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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 in Japan, with the goal of achieving “Sport for Everyone” by understanding exercise and sports participation of children during after-school periods and on holidays as well as sports environments surrounding these children. 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 those aged 10-19 and the turning points for such phenomenon.

From the 2017 survey, the target age groups were newly categorized into those aged 4-11 and those aged 12-21; these surveys have been conducted every two years on exercise and sports participation of preschool through university-age in Japan.

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 (207 urban areas and 18 rural areas)
- 4) Extraction method:** 2-staged stratified random sampling
- 5) Survey methods:** Leaving method
- 6) Survey period:** June-July 2023
- 7) Collected questionnaires (rate):** [4-11 year olds] 1,350 (56.3%)
[12-21 year olds] 1,495 (49.8%)
- 8) Survey contents:** Frequencies, time, and intensity of exercise and sports participation, sports facilities, sports teams/clubs, liking for exercise and sports participation, sports spectating, favorite athletes, sports volunteering, status of physical activities of daily living, sleeping time, media usage time (screen time), and frequencies of exercise, sports, and physical play with family, etc.
- 9) Scope of exercise and sports:** Activities and free play after kindergarten or preschool, as well as school club activities and activities during recess periods, are included. However, lessons at kindergarten, preschool, or school are not included, nor are school events such as sports days or race tournaments.

Frequencies of exercise and sports participation

■ 4-11 year olds

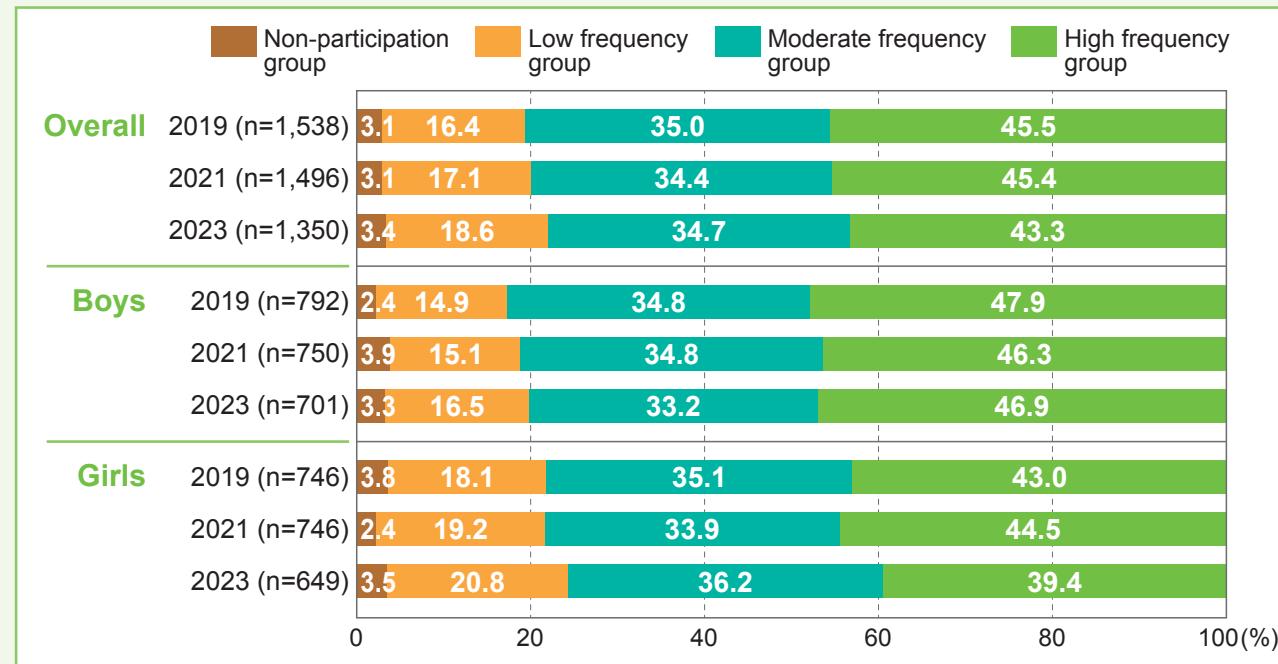
[Table 1] Exercise and sports participation frequency groups (4-11 year olds)

Frequency	Standards
Non-participation group	Non-participation for the past year (0 time/year)
Low frequency group	At least once a year but less than 3 times a week (1-155 times/year)
Moderate frequency group	At least 3 times a week but less than 7 times a week (156-363 times/year)
High frequency group	At least 7 times a week (364 or more times/year)

Source: 2023 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

The 4-11 year old group was divided into 4 groups of “Non-participation group”, “Low frequency group”, “Moderate frequency group”, and “High frequency group” based on standards set from exercise and sports participation frequency over the past year (**Table 1**).

[Fig.1] Annual trends in exercise and sports participation frequency groups (4-11 year olds)



Source: 2023 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

Annual trends in exercise and sports participation frequency groups (ages 4-11) are indicated in **Figure 1**.

At **43.3%** overall, the high frequency group was the most common in the 2023 survey, followed by the moderate frequency group (**34.7%**), the low frequency group (**18.6%**), and the non-participation group (**3.4%**). The percentage of the high frequency group showed a decrease of 2.1 points from the 2021 survey.

Regarding the percentages by gender, the high frequency group was **46.9%** for boys, which was 7.5 points higher than **39.4%** for girls. The percentage of the high frequency group for boys was little changed from the 2021 survey, whereas the percentage for girls decreased by 5.1 points. Since 2019, the trend continues with a higher percentage of the high frequency group for boys than for girls.

■ 12-21 year olds

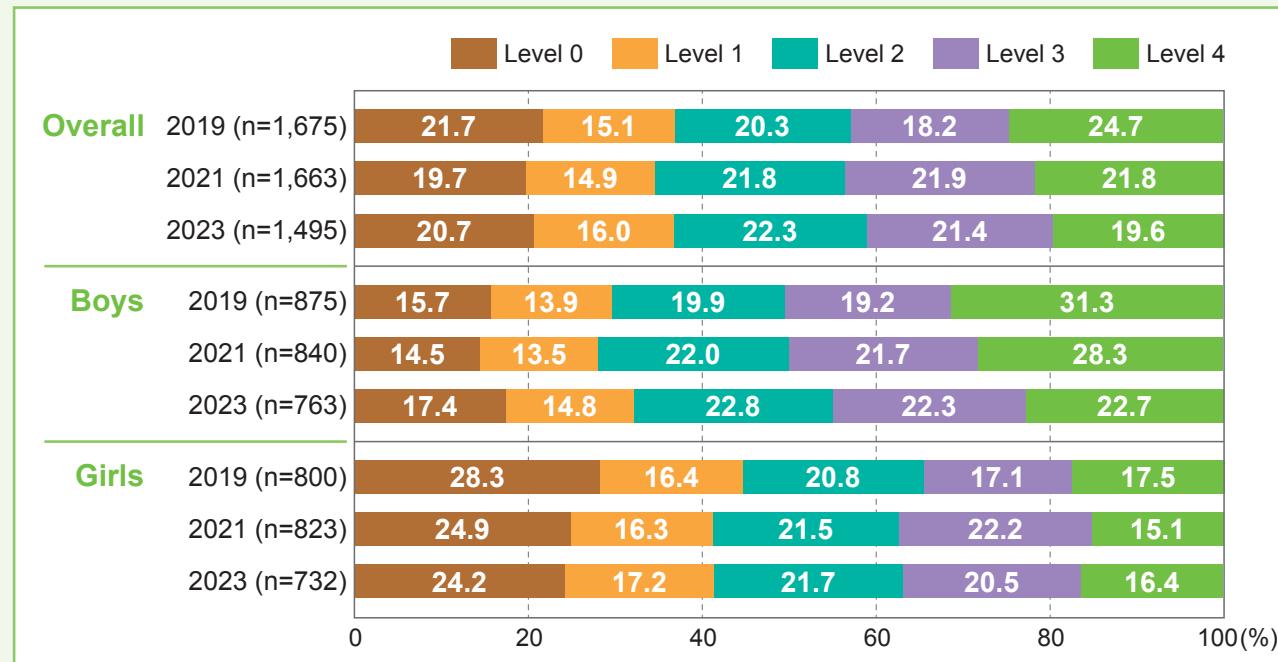
[Table 2] Exercise and sports participation levels (12-21 year olds)

Level	Standards
0	Non-participation for the past year (0 time/year)
1	At least once a 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: 2023 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

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

[Fig.2] Annual trends in exercise and sports participation levels (12-21 year olds)



Source: 2023 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 2023 survey were **20.7%** for Level 0, **16.0%** for Level 1, **22.3%** for Level 2, **21.4%** for Level 3, and **19.6%** for Level 4. Level 4, which represents those who had a higher frequency with at least 120 minutes at a time and at least moderate intensity than other levels, was on a downward trend.

Regarding the rates by gender, Level 2 was the highest for boys at **22.8%**, whereas Level 0 was the highest for girls at **24.2%**. Annual trends show that Level 4 has continued to decrease since the 2019 survey for boys, whereas Level 0 has decreased since the 2019 survey for girls.