect 1-2 weeks after the initial visit. The results of the study will be made available to your school. The findings will be reported as totals and results for individual schools will not be available.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know whether or not you would like your students to be involved in this study as soon as possible. If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the above number. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance for your assistance

Yours sincerely

Siobhan O'Neill M.Psych.Sc.
Public Health Research Officer

Appendix 2

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Sport And Physical Activities Of Secondary School Students.

We would like to ask you a few questions about sport, exercise and other activities you undertake. It will only take a few minutes, and your responses will be strictly private and confidential. Please complete the questionnaire by circling the number, which corresponds, to your answer (e.g. ②).

Q1. What is the main type of transport that you use to travel to and from school? (tick one box)

Car	1
Bus	2
Walk	3
Cycle	4

Q2. Approximately, how far do you live from the school? _____miles

Q3. Approximately, how long does it take to travel from your home to school?
_____min

Q4. Do you participate in any of the following activities, (please tick column A).
Would you like to participate in any of the following activities if they were available, (please tick column B - choose no more than 3).

	A Activities I do	B Activities I would like to do
Aerobics	1	1
Badminton	2	2
Basketball	3	3
Camogie/Hurling	4	4
Canoeing	5	5
Cycling	6	6
Dancing (Irish)	7	7
Dancing (disco, street)	8	8
Football	9	9
Golf	10	10
Gymnastics	11	11
Hillwalking	12	12
Horse riding	13	13
Jogging	14	14
Martial arts	15	15
Rowing	16	16
Rugby	17	17
Soccer	18	18
Squash	19	19
Swimming	20	20
Tennis	21	21
Volleyball	22	22
Walking	23	23
Weight lifting	24	24

Q5. How often, if ever, do you get the opportunity to participate in your favourite sports and physical activities?

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Much of the time
At school	1	2	3	4
At a club/Centre	1	2	3	4
At home/private	1	2	3	4

Q6. Do you participate in sport and physical activity outside of school hours?

Yes	1
No	2

Q7. How many days each week do you participate in sport and physical activity outside of school hours?

_____ days

Q8. How often do you enjoy P.E?

Always	1	Go to Q10
Often	2	
Sometimes	3	Continue
Rarely	4	
Never	5	

Q9. Why do you not enjoy P.E. class?
(Choose no more than 3 reasons).

I do not like the P.E. uniform	1
I am not good at sport	2
It is too competitive	3
I do not like the activities	4
It is not competitive enough	5
Poor changing facilities	6
I get teased/bullied at P.E.	7
Other: please state, _____	8

Q10. Why do you participate in sport and physical activities?
(Choose no more than 3 reasons).

To improve and maintain health	1
To relax	2
To feel in good shape	3
For fun and enjoyment	4
To meet new people	5
To loose weight	6
To mix with friends	7
I don't have a choice	8
To win in competition	9
Other: please state, _____	10

Q11. On average, how often do you participate in the following activities?

	Never	Once a month	1-2 days per week	3-4 days per week	5-6 days per week	Everyday of the week
Reading books for pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reading magazines and newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening to music/CDs etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Going to the cinema	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gardening	1	2	3	4	5	6
Playing with the computer/games console	1	2	3	4	5	6
Watching T.V.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Watching video	1	2	3	4	5	6
Going to a disco/night-club	1	2	3	4	5	6
Playing a musical instrument	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other hobbies: please state, _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q12. Do you think that you take enough exercise?

Yes	1	Go to Q14
No	2	Continue

Q13. What are the main reasons why you do not take enough exercise?
(Choose no more than 3).

I am not the sporty type	1
I do not have enough time	2
I do not have energy	3
I need to rest/relax	4
It is too expensive	5
I do not enjoy exercise	6
I have too much homework	7
I do not want to get injured	8
I am too heavy	9
I do not look attractive in sportswear	10
I do not need to	11
It is not fashionable	12
My parents do not like me going to in the evening	13
None of my friends exercise	14
There are not enough facilities	15
Other: please state, _____	16

Q14. Please give your age. _____ years

Q15. Are you?

Male	1
Female	2

Additional comments:

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Appendix 3

Activity Diary



The Activity Diary

We want to know about sport, exercise and other activities that you do over the next 7 days. Each page of the diary is divided into two sections,

1. Sport and Exercise.
2. Other activities.

1. Sport and Exercise;

Type of activity: Please describe all the sports and physical activities that you do each day. We want to know about physical exercise such as cycling or walking to school and sport such football or swimming. Please write the name of the sport or exercise and how long (in hours and minutes) that you spent on the sport or exercise.

Intensity: We also want to know about the intensity of each exercise, please choose a point on the Intensity Scale, (see next page) which best describes how much effort you put into that exercise. The scale runs from 6 to 20, the higher numbers indicate more effort and the lower numbers indicate less effort. For example, a gentle walk may have taken little effort and would rate 10 on the scale, an aerobics class may be very strenuous and would be rated at 18 on the scale. **If you do not participate in any activity please write 0.**

2. Other Activities;

Note the time (hrs/min) that you spend on each of the activities listed.

Please note the following:

- €# After school (at school) = school sports clubs e.g. school basketball team training after school.
- €# After school (club/Centre) = sport and physical activities at a club or centre outside of school e.g. local soccer club
- €# Home = activities that you participate in at home e.g. playing with friends in the garden, a fitness video.
- €# Work = housework or paid work (part time job) e.g. working in a shop, baby-sitting.

INTENSITY SCALE

6	Very, very light
7	
8	Very light
9	
10	Fairly light
11	
12	Somewhat hard
13	
14	Hard
15	
16	Very hard
17	
18	
19	Very, very hard
20	

Please answer the following

Please give your age. _____ years

Are you?

Male	
Female	

All responses will be strictly private and confidential.

TUESDAY

Exercise and Sport					Other Activities (total day)		
	Type of activity	Intensity	Time hrs.	mins.	Activity	Time hrs.	mins.
Travel to school	Reading for pleasure	.....	.....
Morning break	Watching TV/ Video	.....	.....
Lunch break	Playing computer games	.....	.....
P.E class	Homework	.....	.....
After school (at school)	Work (in the home eg. house work or paid work eg. in a shop)	.....	.....
After school (other club)			
Travel from school			
At home			

WEDNESDAY

Exercise and Sport						Other Activities (total day)		
	Type of activity	Intensity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	Time <i>mins.</i>	Activity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	Time <i>mins.</i>	
Travel to school	Reading for pleasure	.....	.....
Morning break	Watching TV/ Video	.....	.....
Lunch break	Playing computer games	.....	.....
P.E class	Homework	.....	.....
After school (at school)	Work (in the home eg. house work or paid work eg. in a shop)	.....	.....
After school (other club)	
Travel from school	
At home	

FRIDAY

Exercise and Sport					Other Activities (total day)		
	Type of activity	Intensity	Time hrs.	mins.	Activity	Time hrs.	mins.
Travel to school	Reading for pleasure	.....	.....
Morning break	Watching TV/ Video	.....	.....
Lunch break	Playing computer games	.....	.....
P.E class	Homework	.....	.....
After school (at school)	Work (in the home eg. house work or paid work eg. in a shop)	.....	.....
After school (other club)
Travel from school
At home

SATURDAY

Exercise and Sport				Other Activities (total day)			
Description of activity	Intensity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	Time <i>mins.</i>	Activity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	Time <i>mins.</i>	
.....	Reading for pleasure	.....	.....
.....	
.....	
.....	Watching TV/ Video	.....	.....
.....	
.....	
.....	Playing computer games	.....	.....
.....	
.....	
.....	Homework	.....	.....
.....	
.....	
.....	Work (in the home eg. house work or paid work eg. in a shop)	.....	.....
.....	
.....	

SUNDAY

Exercise and Sport				Other Activities (total day)		
Description of activity	Intensity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	mins.	Activity	Time <i>hrs.</i>	mins.
.....	Reading for pleasure	.....	.....
.....
.....
.....	Watching TV/ Video	.....	.....
.....
.....
.....	Playing computer games	.....	.....
.....
.....
.....	Homework	.....	.....
.....
.....
.....	Work (in the home eg. house work or paid work eg. in a shop)	.....	.....
.....
.....

Appendix 4

Additional Comments.

Question 9

Why do you not enjoy P.E.

I get one class of P.E. and it is only for 20 mins.

Sometimes it is boring.

We don't play good sports.

We never play anything good like soccer.

No choice of activities.

Sometimes tired.

He doesn't let us choose our own activities.

He doesn't do soccer.

So long to be let in and get changed.

There is not enough time and so I don't get much exercise.

I do not partake in P.E. class. I do a different subject – computers.

I don't do that subject.

I chose a E.C.P.L. course in computers instead of P.E.

I chose computers instead.

I do art instead.

We do the same thing every week.

Sometimes, there are 8 teams (in soccer and basketball) and you only get one match around 1 - 1½ minutes.

The teacher is boring and it is a small gym.

I did not choose P.E. as a class to take in 4th Year.

I don't have P.E. as a subject.

Do not participate in P.E.

It clashes with my art classes.

I don't do P.E.

Don't do P.E.

It is boring and no fun.

It is a bit boring.

We only do two different things and only one lesson a week and it is not a double class.

It is boring.

It is in the inside gym even if it is nice out.

I get embarrassed easily.

There is not enough time – 30 minutes (not including changing).

There is not enough time to play a proper game.

Too short amount of time.

We haven't enough time and we do the same thing over and over again.

Sometimes, I don't like that particular sport.

Because we only get to do it once a week which I think should be longer.

We don't have enough time – 15 mins.

No proper equipment and 20 mins a week.

We do the same activities again and again. It gets boring after a while.

There is something wrong with my knee and I've been told not to.

I don't think we get enough P.E. time and we don't have a very good variety of games or P.E. to do.

You are sitting down most of the time waiting for your turn so you only get 15 mins out of 35 mins.

We do not have enough time.

It is a bit boring doing the same thing over and over.

Too little time only 30 mins.

Question 10.

Why do you participate in sport and physical activities?

To keep fit and because I love soccer.

Because I love playing sport and to keep fit.

To stay fit.

To pass the time.

Nothing else to do.

Nothing else to do in my neighbourhood in Moycullen.

I love the game of football.

To increase my sporting skills.

To get better and stay fit.

Relieve stress.

To be good at it.

To be able and good at the thing I do.

Feel very healthy.

To try to get along with my classmates.

I like to further my ability to do these things and become very good at them.

And because I really love sport.

I seriously have to lose weight.

Question 11.

**On average how often do you participate in the following activities.
Other hobbies please state:**

Cycling and hockey.

Soccer at home with my Dad and friends, 3 times a week.

Pitch and putt and collecting things.

Football and soccer.

Fishing.

Going golfing with my father.

Playing soccer.

Golf, soccer, swimming and karting.

Playing cricket on the street.

Snooker.

Playing soccer with my friends.

Art.

Golf, soccer and swimming.

I play rugby with my friends every day.

I like to go fishing with my uncle.

Go-Karting.

Snooker, Pool, Cycling.

Walking.

Play hockey once a week; I work one day a week which consists of a lot of walking/exercise.

Playing chess at the weekend at the local nursery home

BMX cycling and skate boarding

Like to go wind surfing and going to wind surfing competitions.

Playing table tennis, snooker and games.

Aerobics and dancing.

Windsurfing.

Boxing.

Enjoy research into classical cars and building web sites.

Order of Malta.

Boxing.

Horse riding.

Hockey and drama.

Singing, acting and dancing I do every day.

Speech and drama and swimming.

Hockey twice a week, walking almost every day.

Hockey, ballroom dancing and aromatherapy.

Drawing sometimes, roller blading.

Like singing in public or private.

Cooking, Baking.

Soccer, squash, (roller blading), walking.

Basketball (Speech and Drama).

Question 13.

What are the main reasons why you do not take enough exercise.

I make a fool of myself.

Because school is too long and I do not get home until five o'clock.

I have asthma.

Weather, e.g. limits walking, cycling, etc.

I am too lazy.

I am too lazy, but want to exercise.

Weather.

I don't get home from school until late as I do study and I've no time and I'm exhausted.

I'm not that good at sports.

Because school stresses me out a lot and when I get home all I want to do is relax.

There is not many places to go like the gym; you have to be over 16.

Not a lot of places to go.

There is no one to play and it takes too long to get to the tennis club.

I have to work.

I don't know where to go and I wouldn't go unless one of my friends were going.

There is not enough P.E. time in school hours.

I'm kind of lazy!

No transport after school.

Also it is hard to get from here to there when someone else is using the car, so my mom cannot drive me and it's too late to get the bus.

I don't like taking sport too seriously, like coaches do. I prefer to have fun.

I don't think the school offers enough activities.

We have camogie but all the other people are brilliant. I'm a bit shy.

I have problems with my ankle and my back.

Additional Comments.

I like sports.

I am the type of person who enjoys playing sport but like to take it seriously whether it is training or a match.

I like sports.

I would do more sports if they were on during our lunch period. and not after school.

I like P.E. because you learn new skills, you always play different sports and it is better than the P.E. you did in primary school.

We should have more P.E in school, like at least four times a week.

I would prefer if we got a say in what we are allowed do in P.E.

I'd prefer to have a choice in what to do in P.E.

I like outside and the fresh air I do like a bit of exercise but I don't like too many sports.

I get enough exercise but more facilities are in need in my area.

The types of programmes I watch on TV would be related to sport.

I think that we spend or have to spend too much time with school and school work and it is dark by the time we get out to play!!

I think there should be more competitions in soccer throughout schools, e.g. two Cups and a big league. Before Summer holidays, I think schools should have a big 5-side Cup.

Exercise and sport in general would be more fun and more accepted if the facilities were made available for those living in the country, i.e. Moycullen. In this area, there is no Youth Centre, leaving the children with nothing else to do but hang around.

I know exercise is good for you. I do a lot of walking but I know I should do more strenuous exercises, e.g. cycling, squash.

It would be so much easier if there was a gym for our age group outside the city. Schools do not have proper facilities.

I would do a hell of a lot more exercise if Galway had a skate park (place with lots of ramps that every other country, cities have).

I love to go wind surfing but I go to school until 4.00 p.m. and have to study in the school until 6.00 p.m.; so I never have time on weekdays to do anything.

There is very little sports to choose from. There is no P.E. uniform, just the normal one. Practice should not be during break time.

I think that sport is an excellent way to keep fit. I love sport so I play it 6-7 days a week.

I play soccer for ***** and I have won two “Player of the Year” awards for playing the best.

I feel sport is good for the body and also makes me feel good about myself.

Exercising makes you feel good about yourself and helps you stay in shape.

Some schools have excellent sports facilities, e.g. St. Mary’s, while others have barely adequate or inadequate facilities.

I don’t like sports so this survey is wasted on me – Sorry.

I love playing soccer. I go to discos for girls.

Sports give you the confidence to be *****; it is good for body and mind.

There is no Community Centre in our area (Moycullen, Co. Galway).

We should be allowed to the gym and there should be more discos.

It should be a double class for P.E. and there should be more there to do in it.

I don’t have much opportunity to play sports.

Not enough facilities

I love sport and exercise.

I need to have more P.E. time during school because we are sitting down all day and we need more exercise.

The P.E. time is too short to play matches and not enough facilities available.

A lot of the facilities outside school are sometimes too expensive and on at a very suitable time. I think there should be more P.E. time during school hours.

The P.E. time is too short. There is not enough X Files episodes on T.V. The classes aren’t fun enough.

There should be more P.E. time than 25 minutes and more facilities.

The facilities I go to are far away and there are not enough local ones.

I think schools should get more P.E. not for a “doss” but it’s fun and healthy. It’s hard after school because activities are expensive and I get loads of homework and when it’s done it’s dark. Also in school, you have to change in front of everyone because the toilets are full.

With the school day being so long, I don’t have enough time to do sports (and too much homework).

I think that I get just enough exercise but sometimes it is hard to get enough with homework, school, etc.

I play hockey for a school team and a club.

I think that this is good and I never knew I did so much sports until I knew when they were writing them down.

All sports and exercise clubs are too expensive.

I think P.E. is too short (35 mins per week). I think the school’s sports facilities are very bad and they don’t care for exercising as much as anything else.

There isn’t really anywhere in my area where I can exercise. I live beside the Kingfisher Club but that’s too expensive.

I would love to do volleyball in school but I have no transport home; if I did, I would definitely do it. Also we only have 35 minutes of P.E. a week and we have complained but the Principal has done nothing about it.

I feel that not enough P.E. time is given to students.

We don’t get enough - P.E. time is 15 mins. C’mon!!

This school is sick. We are made change into our P.E. uniform in class and not allowed take a shower afterwards and there are no facilities.

I would like to have longer P.E. classes and proper changing rooms and sanitary bins in all the toilets.

I would like longer P.E. time in school and we only have 40 mins which is not enough. Most other schools have 1 hour, 20 mins for P.E.

I think there should be more facilities in the school.

I would like to do more exercise but I never can really push myself to do so with all the homework and *****

I think we need more P.E. at school and more equipment.

I wish I could be more active but I really don't have the time because of homework, studying and tests and I get worn out easily.

I wish we could have more P.E. time. We only have 40 mins.

I enjoy sport, exercising, etc., but I do not have a lot of time but I manage to exercise for a short time every day.

We only have 35 mins a week of P.E. I don't have enough time to do activities after school because we get too much homework.

I enjoy sport and exercise but I think we should have more sports in school. We only have 35 mins P.E. and we only get to choose from three after school sports.

I think in my school 35 mins of P.E. time is bad and there should be more of a variety of competitive games, i.e. badminton, soccer, etc. There are no changing facilities to which we can avail of (only the bathroom or classroom).

I eat well. I get a lot of exercise. I may even be fitter than the average teen.

They should have more sports facilities in the Knocknacarra area, e.g. a Sports Centre, because there is not much in the area.

I think that at school there should be P.E. a few times in the week (we only have it once for 35 mins) for people who other than at school don't get a chance to exercise. Schools should have more clubs, especially at lunch time.

In Knocknacarra, there are none and there is a population much bigger than Tuam and Ballina.

I enjoy P.E. most of the time but we only have 35 mins a week and we don't have showers. I wish we had a double P.E. class.

I do enjoy walking as an exercise but I dislike football, rugby, camogie, soccer, etc. I would have liked to join the basketball and volleyball team, but I have piano lessons and speech and drama class on those particular days.

I do enjoy sports and exercising but there is not nearly enough classes and facilities in Galway. On the school basketball B team, we never get as many games as the A team. It is unfair.

In our school, there are not enough facilities so I do not do as much exercise as I would like to. Also we only get 35 mins of P.E. a week which I think is pathetic.

I do hockey at school and play on the school team. (Hockey was not on the list on the front page).

I love playing sport and having fun, but I don't like competitions unless with my friends. I get too nervous and play badly. There aren't many areas with courts or pitches for people to use freely.

I enjoy taking exercise as I love dancing, running, etc. I would love to be able to walk/cycle to school. I don't watch much T.V. but sometimes I cannot go out because of homework. I think we should get less homework and more time to go out and about running and doing more exercise.

More P.E. time.

The ***** P.E. gear isn't nice.

I am not so much into sports. I prefer dancing and acting but I do a lot of walking. I would like a gym to go to but I am underage.

I am quite a sporty person so I enjoy a lot of hobbies. I hope I have helped you with your survey.

I think we should have way more classes of P.E. a week. We only have one class a week for 40 mins.

I also play hockey once a week for an hour and a half.

I would love if this school had more after school and during school activities (e.g. judo, swimming, tennis and horse riding).

I hope this is to improve sports facilities or to give us a better P.E. time in school because we only get 40 mins per week which is "crap"!! We should get an hour because young people today are very unfit compared to years ago.

I enjoy sports and exercise. I exercise a lot to make sure I stay a size 6. I do not want to get fat. Also it is a great way to meet new friends.

I would like to take part in more activities but there are not enough facilities for the things I would like to do.

I'm lucky as there are plenty of facilities near me but in some parts of Galway there are in no way enough facilities.

I think that there should be more after school activities.

I have hobbies/sports outside of school which I enjoy but I feel the school places too much emphasis on academic work and not enough on physical.

As a sporty person, I feel we do not get enough P.E. time and with this I feel I will fall behind in fitness.

I love doing sports but I feel there isn't enough facilities, e.g. a public basketball court, tennis court, etc.

You need more time for P.E. in schools because I think a lot of people enjoy playing sports with each other.

Appendix 5

Summary of Results

Summary Of Questionnaire Results. (total %)													
Q.no	Question	Male		Female		Age - 1 12,13		Age - 2 14,15		Age - 3 16,17		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Q1	Main mode of transport usually used												
	Car	171	44	213	51	281	50	39	40	64	44	384	47
	Bus	111	28	132	32	172	30	33	34	39	27	244	30
	Walk	61	16	67	16	82	14	14	14	32	22	128	16
	Cycle	55	14	10	2	45	8	11	11	9	6	65	8
Q2	Distance from home to school (miles)												
	0-3	231	61	260	67	343	64	56	60	92	66	491	64
	4-7	105	28	80	21	129	24	26	28	31	22	185	24
	8-11	29	8	30	8	40	8	9	10	10	7	59	8
	12-40	14	4	18	5	22	4	3	3	7	5	32	4
Q3	Travel time from home to school (minutes)												
	0-5	45	11	55	13	70	12	15	16	15	10	100	12
	6-10	86	22	93	23	127	22	11	12	41	29	179	22
	11-20	179	45	157	38	240	42	45	47	51	35	336	42
	21-30	59	15	80	20	99	18	15	16	25	17	139	17
	31-60	25	6	26	6	30	5	10	10	12	8	51	6
Q4A	Activities students participate in												
	Aerobics	7	2	51	12	31	5	6	6	21	15	58	7
	Badminton	36	9	78	19	80	14	11	11	23	16	114	14
	Basketball	156	39	207	50	293	51	32	33	39	27	364	45
	Camogie/Hurling	80	20	50	12	101	18	10	10	19	13	130	16
	Canoeing	37	9	29	7	52	9	9	9	5	4	66	8
	Cycling	162	41	214	51	285	50	37	38	54	37	376	46
	Dancing (Irish)	10	3	39	9	39	7	5	5	5	3	49	6
	Dancing (disco, street)	51	13	155	37	155	23	23	24	50	35	206	26
	Football	237	59	138	33	285	50	33	34	58	40	376	46
	Golf	111	28	22	5	106	18	10	10	17	12	133	16
	Gymnastics	15	4	20	5	27	5	2	2	6	4	35	4
	Hillwalking	24	326	32	8	41	7	5	5	10	7	56	7
	Horse Riding	28	7	60	15	57	10	15	16	16	11	88	11
	Jogging	87	22	81	20	129	23	12	12	27	19	168	21
	Martial Arts	32	8	30	7	43	8	9	9	10	7	62	8
	Rowing	12	3	8	2	11	2	2	2	7	5	20	2
	Rugby	97	24	15	4	87	15	17	18	8	6	112	14
	Soccer	282	71	140	34	319	56	42	43	62	43	423	52
	Squash	22	6	22	5	32	6	2	2	10	7	44	5
	Swimming	173	43	228	55	306	53	38	39	57	39	401	49
	Tennis	85	21	111	27	153	27	17	18	26	18	196	24
	Volleyball	7	2	73	18	63	11	8	8	9	6	80	10
	Walking	106	27	285	68	259	45	43	44	90	62	392	48
	Weight lifting	38	10	12	3	23	4	11	11	16	11	50	6

Q4B	Activities students would like to participate in												
Aerobics	19	5	92	22	70	12	12	12	30	21	112	14	
Badminton	45	11	48	12	74	13	13	13	6	4	93	11	
Basketball	59	15	32	8	71	13	12	12	8	6	91	11	
Camogie/Hurling	14	4	36	9	41	7	2	2	8	6	51	6	
Canoeing	107	27	122	29	165	29	22	23	43	30	230	28	
Cycling	28	7	19	5	33	6	4	4	11	8	48	6	
Dancing (Irish)	5	1	24	6	18	3	2	2	9	6	29	4	
Dancing (disco, street)	35	9	73	18	64	11	19	20	26	18	109	13	
Football	18	5	25	6	31	5	5	5	7	5	43	5	
Golf	65	16	14	3	59	10	6	6	14	10	79	10	
Gymnastics	19	5	102	25	85	15	14	14	22	15	121	15	
Hillwalking	28	7	22	5	36	6	6	6	8	6	50	6	
Horse Riding	39	10	119	29	116	20	13	13	30	21	159	19	
Jogging	11	3	17	4	19	3	4	4	5	3	28	3	
Martial Arts	104	26	99	24	123	21	30	31	51	35	204	25	
Rowing	83	21	54	13	103	18	10	10	25	17	138	17	
Rugby	59	15	34	8	66	12	13	13	14	10	93	12	
Soccer	23	6	21	5	33	6	6	6	5	3	44	5	
Squash	29	7	25	6	39	7	8	8	8	6	55	7	
Swimming	27	7	48	12	49	9	7	7	20	14	76	9	
Tennis	46	12	47	11	73	13	8	8	13	9	94	12	
Volleyball	29	7	45	11	58	10	3	3	14	10	75	9	
Walking	7	2	3	1	7	1	2	2	1	1	10	1	
Weight lifting	90	23	20	5	76	13	13	13	22	15	111	14	
Q5	How often do you get the opportunity to participate in your favourite activities												
	<i>Opportunity to participate at home/private</i>												
never	24	7	12	3	17	3	6	7	13	10	36	5	
occasionally	77	21	120	32	130	25	21	25	46	34	197	27	
frequently	110	30	113	31	160	31	23	27	40	29	223	30	
much of the time	151	42	126	34	205	40	35	41	37	27	277	38	
	<i>Opportunity to participate at club/centre</i>												
never	52	15	105	30	85	18	23	28	49	35	157	23	
occasionally	58	16	66	19	87	18	13	16	24	17	124	18	
frequently	105	30	85	25	140	29	19	23	31	22	190	27	
much of the time	140	39	88	26	165	35	28	34	35	25	228	33	
	<i>Opportunity to participate at school</i>												
never	54	15	71	19	67	13	16	19	42	30	125	17	
occasionally	121	33	156	42	189	37	32	38	57	41	278	38	
frequently	97	26	98	26	151	29	23	27	21	15	195	26	
much of the time	95	26	46	12	108	21	13	16	20	14	141	19	
Q6	Participation outside of school hours												
	370	93	377	91	533	93	85	88	129	89	747	92	

Q7													
No. of day per week students participate in sport outside of school hours													
	0	11	3	20	5	17	3	7	7	8	6	32	4
	1	15	4	48	12	41	7	8	8	14	10	63	8
	2	55	14	78	19	87	16	19	20	27	19	133	17
	3	78	20	82	20	109	19	21	22	30	22	160	20
	4	68	17	67	16	99	18	13	14	23	17	135	17
	5	61	16	41	10	81	14	10	11	11	8	102	13
	6	40	10	19	5	48	9	6	6	5	4	59	7
	7	61	16	51	12	80	14	11	12	21	15	112	14
Q8													
How often students enjoy P.E													
	always	153	40	133	32	210	37	40	42	37	26	287	36
	often	111	29	113	27	176	31	19	20	29	20	224	28
	sometimes	81	21	91	22	126	22	19	20	27	19	172	22
	rarely	28	7	31	8	37	7	8	8	14	10	59	7
	never	14	4	46	11	16	3	9	10	35	25	60	8
Q9													
Reasons for not enjoying P.E													
	Don't like the P.E. uniform	6	7	22	17	22	16	4	15	2	4	28	13
	Not good at sport	16	19	36	27	29	21	7	27	16	30	52	24
	Too competitive	7	8	16	12	16	12	2	8	5	9	23	11
	Don't like the activities	58	68	86	65	91	66	15	58	38	72	144	66
	Not competitive enough	18	21	14	11	17	12	6	23	9	17	32	15
	Poor changing facilities	12	14	56	42	37	27	9	35	22	42	68	31
	I get teased at P.E.	4	5	5	4	6	4	0	0	3	6	9	4
Q10													
Reasons for participation in sport and physical activity													
	to improve and maintain health	245	23	214	19	321	21	58	21	80	20	459	21
	to relax	44	4	39	3	49	3	13	5	21	5	83	4
	to feel in good shape	148	14	188	17	228	15	43	17	65	17	336	16
	for fun and enjoyment	310	30	324	29	464	30	73	28	98	25	635	30
	to meet new people	46	4	68	6	90	6	8	3	16	4	114	5
	to loose weight	32	3	111	10	81	5	19	7	43	11	143	7
	to mix with friends	130	12	152	13	207	14	26	10	50	13	283	13
	don't have a choice	7	1	11	1	11	1	3	1	4	1	18	1
	to win in competition	88	8	28	3	82	5	16	6	18	5	116	5
Q11													
How often do you participate in the following													
Reading books for pleasure													
	never	109	29	43	11	91	17	24	26	37	26	152	19
	once a month	81	21	90	22	113	21	20	22	39	27	171	22
	1-2 days per week	91	24	71	18	126	23	17	19	19	13	162	21
	3-4 days per week	51	13	54	13	86	16	10	11	9	6	105	13

5-6 days per week	18	5	58	14	55	10	6	7	15	10	76	10
everyday of the week	31	8	88	22	79	14	15	16	25	17	119	15

<i>Reading magazines and newspapers</i>												
never	32	9	7	2	30	6	5	5	4	3	39	5
once a month	31	8	64	16	74	14	10	11	11	8	95	12
1-2 days per week	131	35	134	33	178	32	33	36	55	38	265	34
3-4 days per week	81	21	93	23	121	22	23	25	30	21	174	22
5-6 days per week	38	10	51	13	68	12	6	7	15	10	89	11
everyday of the week	65	17	58	14	78	14	15	16	30	21	123	16
<i>Listening to music/CD's etc.</i>												
never	19	5	1	0	17	3	2	2	1	1	20	3
once a month	8	2	7	2	13	2	0	0	2	1	15	2
1-2 days per week	63	16	29	7	76	14	11	12	5	4	92	12
3-4 days per week	77	20	38	9	85	15	12	13	18	13	115	14
5-6 days per week	67	17	60	15	102	18	10	11	15	10	127	16
everyday of the week	155	40	274	67	268	48	59	63	103	72	429	54
<i>Going to the cinema</i>												
never	35	9	14	3	30	5	6	6	13	9	49	6
once a month	227	59	294	72	356	65	57	60	109	76	521	66
1-2 days per week	111	29	93	23	157	29	30	32	17	2	204	26
3-4 days per week	4	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
5-6 days per week	1	0	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	0
everyday of the week	4	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	5	1
<i>Gardening</i>												
never	269	72	297	76	375	70	73	79	119	84	566	74
once a month	64	17	76	20	111	21	12	13	17	12	140	18
1-2 days per week	29	8	14	4	34	6	6	7	3	2	43	6
3-4 days per week	8	2	2	1	9	2	1	1	0	0	10	1
5-6 days per week	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	3	0
everyday of the week	3	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	4	1
<i>Playing with the computer/games console</i>												
never	17	4	82	20	59	11	14	15	26	18	99	12
once a month	22	6	89	22	72	13	15	16	24	17	111	14
1-2 days per week	114	29	112	28	165	30	22	24	39	27	226	29
3-4 days per week	102	26	64	16	123	22	17	19	26	18	166	21
5-6 days per week	55	14	35	9	72	13	7	8	11	8	90	11

everyday of the week	79	20	21	5	67	12	17	19	17	12	100	13
Watching T.V												
never	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	1
once a month	3	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	4	1
1-2 days per week	30	8	21	5	38	7	5	5	8	6	51	6
3-4 days per week	43	11	30	7	62	11	5	5	6	4	73	9
5-6 days per week	61	16	53	13	86	15	26	17	12	8	114	14
everyday of the week	250	64	307	74	374	66	67	70	117	81	557	69
Watching a video												
never	24	6	13	3	24	4	6	6	7	5	37	5
once a month	80	21	140	35	150	28	26	28	44	31	220	28
1-2 days per week	175	46	173	44	252	47	36	38	60	42	348	45
3-4 days per week	52	14	38	10	64	12	13	14	13	9	90	12
5-6 days per week	18	5	18	5	22	4	6	6	8	6	36	5
everyday of the week	30	8	15	4	28	5	7	7	11	8	45	6

Going to a disco/night-club												
never	140	38	137	35	225	43	28	30	24	17	277	36
once a month	184	50	216	55	274	52	51	55	76	54	400	53
1-2 days per week	34	9	39	10	24	5	13	14	36	26	73	10
3-4 days per week	4	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	4	1
5-6 days per week	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	3	0
everyday of the week	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	4	1
Playing a musical instrument												
never	267	73	210	54	324	61	65	72	89	63	477	63
once a month	11	3	44	11	40	8	4	4	11	8	55	7
1-2 days per week	21	6	52	13	60	11	4	4	9	6	73	10
3-4 days per week	20	6	34	9	37	7	5	6	12	9	54	7
5-6 days per week	15	4	18	5	25	5	4	4	4	3	33	4
everyday of the week	32	9	34	9	42	8	8	9	16	11	66	9

Q12

Students perceptions as to whether they take enough exercise

291	73	203	49	371	65	57	59	66	46	494	60
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Q13

Reasons for non participation

not the sporty type	28	12	53	10	45	10	11	12	25	12	81	11
not enough time	49	20	136	27	106	23	28	31	52	25	185	24
not enough energy	18	7	28	5	25	5	8	9	13	6	46	6
need to rest/relax	12	5	15	3	16	3	4	4	7	3	27	4

too expensive	6	3	16	3	11	3	1	1	11	5	22	3
do not enjoy exercise	9	4	11	2	16	3	1	1	3	2	20	3
too much homework	57	24	116	23	116	25	21	23	37	18	173	24
don't want to get injured	3	1	5	1	7	2	0	0	1	0	8	1
too heavy	11	5	20	4	20	4	3	3	8	4	31	5
not attractive in sports wear	5	2	15	3	14	3	1	1	5	2	20	3
no need to	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	1
not fashionable	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
my parents	3	1	5	1	4	1	2	2	2	1	8	1
none of my friends exercise	11	5	14	3	19	4	1	1	5	2	325	3
not enough facilities	29	12	76	15	63	14	8	9	35	17	105	14

Summary Of Activity Diary Results						
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Physically active modes of transport						
Travel walk	60	16	75	20	135	39
Travel cycle	24	6	10	3	34	9
Activities participated in						
Aerobics	1	0	22	6	23	6
Badminton	5	1	13	3	18	5
Basketball	49	13	77	21	126	34
Camogie/Hurling	26	7	16	4	42	11
Canoeing	1	0	1	0	2	1
Cycling	29	8	29	8	58	16
Dancing (Irish)	3	1	11	3	14	4
Dancing (disco, street)	2	1	10	3	12	3
Gaelic football	44	12	18	5	62	17
Golf	17	5	1	0	18	5
Gymnastics	24	6	4	1	28	8
Hillwalking	0	0	1	0	1	0
Hockey	1	0	24	6	25	8
Horse riding	2	1	16	4	18	5
Jogging	15	4	52	14	67	18
Martial arts	8	2	5	1	13	3
Rowing	3	1	4	1	7	2
Rugby	27	7	1	0	28	8
Soccer	113	30	48	13	161	43
Squash	2	1	2	1	4	1
Swimming	30	8	13	3	43	12
Table tennis	5	1	0	0	5	1
Tennis	9	2	20	5	29	8
Volleyball	0	0	23	6	23	6
Walking	64	17	113	30	177	48
Weight lifting	5	1	0	0	5	1
Athletics	18	5	48	13	66	18
Type of activity						
Team sport	276	53	247	47		
Individual sport	310	59	412	57		
Time spent on activities (mins)						
up to 300	19	13	38	25	57	20
300-600	40	28	44	29	84	28
600-900	47	32	36	24	83	28
900-1200	23	16	17	11	40	13
1200 upwards	16	11	18	12	34	11

Intensity (6 = Very, very light, 19 = very, very hard)						
6-10	22	15	29	19	51	17
10-14	101	70	101	66	202	68
15-18	22	15	22	15	44	15
18 upwards	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activity index						
up to 3000	16	11	30	20	46	16
3001-6000	31	21	31	20	62	21
6000-9000	30	21	40	26	70	23
9000-12000	30	21	19	12	49	16
12000-15000	21	14	16	10	37	12
15000 upwards	17	12	17	11	34	11
Time spent on P.E per week (mins)						
0	21	15	34	22	55	19
up to 30	7	5	16	11	23	8
30-60	87	63	60	40	147	51
60-90	20	14	39	26	59	20
90 upwards	4	3	3	2	7	3
Time spent reading for pleasure (hours)						
0	36	27	22	15	59	21
up to 1	30	22	17	11	47	16
1-3	37	27	42	28	79	27
3-6	22	16	38	26	60	21
6-9	10	7	19	13	29	10
9 upwards	3	2	11	7	14	5
Time spent watching T.V (hours)						
up to 2	8	6	2	1	10	3
2-5	15	10	20	13	35	12
5-10	41	29	55	37	96	33
10-15	40	28	44	30	84	29
15-20	24	17	17	11	41	14
20 upwards	16	11	11	7	27	9
Time spent playing with the computer/games console (hours)						
0	32	23	69	47	101	35
up to 2	30	22	46	31	76	26
2-5	40	29	20	13	60	20
5-10	22	16	10	7	32	11
10 upwards	15	11	4	3	19	6
Time spent doing homework (hours)						
up to 2	14	10	8	5	22	8
2-5	27	19	28	19	55	19
5-10	72	50	72	48	144	49
10-15	22	15	29	20	51	17
15 upwards	9	6	12	8	21	7

Time spent working (in the home e.g. house work, or paid work e.g. in a shop) (hours)						
0	26	19	13	9	39	14
up to 1	28	20	11	7	39	14
1-3	29	21	45	31	74	26
3-5	30	22	27	19	57	20
5-10	20	14	23	16	43	15
10-15	2	1	10	7	12	4
15 upwards	4	3	15	10	19	7