

The 2019 SSF National Sports-Life Survey of Children and Young People

● Executive Summary December 2019, Japan

2019



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Introduction

Since 2001, the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) has conducted its Sports-Life Survey of Ages 10 to 19 on children between those ages who reside in Japan, with the goal of achieving “Sport for Everyone” by understanding the exercise and sports participation rates of children during after-school periods and on holidays as well as the sports environments that surround these children. Then in 2009, the SSF also began conducting the Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 9 on young children in order to better ascertain the factors that lead to the polarization of exercise and sports participation observed in children aged 10–19 and the turning points for that phenomenon.

Beginning with the previous set of surveys in 2017, the target age groups were changed to 4–11 years and 12–21 years; these surveys on exercise and sports participation from preschool through university age in Japan are conducted every two years.

Methods

- 1 **Population:** 4-21 year olds living in Japan
- 2 **Sample numbers:** 【4-11 year olds】 2,400
【12-21 year olds】 3,000
- 3 **Locations:** 225 (205 urban areas and 20 rural areas)
- 4 **Extraction method:** 2-staged stratified random sampling
- 5 **Survey methods:** Questionnaire sheet left at home
- 6 **Survey period:** June-July 2019
- 7 **Collected questionnaires (rate):**
【4-11 year olds】 1,538 (64.1%)
【12-21 year olds】 1,675 (55.8%)
- 8 **Survey contents:** Exercise and sports frequency, time and intensity, sports facilities, gyms, teams, clubs, liking exercise and sports, self-evaluation of physical fitness, sports spectating, favorite athletes, sports volunteering, sleep time, time using media(screen time), frequency of exercise and doing sports with family, etc.
- 9 **Scope of exercise and sports:** Activities and free play that takes place after kindergarten or preschool, as well as school club activities and activities during recess periods, are included. However, lessons received at kindergarten, preschool, or school are not included, nor are school events such as sports days or race tournaments.

Exercise and sports frequency

● 4-11 year olds Exercise and sports frequency groups

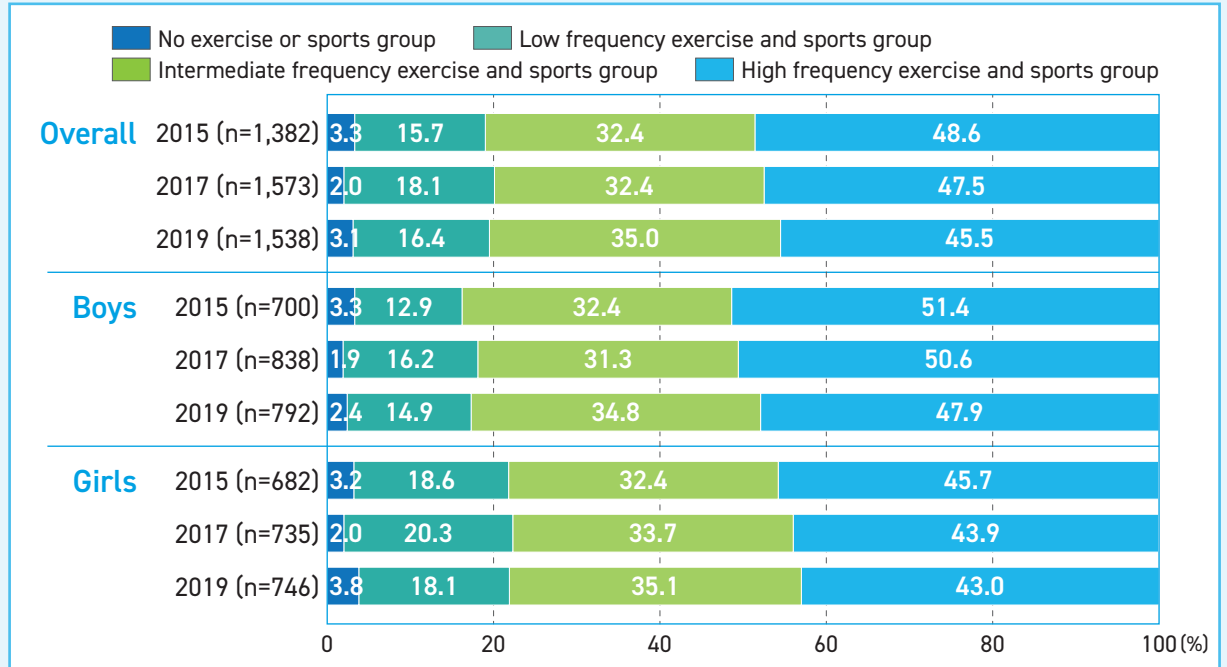
[Table 1] Exercise and sports frequency groups

Frequency	Standards
No exercise or sports group	Doing absolutely no exercise or sports in the past 1 year (0 times/year)
Low frequency exercise and sports group	Once a year or more, less than 3 times a week (1-155 times/year)
Intermediate frequency exercise and sports group	3 times a week or more, less than 7 times a week (156-363 times/year)
High frequency exercise and sports group	7 times a week or more (364 times a week or more/year)

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11

The 4-11 year old group was divided into the 4 groups of “the no exercise or sports group,” “low frequency exercise and sports group,” “intermediate frequency exercise and sports group” and “high frequency exercise and sports group” based on standards set from exercise and sports frequency over the past year (Table 1).

[Fig.1] Annual trends in exercise and sports frequency groups (4-11 year olds : overall / by gender)



*1) 2015 was calculated by adding the data for ten- and eleven-year-olds from Sports-Life Survey of Ages 10 to 19.
Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11

Annual trends in exercise and sports frequency groups (ages 4–11) are indicated in Figure 1. At 45.5% overall, the high-frequency group was the most common in the 2019 survey, followed by the intermediate-frequency group (35.0%), the low-frequency group (16.4%), and the no-exercise group (3.1%). The ratio of the high-frequency group has exhibited a declining trend since 2015.

In terms of gender, the high-frequency rate for boys was 4.9points higher than that for girls, with 47.9% of boys and 43.0% of girls in the high-frequency group. The ratio of the high-frequency group has declined for both boys and girls since 2015.

● 12-21 year olds Exercise and sports level

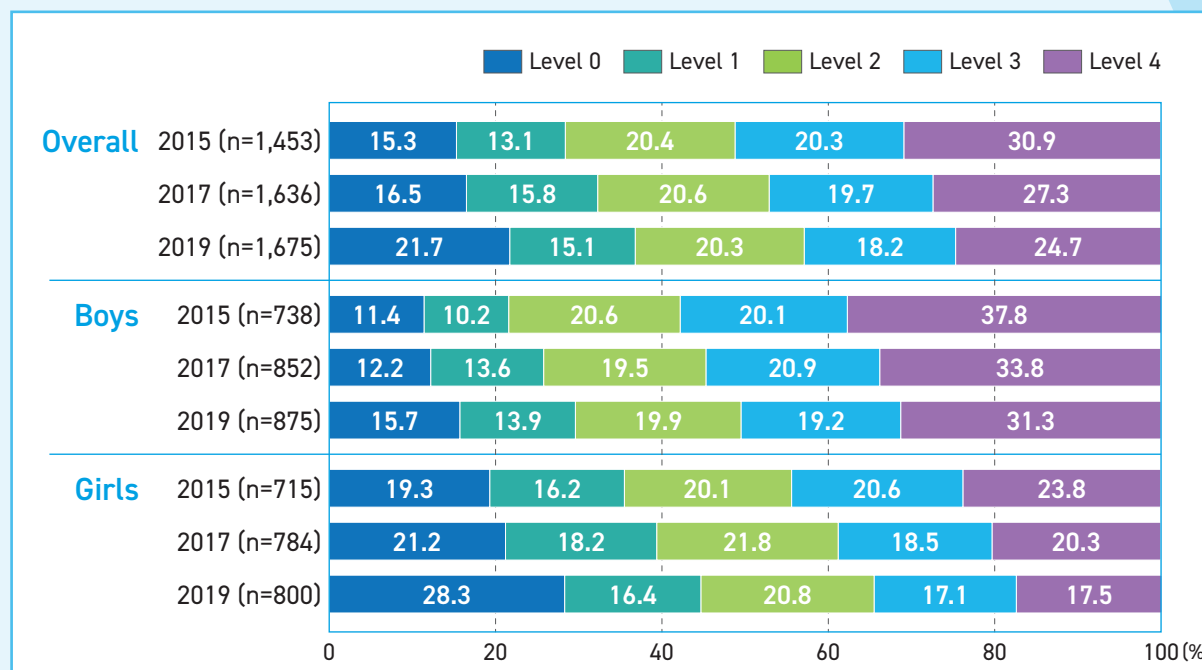
[Table 2] Exercise and sports level

Level	Standards
0	Non-participation (0 time/year)
1	At least once during the year but less than once a week (1-51 times/year)
2	At least once a week but less than 5 times a week (52-259 times/year)
3	At least 5 times a week (260 times or more/year)
4	At least 5 times a week (260 times or more/year) with a duration of 120 minutes, and with more than moderate intensity

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The 12-21 year olds were classified into 5 levels from level 0 to level 4 based on standards set from exercise and sports frequency, time and intensity over the past year (Table 2).

[Fig.2] Annual trends in exercise and sports level (12-21 year olds : overall / by gender)



*1) 2015 was calculated by analyzing the data for twelve- through nineteen-year-olds from Sports-Life Survey of Ages 10 to 19. Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Annual trends in exercise and sports participation levels (ages 12-21) are indicated in Figure 2. The overall rates in the 2019 survey were 21.7% for Level 0, 15.1% for Level 1, 20.3% for Level 2, 18.2% for Level 3, and 24.7% for Level 4. Looking at the annual trends, Level 4, which indicates high frequency and intensity, is declining, while Level 0, which indicates no exercise or sports, is increasing.

In terms of gender, Level 4 was the highest for boys (31.3%), while Level 0 was the highest for girls (28.3%). Both boys and girls exhibit annual trends of a declining Level 4 and an increasing Level 0. In particular, Level 0 has increased 9points for girls since 2015.

Exercise and sports types

[Table 3] Exercise and sport types often carried out over the past year (multiple answers)

4-11 year olds (n=1,491)			12-21 year olds (n=1,312)		
Rank	Type of exercise / sport	%	Rank	Type of exercise / sport	%
1	Tag	52.6	1	Soccer	21.5
2	Swimming	34.1	2	Basketball	20.0
3	Dodgeball	29.0	3	Jogging/running	17.5
4	Bicycle riding	27.6	4	Badminton	16.5
5	Soccer	26.0	5	Muscle training	13.5
6	Swings	25.7		Volleyball	13.5
7	Jump rope (including long jump rope)	24.4	7	Table tennis	13.0
8	Race	17.9	8	Tag	11.9
9	Hide-and-seek	17.2	9	Baseball	11.5
10	Iron bar	17.0	10	Walking	11.1
11	Basketball	8.9	11	Swimming	10.1
12	Badminton	8.5	12	Bowling	8.9
13	Baseball	6.7	13	Soft tennis	8.2
14	Gymnastics (light gymnastics, morning radio calisthenics, etc.)	6.2	14	Track & Field	6.9
15	Catch	5.6	15	Jump rope (including long jump rope)	6.8
16	Unicycle	4.6	16	Catch	5.9
17	Table tennis	4.4		Dodgeball	5.9
18	Scooter	4.2	18	Tennis	5.6
19	Trampoline	3.6	19	Cycling	5.2
	Hip hop dance	3.6	20	Swings	4.8

Table 3 indicates the top twenty exercise or sports activities that were done often (on many occasions) in the past year.

For the 4–11 age group, “tag” was the highest at **52.6%**, followed by “swimming” at **34.1%**, “dodgeball” at **29.0%**, “bicycle riding” at **27.6%**, and “soccer” at **26.0%**.

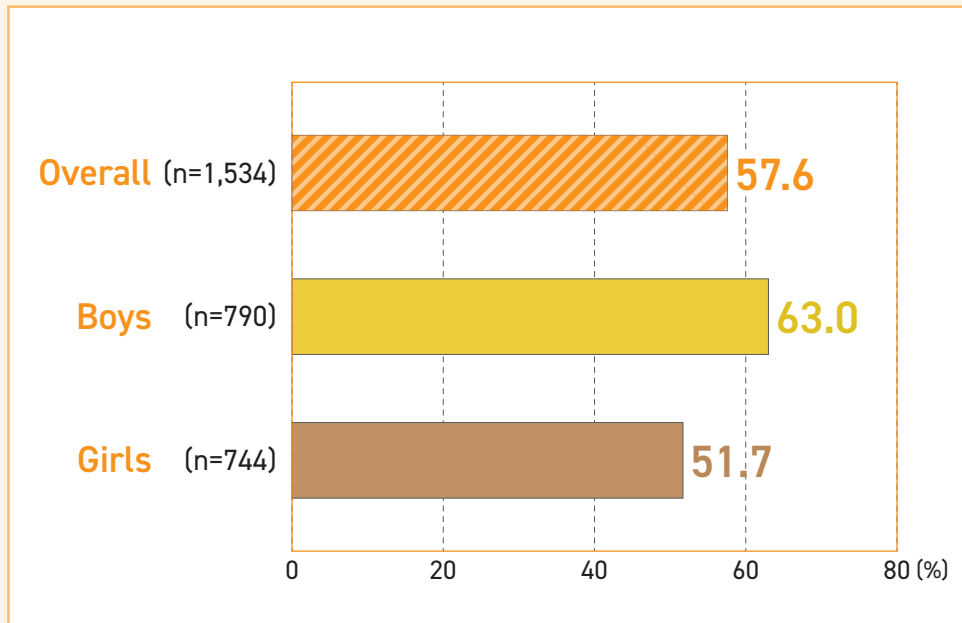
For the 12–21 age group, “soccer” was in first place at **21.5%**, followed by “basketball” at **20.0%**, “jogging/running” at **17.5%**, “badminton” at **16.5%**, and “muscle training” and “volleyball” at **13.5%** each.

*1) Types of exercise and sports carried out often: Type of exercise and/or sport carried out the most frequently among the exercises and sports carried out over the past year.

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11 and National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

- 4-11 year olds

[Fig. 3] Participation rate in sports teams/clubs
(4-11 year olds : overall / by gender)



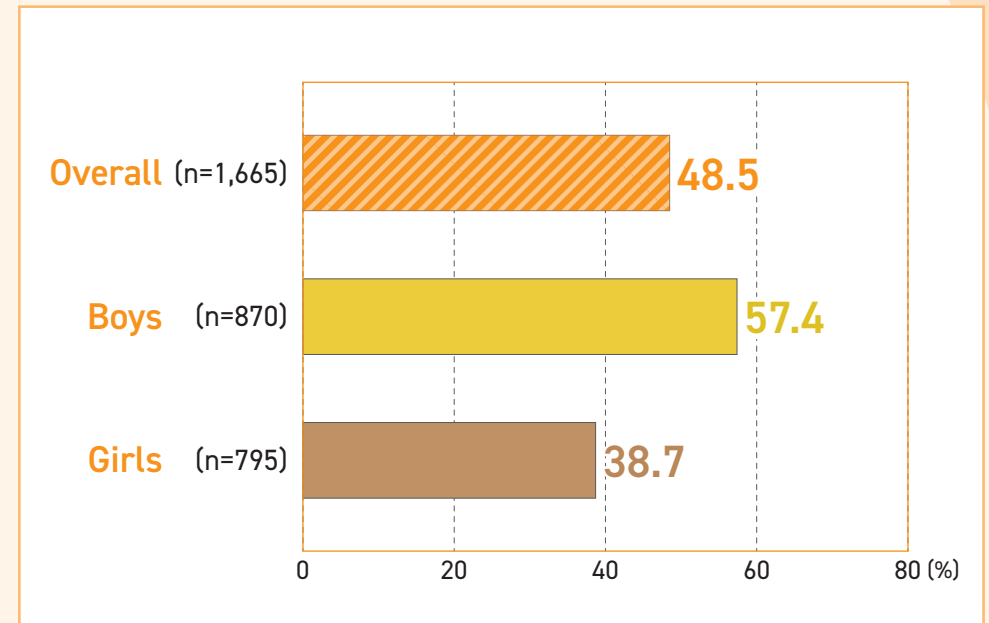
*1) Including school club activities, sports teams, private sports teams/clubs (swimming, gymnastics, etc.), regional sports teams/clubs (youth sports team, regional sports classes, etc.).
Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11

The participation rates in sports teams/clubs for ages 4–11 are indicated in **Figure 3**. The overall rate of participation in sports teams/clubs for ages 4–11 was **57.6%**.

In terms of gender, boys had a participation rate of **63.0%** and girls had a participation rate of **51.7%**.

- 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 4] Participation rate in sports teams/clubs
(12-21 year olds : overall / by gender)



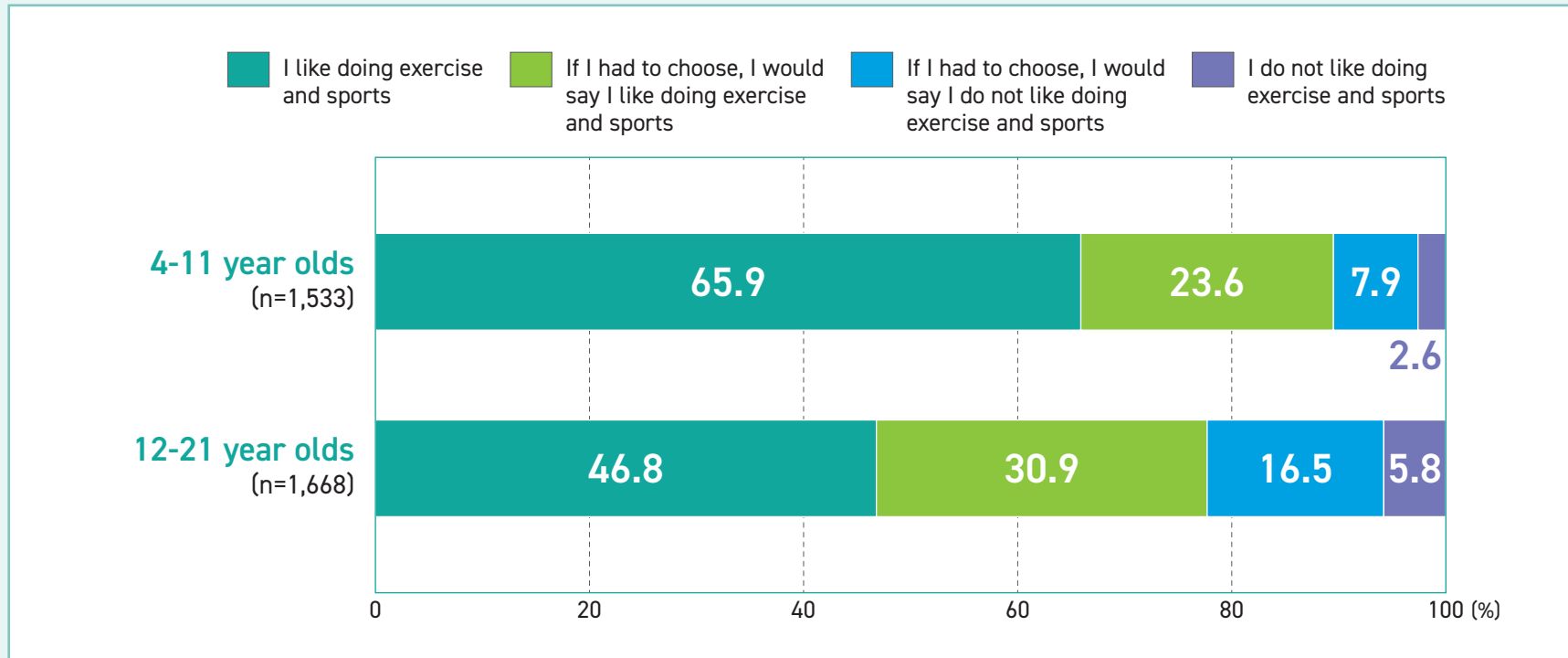
*1) Including school club activities, sports teams, private sports teams/clubs (swimming, gymnastics, etc.), regional sports teams/clubs (youth sports team, regional sports classes, etc.).
Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The participation rates in sports teams/clubs for ages 12–21 are indicated in **Figure 4**. The overall rate of participation in sports teams/clubs for ages 12–21 was **48.5%**.

In terms of gender, boys had a participation rate of **57.4%** and girls had a participation rate of **38.7%**.

Liking exercise and sports

[Fig. 5] Liking exercise and sports



Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children 4-11 and National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

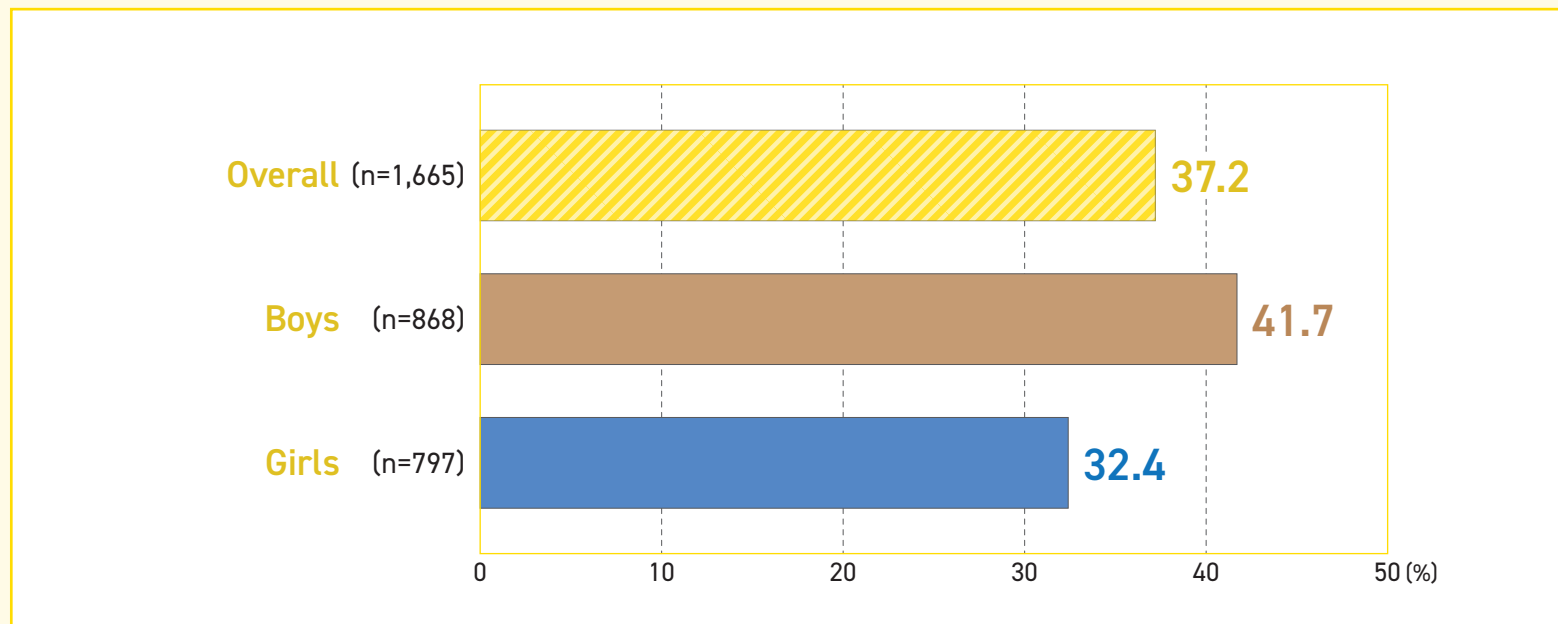
The rates of liking and disliking exercise and sports are indicated in **Figure 5**. For ages 4–11, “I like doing exercise and sports” was **65.9%**, “If I had to choose, I would say I like doing exercise and sports” was **23.6%**, “If I had to choose, I would say I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **7.9%**, and “I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **2.6%**.

For ages 12–21, “I like doing exercise and sports” was **46.8%**, “If I had to choose, I would say I like doing exercise and sports” was **30.9%**, “If I had to choose, I would say I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **16.5%**, and “I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **5.8%**.

1 Rate of live viewing of sports at the venue

• 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 6] Rate of live viewing of sports at the venue (12-21 year olds : overall / by gender)



Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The rates of live sports viewing for ages 12-21 are indicated in **Figure 6**.

Overall, **37.2%** of survey participants watched a sports

match at a gymnasium, stadium, or other facility in the past year. In terms of gender, **41.7%** of boys and **32.4%** of girls watched a live match.

Sports spectating

2 Type of sports viewed live at the venue

• 12-21 year olds

[Table 4] Type of sports viewed live at the venue by 12-21 year olds (overall / by gender : multiple answers)

Rank	Type of sport	Overall (n=1,665)	Boys (n=868)	Girl (n=797)
1	Professional baseball (NPB)	12.0	14.2	9.7
2	High school baseball	10.1	11.5	8.5
3	J League (J1, J2 and J3)	6.2	9.6	2.5
4	Basketball (high school, university, NBL, WJBL, etc.)	4.4	4.4	4.4
5	Soccer (high school, university, JFL, etc.)	3.7	5.0	2.4
	I have not viewed sports live	62.8	58.3	67.6

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Table 4 indicates the sports that were viewed live by the 12-21 age group.

Overall, “professional baseball (NPB)” had the highest viewing rate at **12.0%**, followed by “high-school baseball” at **10.1%**, “J League (J1, J2, J3)” at **6.2%**, “basketball (high-school, university, NBL, WJBL, etc.)” at **4.4%**, and

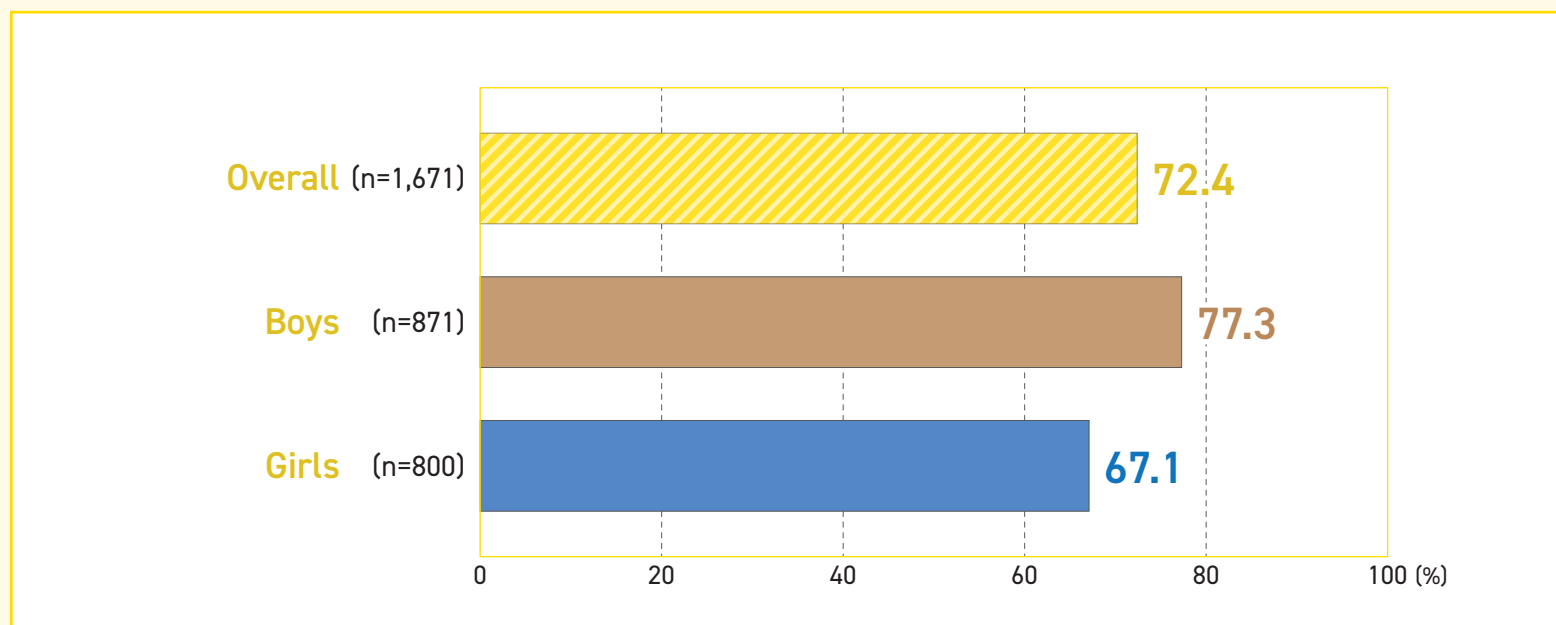
“soccer (high-school, university, JFL, etc.)” at **3.7%**.

For both boys and girls, “professional baseball (NPB)” had the highest viewing rate (**14.2%** for boys and **9.7%** for girls), followed by “high-school baseball” (**11.5%** for boys and **8.5%** for girls).

3 Sports viewing rates via media

- 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 7] Sports viewing rate via media such as television and smartphones
(ages 12-21 : overall / by gender)



*1) Includes viewing through media such as television, smartphones, tablets, PCs, etc.

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

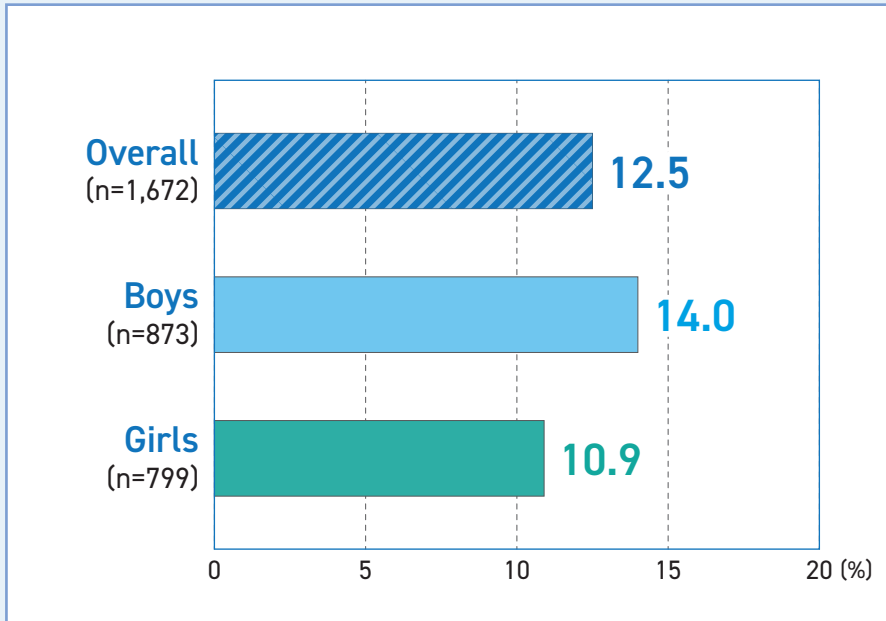
The rates of sports viewed through media such as television and smartphones for ages 12-21 are indicated in **Figure 7**. Overall, **72.4%** of survey participants viewed

a sports match using a television, smartphone, or other form of media in the past year. In terms of gender, **77.3%** of boys and **67.1%** of girls viewed a sports match via such media.

Sports volunteering

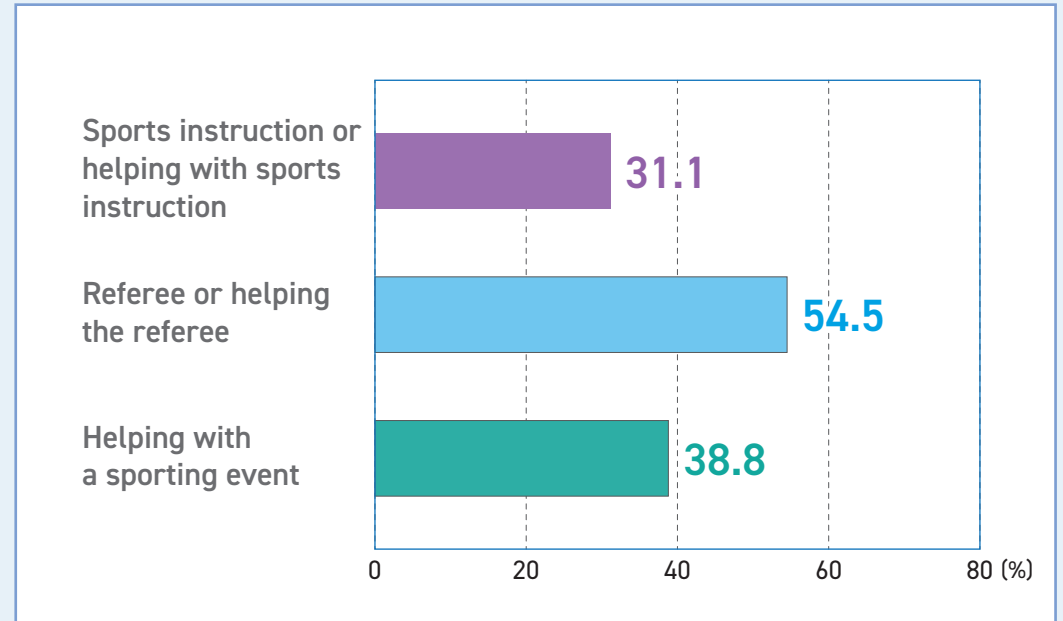
● 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 8] Sports volunteer rate (12-21 year olds : overall / by gender)



Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

[Fig. 9] Sports volunteer activities (12-21 year olds) (n=209 : Multiple answers)



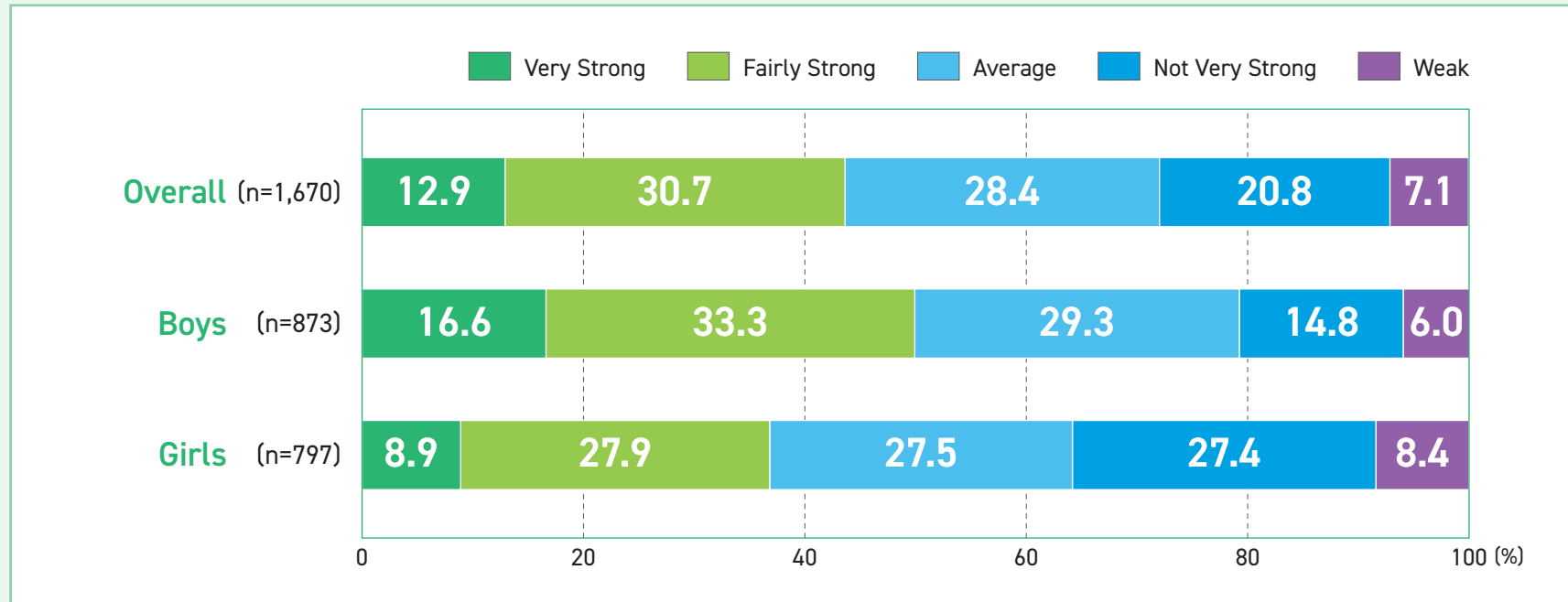
Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Figure 8 indicates the sports volunteering rates for ages 12–21. Overall, **12.5%** of subjects participated in sports volunteering in the past year. The sports volunteering rate for boys (**14.0%**) was higher than that for girls (**10.9%**).

When asked about the type of sports volunteering they participated in, most subjects responded with “referee or helping the referee (**54.5%**)”, followed by “helping with a sporting event (**38.8%**)” and “sports instruction or helping with sports instruction” (**31.1%**), as indicated in **Figure 9**.

- 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 10] Self-evaluation of physical strength (ages 12–21: overall / by gender)



Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

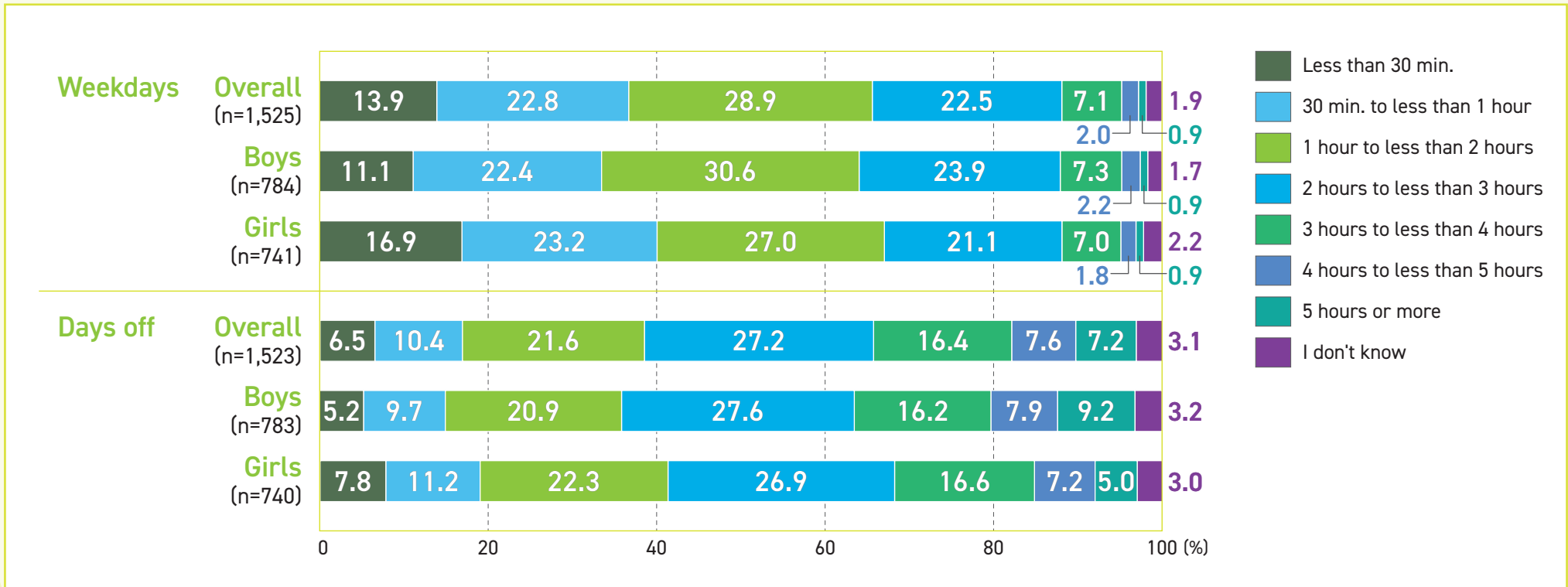
Subjects in the 12–21 age group were asked how they felt about their own physical strength. Overall, **12.9%** responded with “very strong,” **30.7%** with “fairly strong,” **28.4%** with “average,” **20.8%** with “not very strong,” and **7.1%** with “weak” (**Figure 10**).

In terms of gender, a total of **49.9%** of boys responded with “very strong” or “fairly strong,” which is **13.1 points** higher than that total for girls (**36.8%**).

Media usage time (screen time)

● 4-11 year olds

[Fig. 11] Media usage time (4-11 year olds : overall / by gender)



*1) Number of hours watching TV or DVD, using computer, video games (including TV, computer and cellular device games, etc.) or using smart phone per day outside of school class (including kindergarten and pre-school).

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11

Figure 11 indicates the media usage time (screen time) on weekdays and holidays for the 4–11 age group.

Regarding the media usage time per day (outside of lessons at kindergarten, preschool, or school), the highest reported answer for weekdays

was “1 hour to less than 2 hours” (28.9%) followed by “30 min. to less than 1 hour” (22.8%). For holidays, the most frequent response was “2 hours to less than 3 hours” (27.2%) followed by “1 hour to less than 2 hours” (21.6%).

● 12-21 year olds

[Fig. 12] Media usage time (12-21 year olds : overall / by gender)



*1) Number of hours watching TV or DVD, using computer, video games (including TV, computer and cellular device games, etc.) or using smart phone per day outside of school and/or work.
 Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Figure 12 indicates the media usage time (screen time) on weekdays and holidays for the 12–21 age group.

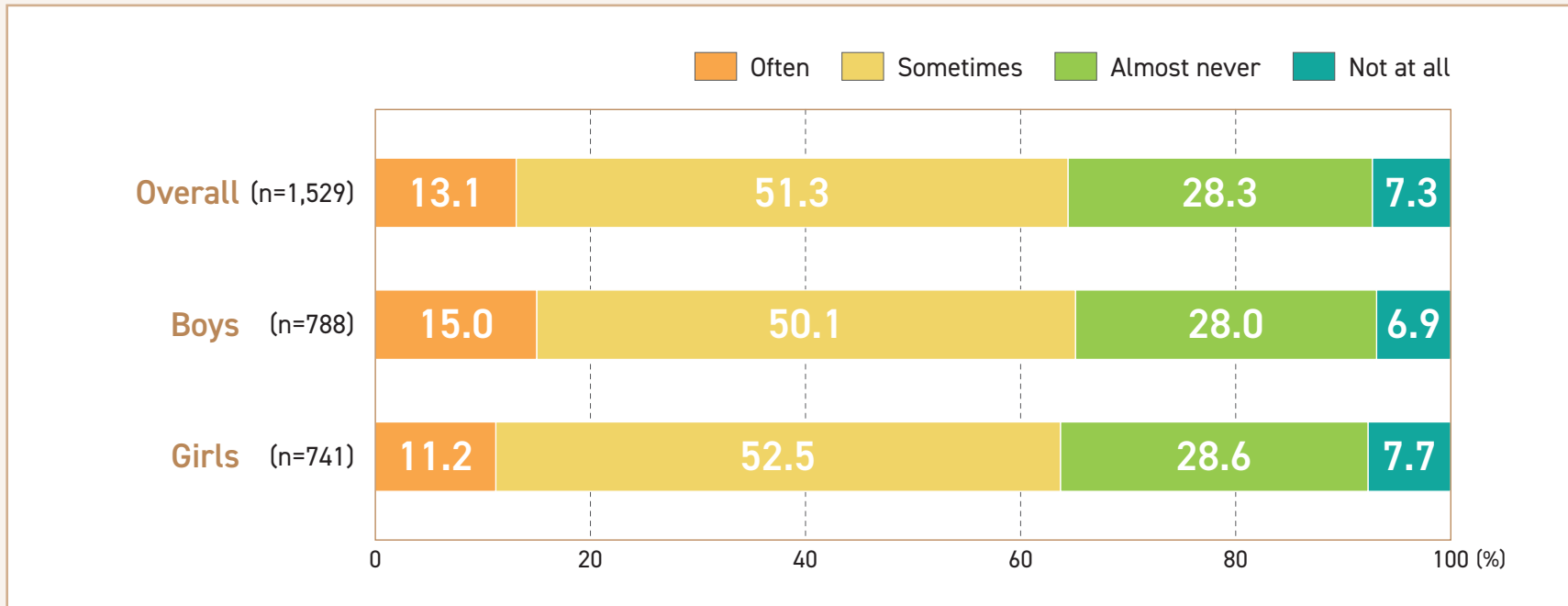
Regarding the media usage time per day (outside of work or lessons at school), the highest reported answer for weekdays was “2 hours to less than

3 hours” (26.8%) followed by “1 hour to less than 2 hours” (20.0%). For holidays, the most frequent response was “5 hours or more” (22.5%); the rate of individuals who use media for longer periods of time on holidays compared to weekdays is increasing.

Exercise, sports and physical play with family

• 4-11 year olds

[Fig. 13] Exercise, sports and physical play with family (4-11 year olds) (overall / by gender of child)



*1) Family indicate parents and guardians.

Source: 2019 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Children Ages 4 to 11

Figure 13 indicates the frequency of engaging in exercise or sports together with family for the 4–11 age group.

Parents or guardians of respondents in the 4–11 age group were asked: “Do you or another family member regularly engage in exercise, sports, or physical play together with the child participating in the survey?”

Overall, 13.1% responded with “often,” 51.3% with “sometimes,” 28.3% with “almost never,” and 7.3% with “not at all.” A total of 64.4% of children aged 4–11 engaged in exercise, sports, or physical play together with a family member “often” or “sometimes.”

This total number was 65.1% for boys and 63.7% for girls.

Towards the Realization of "Sport for Everyone"

The Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) was established in March 1991.

Since the establishment, SSF has implemented a wide range of activities such as survey research, grant programs, and international cultural exchange in order to promote the enjoyment of sports by "anyone, anytime, anywhere".

As Japan has faced the declining birthrate and the aging society, the public awareness about the importance of sports and healthy lifestyles has increased. Despite this fact, over the past ten years, the number of people who are unaccustomed to playing sports has remained steady at five out of ten. SSF believes that it is our responsibility to change this shocking statistic while helping create a healthy, dynamic environment for everyone, the mission of SSF.

The first decade of the 21st century has now gone and we have begun to see a push toward new sports policies by the government. SSF celebrated its 20th anniversary amid the ongoing changes, and has decided to enhance the research function, which compiles and analyzes a wide variety of survey data. We are thus able to proactively propose governmental policy on local and national levels and propose programs to sports organizations. In addition, we are also able to develop and implement programs that embody our vision of sports in the future.

SSF will continue promoting the firm establishment of "Sport for Everyone," a philosophy that aims to create a happier, healthier society, with the ultimate goal of enriching the athletic lives of each individual and creating an environment in which people can continue enjoying sports in their own ways.

Kazutoshi Watanabe, President
Sasakawa Sports Foundation

SPORT FOR
every
one

Outline of Activities

1

Research and surveys

The Institute of Sports Policy, established in SSF carries out fact-finding surveys, case studies and empirical research in the three fields of "sports policy", "community-building through sports" and "promotion of sports among children and youth".

The institute gathers and analyses quantitative data and advanced cases in the country as well as overseas, which are essential for the national government and local governments to draft sports policy and for various organizations to plan sports promotion programs. SSF proactively makes proposals for policies to governments and for plans to sports organizations, based on evidence obtained from the research and survey.

2

Collaboration with local governments

SSF promotes a nationwide sport program, which aims to encourage people to participate in sports and physical activities, called Challenge Day. In this program, municipal communities with similar size of populations compete over the percentage of their residents who did some kind of sports and physical activities for a minimum of fifteen minutes on the last Wednesday of May. Through Challenge Day, SSF is able to forge closer links with local governments and other organizations, and to verify that sports are beneficial in building local communities and promoting relationships between people of different generations, and to propose a system in which individual residents can enjoy sports in their communities.

Furthermore, in collaboration with local governments who participate in Challenge Day and with other local governments nationwide, SSF draws up sports promotion plans for local communities and offers the results of its surveys and research.

3

Public relations

SSF disseminates the information about its initiatives as described above, and releases the latest sports information in the country and overseas that is beneficial for sports policy research, using its official website, social media, at symposiums, seminars, and international conferences.

As part of its public relations activities, SSF publishes the results of the National Sport and Lifestyle Survey, which is biannually conducted to understand the state of participation and involvement in sports by Japanese, by means of a report called the SSF National Sports-Life Survey.

SSF also brings out and extensively distributes Sport White Paper, in which the latest data in the country and overseas is printed.





SSF

SASAKAWA SPORTS FOUNDATION

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