

The 2024 SSF National Sports-Life Survey

Overview

1 Introduction

In order to understand the levels of participation in sports and physical activities by Japanese, the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) has examined the statistical data gathered through the “SSF National Sports-Life Survey”, which has been conducted every other year since 1992. This survey measures the number of people aged 18 and over taking part in sports and physical activities across Japan in terms of frequencies, duration, and intensity. People take part in sports and physical activities in different ways, with many doing a range of activities including sports spectating and sports volunteering.

2 Survey design

- 1) Population: People aged 18 and over who live in Japan
- 2) Sample size: 3,000
- 3) Number of locations: 300
(90 in metro areas; 122 in cities with a population of over 100,000 people; 64 in cities with a population of less than 100,000 people, 24 in towns and villages)
- 4) Extracting method: Quota method

3 Survey period

June 7th - July 7th, 2024

4 Survey methods

Leaving method:

The survey officials visit respondents, distributing a paper-based questionnaire and having the respondents fill out the questionnaire within a certain period. Then, the survey officials return to the respondents to collect the questionnaire.

5 Survey sample

3,000 (Male : 1,498, Female : 1,502)

18・19 years old	68 (Male : 37, Female : 31)
20-29	376 (Male : 192, Female : 184)
30-39	424 (Male : 217, Female : 207)
40-49	559 (Male : 286, Female : 273)
50-59	567 (Male : 286, Female : 281)
60-69	483 (Male : 237, Female : 246)
70 and over	523 (Male : 243, Female : 280)

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Description of terms

■ Range of sports and physical activities

This survey measures a wide range of sporting activities including fitness activities, Strolling/Walking/Cycling/ for leisure or travel and dance. The school PE classes were excluded whilst sports club activities at schools and workplaces were included.

■ Estimated participants

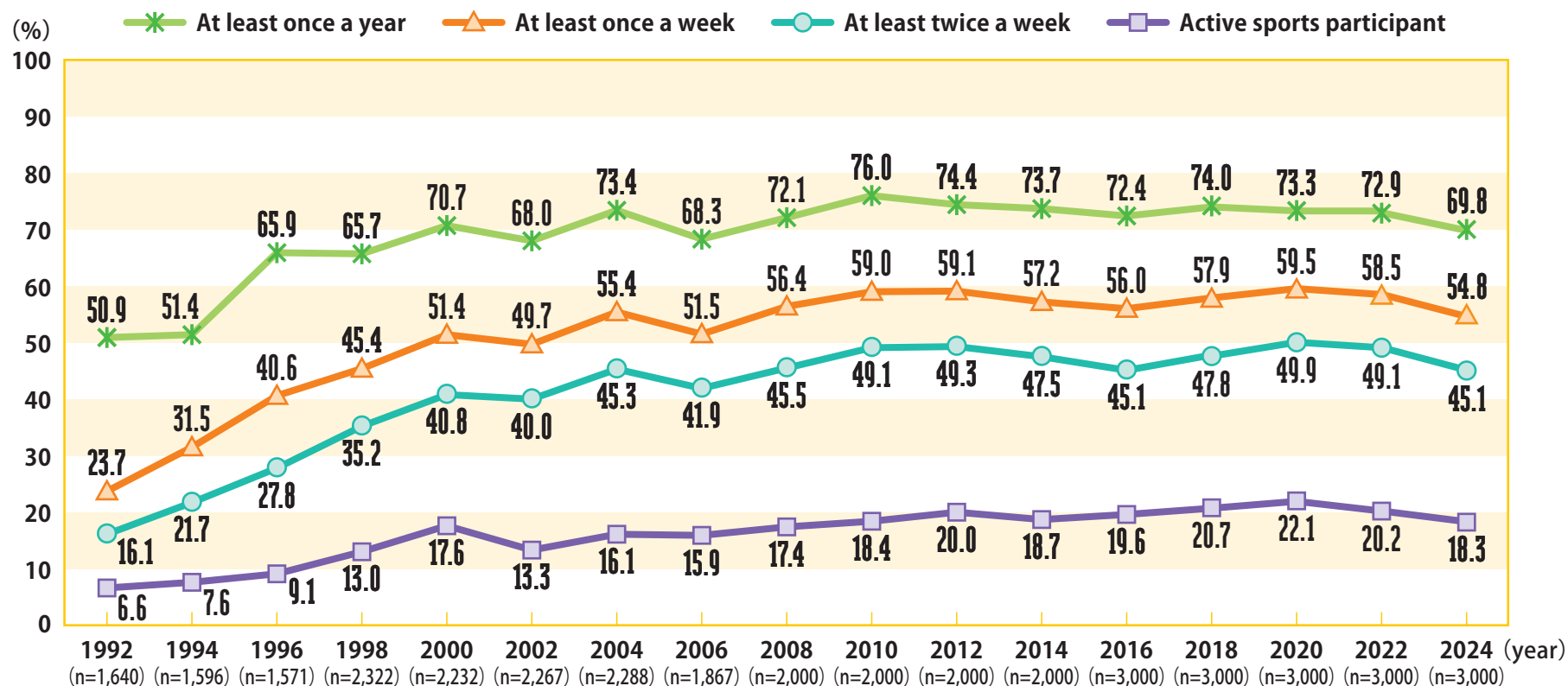
Estimated sports participants are calculated by applying the rate of regular sports and physical activities participation over the past year to the total population of those 18 and over (104,716,185 people in Japan)

■ Level of participation in sports and physical activities

In this survey, the participation in sports and physical activities are divided into the following levels; “Level 0” for those who did not participate in any sports or physical activities for the past year; “Level 1” for those who participated at least once during the year, but less than twice a week; “Level 2” for those who participated at least twice a week; “Level 3” for those who participated at least twice a week with a duration of “more than 30 minutes”; and “Level 4” for those who participated at least twice a week, duration of “more than 30 minutes”, and with more than moderate intensity.

Annual changes in sports and physical activities

Annual changes in sports and physical activities



Note 1: Until 2014, the survey targeted people aged 20 and over; starting in 2016, it targeted those aged 18 and over.

Note 2: Active sports participant is Level 4 people (those who participated for at least 30 minutes twice a week at moderate intensity or greater).

69.8% of people participated in sports and physical activities at least once in 2024.

The percentage of those who participated in sports and physical activities at least once a week has risen since 1992, from **23.7%** to **54.8%** in 2024.

Furthermore, the percentage for sports participation at least twice a week in 2024 was **45.1%**, continuing its increase from **16.1%** recorded in 1992.

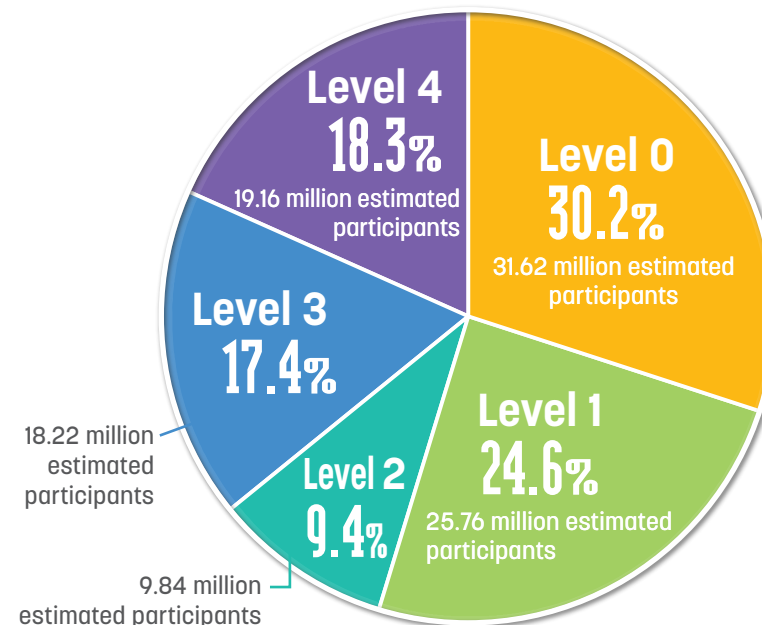
The rate of active sports participants was **18.3%**. It has exceeded 20% during the previous three surveys and falling below the rate in 2022.

Levels of sports and physical activities

Definition of levels

Level	Definition
Level 0	No sports/physical activities at all for the past year
Level 1	At least once a year, but less than twice a week (1-103 times a year)
Level 2	At least twice a week (at least 104 times a year)
Level 3	At least twice a week and at least 30 min at a time
Level 4 (Active sports participant)	At least twice a week, at least 30 min at a time, and at moderate intensity at least slightly hard

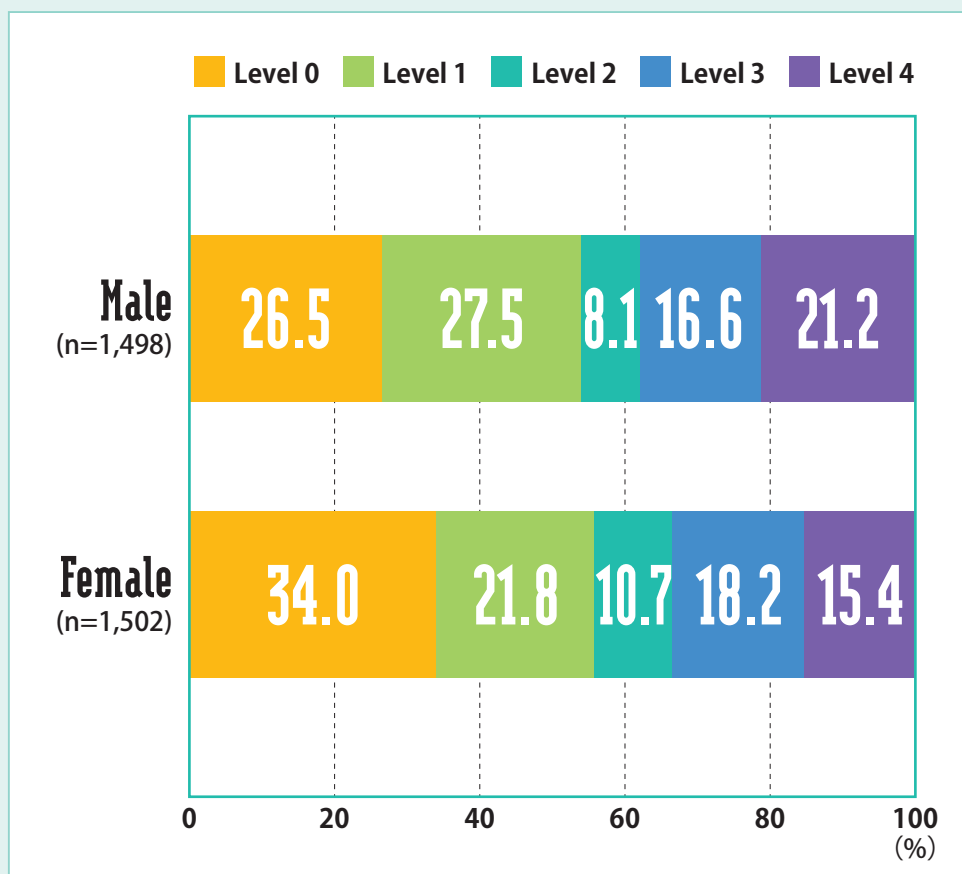
Levels of sports and physical activities



Note: The estimated number of participants was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (104,716,185 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2023) by the percentage for each participation level.

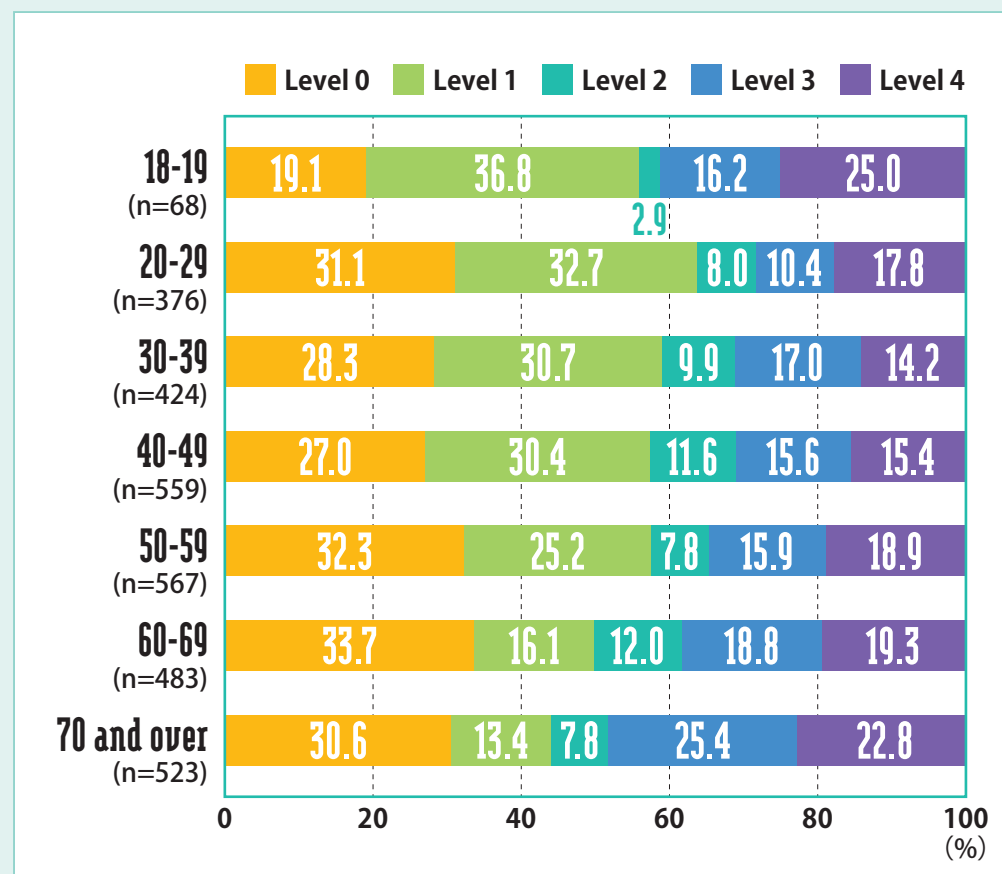
30.2% of people (31.62 million) were Level 0 for those who did not participate in any sports or physical activities for the past year. **24.6%** of people (25.76 million) were Level 1; **9.4%** (9.84 million) were Level 2; **17.4%** (18.22 million) were Level 3. **18.3%** (19.16 million) were Level 4 that is defined as the active sports participant group.

Levels of sports and physical activities: By gender



45.9% of males and **44.3%** of females participated in sports and physical activities at least twice a week for the past year (Level 2 or greater), with males exceeding females by 1.6 points. On the other hand, the percentage of Level 0—those who did not participate in sports and physical activities at all for the past year—was 7.5 points higher for females (**34.0%**) than for males (**26.5%**).

Levels of sports and physical activities: By age



The percentage of people who participated at least twice a week for the past year (Level 2 or greater) differed by age groups. The percentage of Level 2 or greater was **44.1%** in the 18-19 age group, **36.2%** in the 20-29 age group, **41.1%** in the 30-39 age group, **42.6%** in the 40-49 age group, **42.6%** in the 50-59 age group, **50.1%** in the 60-69 age group, and **56.0%** in the 70 and over age group.

Types of sports and physical activities

Types of sports and physical activities

Total (n=3,000)			
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Estimated participants (in 10,000s)
1	Strolling	30.1	3,152
2	Walking	27.5	2,880
3	Calisthenics and light exercises	17.3	1,812
4	Weight training	16.0	1,675
5	Jogging/ Running	7.7	806
6	Golf on a course	6.9	723
7	Golf practice on a driving range	6.8	712
8	Bowling	6.3	660
9	Cycling	6.2	649
	Fishing	6.2	649
11	Swimming	4.8	503
12	Playing catch	4.6	482
	Jumping rope	4.6	482
14	Badminton	4.5	471
15	Sea bathing	4.1	429
16	Yoga	4.0	419
	Camping	3.9	408
17	Football	3.9	408
	Mountaineering	3.9	408
20	Table tennis	3.7	387

Note: The estimated number of participants was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (104,716,185 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2023) by the percentage for each participation level.

In terms of sports and physical activities performed in the past year, "Strolling" came in first place at **30.1%** (31.52 million), followed by "Walking" at **27.5%** (28.80 million), "Calisthenics and light exercises" at **17.3%** (18.12 million), "Weight training" at **16.0%** (16.75 million), and "Jogging/Running" at **7.7%** (8.06 million).

Types of sports and physical activities: By gender

Male (n=1,498)			Female (n=1,502)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Walking	27.6	1	Strolling	34.0
2	Strolling	26.2	2	Walking	27.4
3	Weight training	19.6	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	22.4
4	Calisthenics and light exercises	12.1	4	Weight training	12.3
5	Golf on a course	12.0	5	Yoga	7.4
6	Jogging/ Running	11.7	6	Jumping rope	6.3
7	Golf practice on a driving range	11.3	7	Badminton	5.6
8	Fishing	9.9	8	Cycling	4.9
9	Bowling	7.7		Bowling	4.9
10	Cycling	7.4	10	Swimming	4.3

For both males and females, "Strolling", "Walking", "Calisthenics and light exercises", and "Weight training" were ranked in the top 5 sports and physical activities. In contrast, different types of sports and physical activities by gender were listed in subsequent rankings. Furthermore, the top 4 sports participation rates were higher for females than for males, whereas the rates of the subsequent rankings were higher for males than for females.

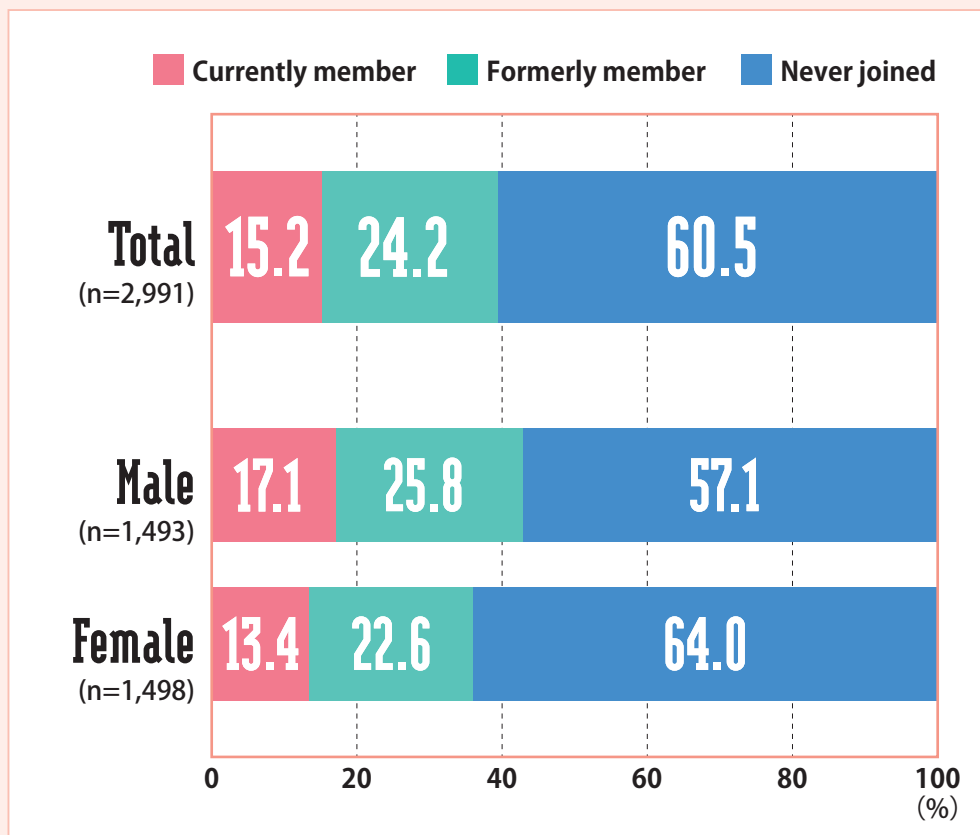
Types of sports and physical activities: By age

18-19 (n=68)			20-29 (n=376)			30-39 (n=424)			40-49 (n=559)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Weight training	20.6	1	Strolling	28.7	1	Strolling	30.0	1	Strolling	34.5
	Jogging/ Running	20.6	2	Weight training	22.9	2	Walking	20.3	2	Walking	25.9
3	Football	19.1	3	Walking	17.3	3	Weight training	19.6	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	18.6
	Strolling	19.1	4	Bowling	11.2	4	Calisthenics and light exercises	12.3	4	Weight training	17.0
5	Bowling	17.6	5	Jogging/ Running	9.3	5	Bowling	10.1	5	Jogging/ Running	11.8
6	Badminton	13.2	6	Calisthenics and light exercises	8.5	6	Jumping rope	9.0	6	Fishing	9.1
7	Walking	10.3	7	Snowboarding	8.0	7	Sea bathing	8.5	7	Cycling	8.6
	Snowboarding	10.3	8	Golf practice on a driving range	7.4		Football	8.5	8	Jumping rope	8.4
9	Swimming	8.8	9	Badminton	6.9		Jogging/ Running	8.5	10	Bowling	8.4
	Fishing	8.8		Volleyball	6.9	Golf practice on a driving range	7.8	Swimming		8.2	
				Baseball	6.9						

50-59 (n=567)			60-69 (n=483)			70 and over (n=523)		
Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Participation rate (%)
1	Walking	30.0	1	Strolling	29.6	1	Walking	40.2
2	Strolling	27.9	2	Walking	29.4	2	Strolling	31.0
3	Weight training	15.5	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	22.6	3	Calisthenics and light exercises	25.0
4	Calisthenics and light exercises	15.3	4	Weight training	9.9	4	Weight training	12.4
5	Golf on a course	8.3	5	Golf on a course	7.7	5	Golf on a course	7.6
6	Jogging/ Running	7.4	6	Golf practice on a driving range	6.6	6	Golf practice on a driving range	6.9
7	Cycling	7.2	7	Cycling	5.4	7	Fishing	4.4
8	Golf practice on a driving range	7.1	8	Yoga	4.1	8	Hiking	4.2
9	Fishing	6.9	9	Jogging/ Running	3.9	9	Swimming	3.8
10	Bowling	4.9		Hiking	3.9	10	Ground golf	3.4
					Cycling		3.4	
					Jogging/ Running	3.4		

Sports clubs

Sports club membership: Total and by gender

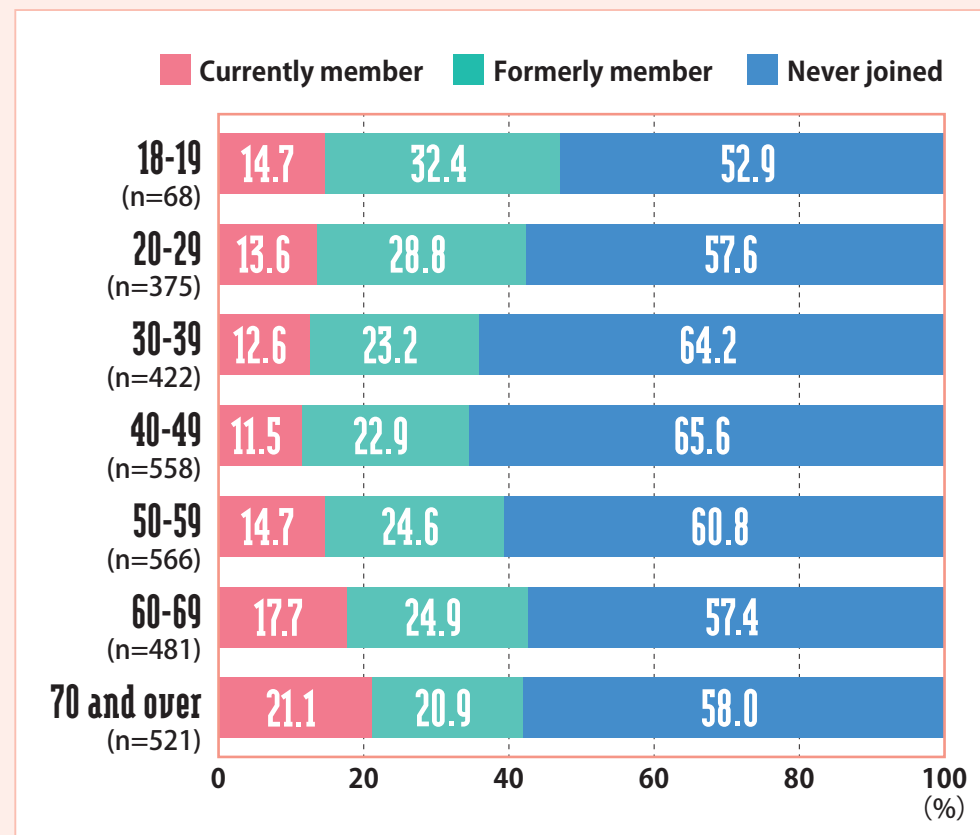


15.2% of people were current members of sports clubs and **24.2%** were former members. Those who never joined sports clubs were **60.5%**.

In terms of gender comparison, the percentages of "Currently member" were **17.1%** of males that was 3.7 points higher than **13.4%** of females, widening the gender gap since 2022.

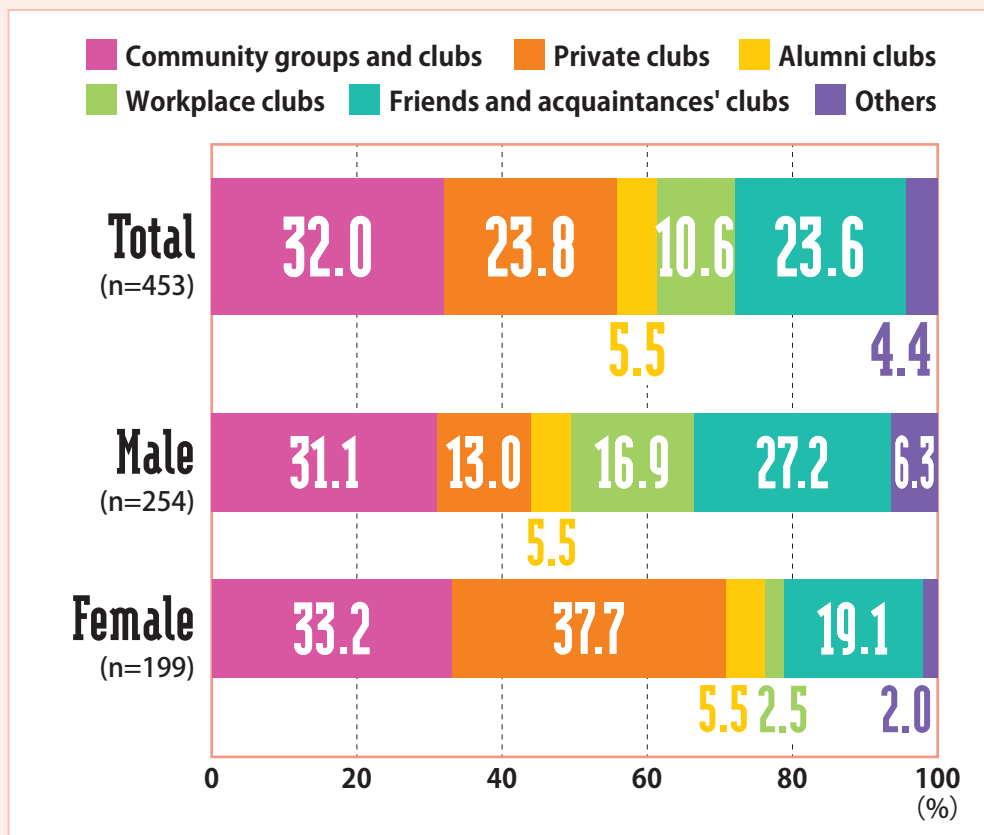
The percentage of "Never joined" were **57.1%** of males, which was 6.9 points lower than females **64.0%**.

Sports club membership: By age



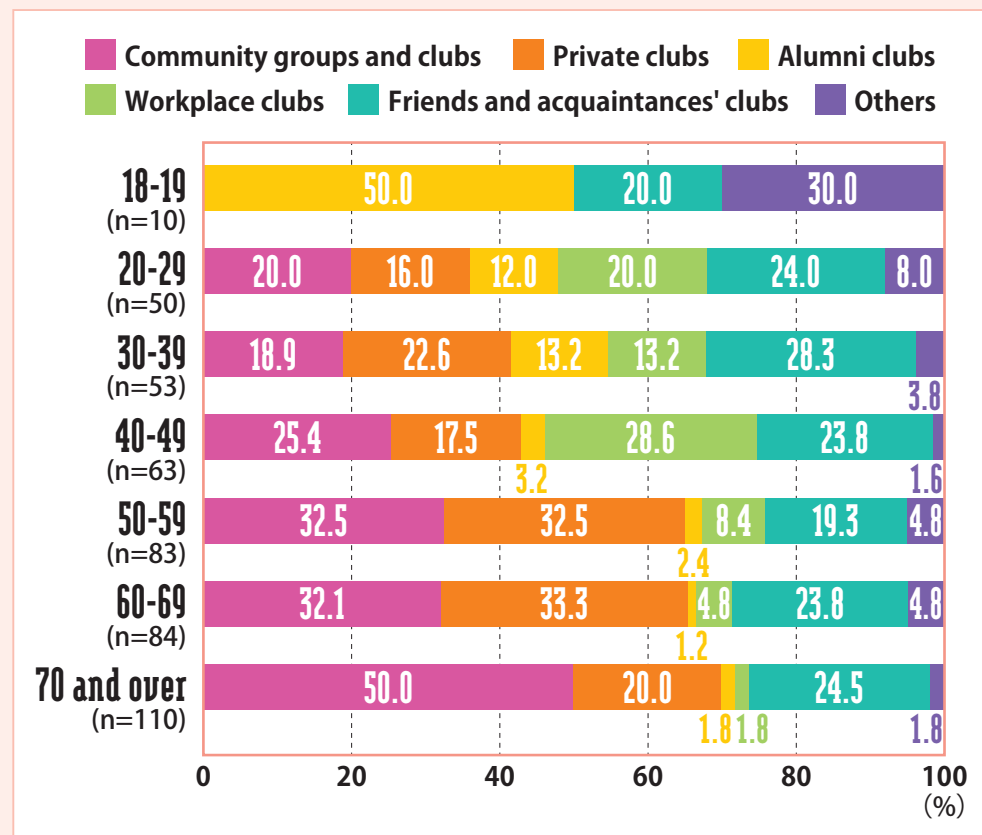
The percentage of "Currently member" was the highest at **21.1%** in the 70 and over age group. It decreased to **17.7%** of the 60-69 age group, **14.7%** of 18-19 and 50-59 age groups, **13.6%** of the 20-29 age group, and **12.6%** of the 30-39 age group. The lowest was **11.5%** of the 40-49 age group, and the rate increased with the advance of age.

Types of sports clubs: Total and by gender



"Community groups and clubs" showed the highest membership rate at **32.0%**, followed by "Private clubs" at **23.8%** and "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **23.6%**. The sports club membership types differed by gender. For males, "Community groups and clubs" was the highest membership rate at **31.1%**, followed by "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **27.2%** and "Workplace clubs" at **16.9%**. On the other hand, "Private clubs" was the highest at **37.7%** for females, followed by "Community groups and clubs" at **33.2%** and "Friends and acquaintances' clubs" at **19.1%**.

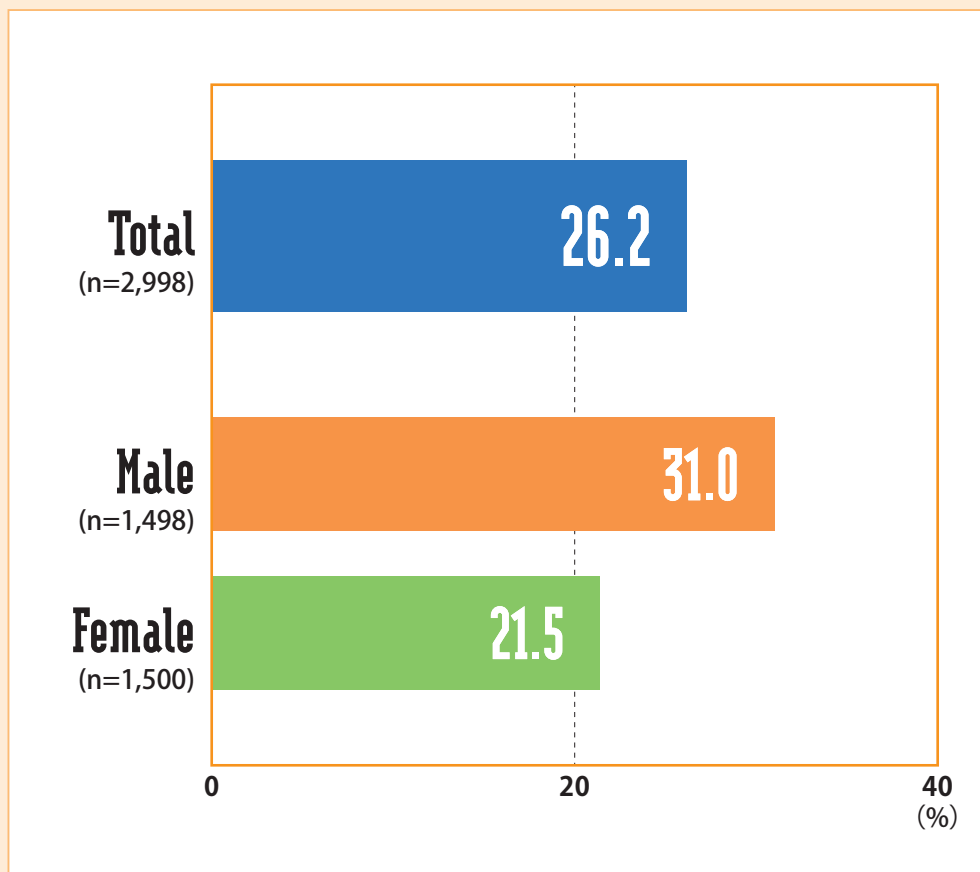
Types of sports clubs: By age



"Community groups and clubs" showed a higher membership rate at **50.0%** in the 70 and over age group compared to other age groups. On the other hand, "Workplace clubs" was higher in the 40-49 age group **28.6%** and in the 20-29 age group **20.0%** than in other groups. Furthermore, "Private clubs" was joined by the 50-59 [**32.5%**] age group, and 60-69 [**33.3%**] age group more than by others.

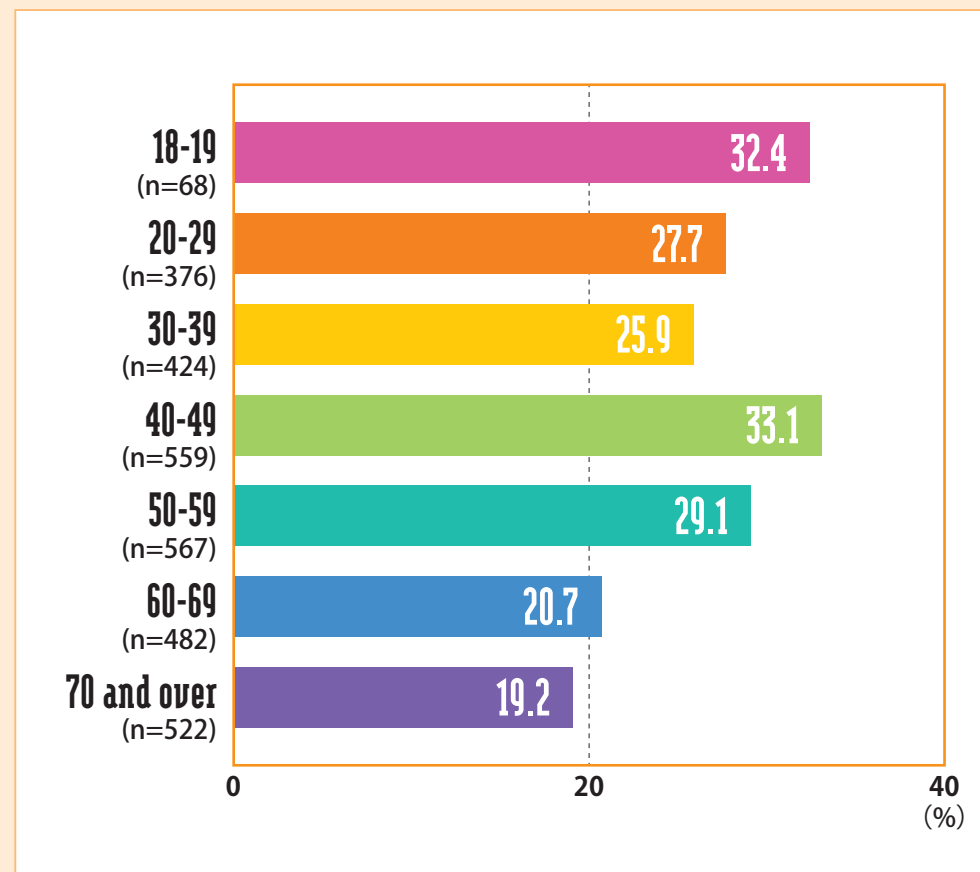
Sports spectating

Live sports spectating at the venue: Total and by gender



The percentage of people who attended a live sporting event at the stadium or arena in the past year was **26.2%**. In terms of gender comparison, **31.0%** of males was 9.5 points higher than **21.5%** of females. This trend of males with more attendance to a live sporting event than females has remained unchanged since the first survey of this item in 1994.

Live sports spectating at the venue: By age



The rate of live sports spectating at the stadium or arena was the highest at **33.1%** in the 40-49 age group, followed by **32.4%** in the 18-19 age group, **29.1%** in the 50-59 age group, **27.7%** in the 20-29 age group, **25.9%** in the 30-39 age group, **20.7%** in the 60-69 age group, and **19.2%** in the 70 and over age group.

The rate of live sports spectating at the stadium or arena in the 40-49 age group increased by 9.2 points from 2022 at 23.9%.

Types of live spectating sports at the venue

Total (n=2,998)					
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	① Estimated spectators (in 10,000s)	② Frequency (times/year)	③ Estimated annual total (①×②) (in 10,000s)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	12.1	1,267	2.55	3,231
2	Professional football (J.LEAGUE)	4.4	461	3.85	1,775
3	High school baseball	3.5	367	3.64	1,336
4	Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)	2.0	209	2.29	479
5	Football (high school, university, JFL, WE LEAGUE, etc.)	1.7	178	4.08	726

Note: The estimated number of spectators was calculated by multiplying the total population of individuals aged 18 and over (104,716,185 people according to the basic resident register as of January 1, 2023) by the percentage of each attendance rate.

※NPB: Nippon Professional Baseball

“Professional baseball (NPB)” recorded the highest attendance rate at **12.1%**. It was followed by “Professional football (J.LEAGUE)” at **4.4%**, “High school baseball” at **3.5%**, “Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)” at **2.0%** and “Football (high school, university, JFL, WE LEAGUE, etc.)” at **1.7%**.

Types of live spectating sports at the venue: By gender

Male (n=1,498)			Female (n=1,500)		
Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Attendance rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	15.6	1	Professional baseball (NPB※)	8.7
2	Professional football (J.LEAGUE)	5.4	2	Professional football (J.LEAGUE)	3.4
3	High school baseball	4.5	3	High school baseball	2.5
4	Football (high school, university, JFL, WE LEAGUE, etc.)	2.2	4	Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)	1.8
5	Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)	2.1	5	Football (high school, university, JFL, WE LEAGUE, etc.)	1.3

※NPB: Nippon Professional Baseball

For both males and females, “Professional baseball (NPB)” recorded the highest attendance rate at **15.6%** and **8.7%** respectively. It was followed by “Professional football (J.LEAGUE)” at **5.4%** for males and **3.4%** for females and “High school baseball” at **4.5%** for males and **2.5%** for females.

Types of sports watching on TV: Total and by gender

Total (n=2,992)			Male (n=1,493)			Female (n=1,499)		
Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)	Rank	Types of sports	Viewing rate (%)
1	Professional baseball (NPB※1)	47.4	1	Professional baseball (NPB※1)	55.1	1	Professional baseball (NPB※1)	39.8
2	Japan national football team games (including the Olympics and Nadeshiko Japan※2)	36.4	2	Japan national football team games (including the Olympics and Nadeshiko Japan※2)	42.9	2	Volleyball (high school, university, V.LEAGUE, national team, etc.)	33.8
3	High school baseball	36.3	3	Major League Baseball (MLB)	40.4		Marathon/ Ekiden road relay	33.8
4	Major League Baseball (MLB)	35.1	4	High school baseball	40.2	4	High school baseball	32.4
5	Marathon/ Ekiden road relay	33.6	5	Marathon/ Ekiden road relay	33.4	5	Japan national football team games (including the Olympics and Nadeshiko Japan※2)	30.0
Didn't watch any sports on TV		21.0	Didn't watch any sports on TV		17.5	Didn't watch any sports on TV		24.4

※1 NPB: Nippon Professional Baseball

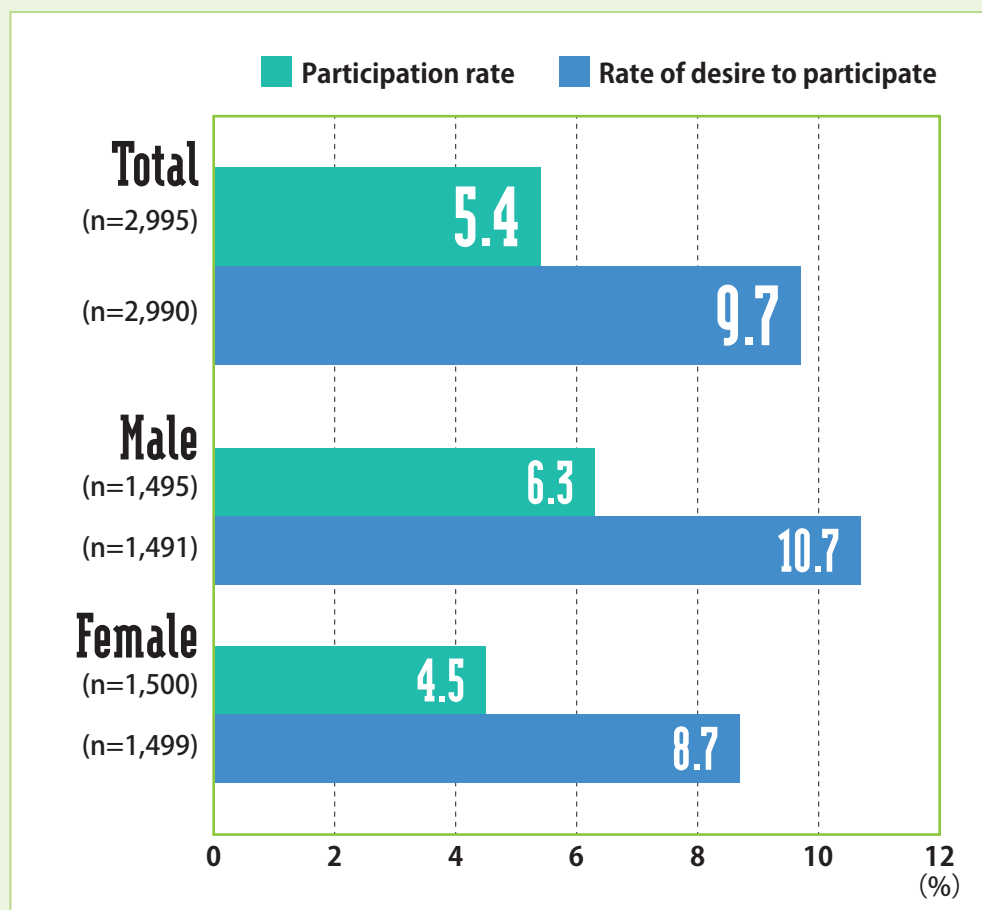
※2 Nadeshiko Japan: Women's national team

Regarding sports that were watched on TV in the past year, the most popular was "Professional baseball (NPB)" at **47.4%**, followed by "Japan national football team games (including the Olympics and Nadeshiko Japan)" at **36.4%**, "High school baseball" at **36.3%**, "Major League Baseball (MLB)" at **35.1%** and "Marathon/Ekiden road relay" at **33.6%**.

For both males and females, "Professional baseball (NPB)" was the most watched on TV at **55.1%** and **39.8%** respectively. For males, followed by "Japan national football team games (including the Olympics and Nadeshiko Japan)" at **42.9%**, and "Major League Baseball (MLB)" at **40.4%**. On the other hand, for females, followed by "Volleyball (high school, university, V. LEAGUE, national team, etc.)" and "Marathon/Ekiden road relay" at **33.8%**.

Sports volunteering

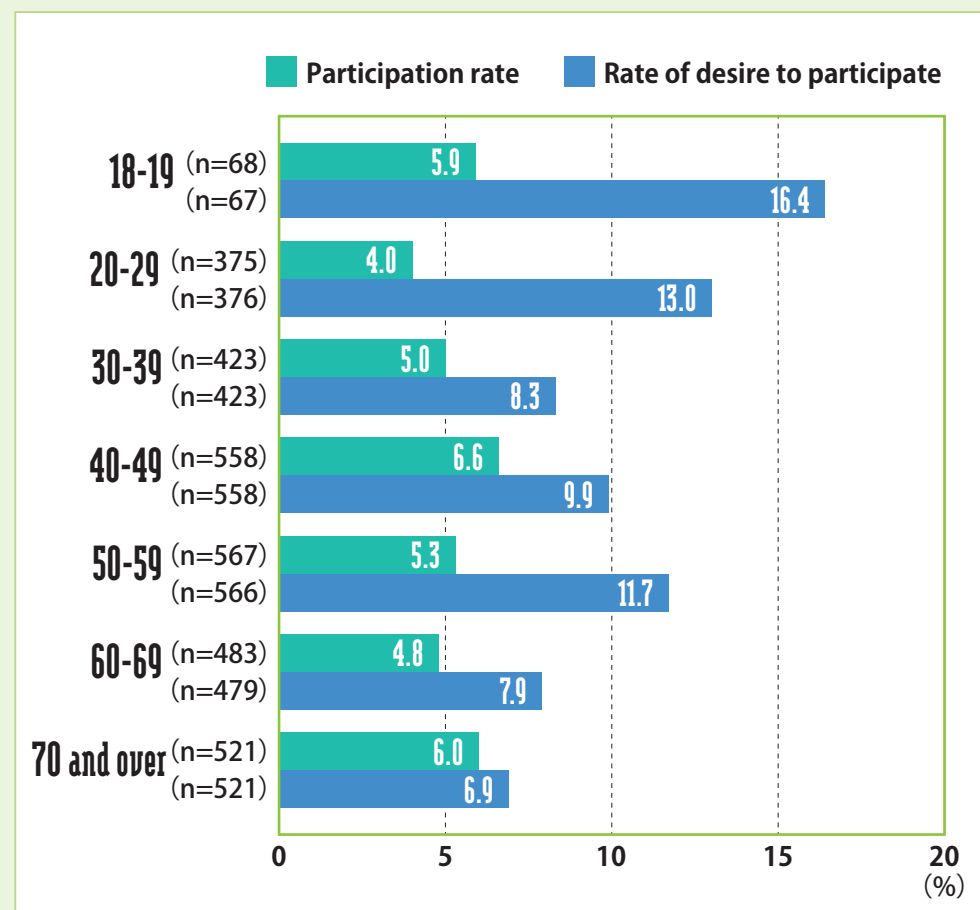
Sports volunteering: Total and by gender



5.4% of people participated in sports volunteering in the past year. The rate has slightly decreased compared to the first survey in 1994 at 6.1%.

In terms of gender comparison, **6.3%** of males and **4.5%** of females participated in sports volunteering. The trend of males with a higher volunteer participation rate than females was also seen in past surveys.

Sports volunteering: By age

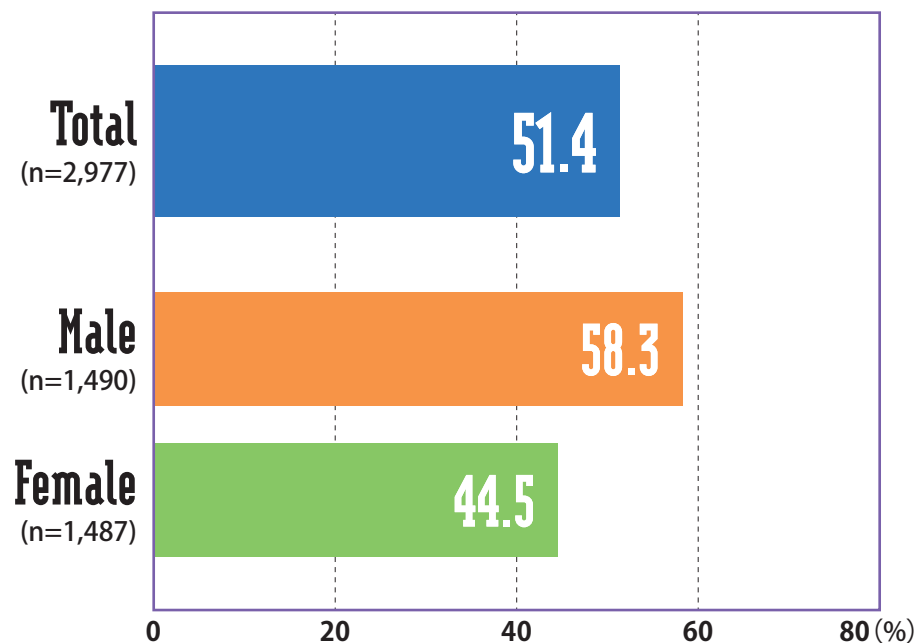


The sports volunteering participation rate was the highest for the 40-49 age group (**6.6%**), followed by the 70 and over age group (**6.0%**).

The rate of desire to participate in sports volunteering activities was the highest for the 18-19 age group (**16.4%**), followed by the 20-29 age group (**13.0%**), and the 50-59 age group (**11.7%**).

Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ)

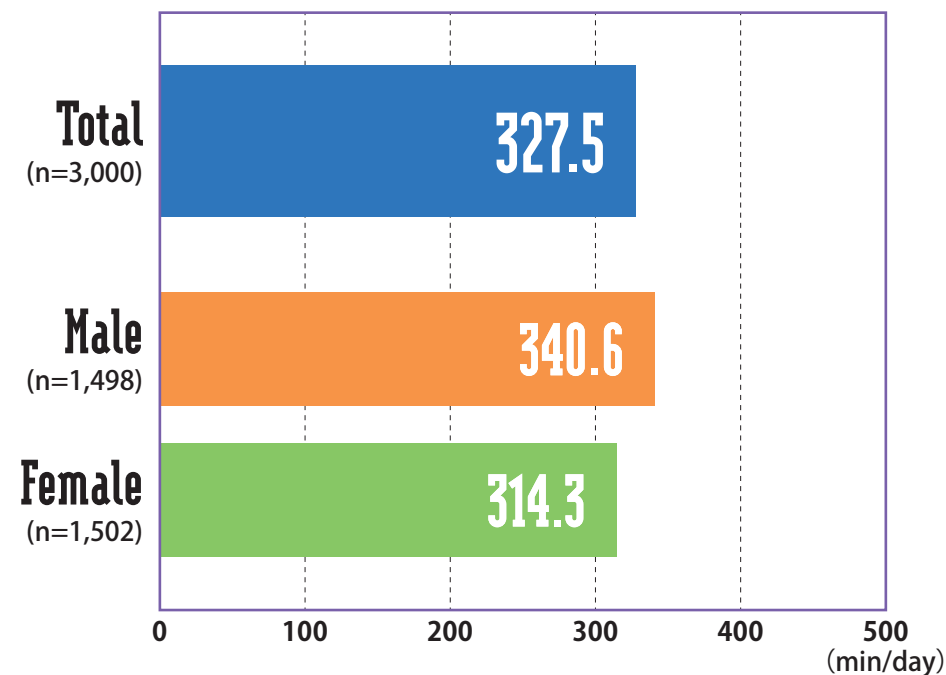
Sufficient physical activities for health according to the WHO recommendations※: Total and by gender



※The WHO recommendations: Adults aged 18 and over should do at least 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity; or at least 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent combination of moderate-and vigorous-intensity activity throughout the week.

Overall, **51.4%** of people met the WHO recommendations on physical activities for health. There was a difference in gender comparison. Males accomplished the recommendations by **58.3%**. In contrast, the rate of accomplishing the recommendations among females was **44.5%**, which was 13.8 points lower than that of males.

The amount of time spent being sedentary (Sedentary behaviours): Total and by gender



The time spent being sedentary includes any time spent sitting or reclining on a typical day, but does not include time spent sleeping. Overall, **327.5 min/day** on average (about five and a half hours) was reported as the amount of time spent being sedentary. Regarding the time by gender, it was 26.3 min/day longer for males [**340.6 min/day**] than for females [**314.3 min/day**].

A think tank whose every dream and action is taken with the future in mind.

The activities of the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) are aimed at creating a “Sport for Everyone society” in which everyone enjoys sports in a manner that fits their own lifestyle and interests.

The role of the community in people’s lives has been shrinking over the years, and kids are growing up with fewer opportunities to interact with those in different age groups. The rapid graying of the population is pushing up health- and nursing-care costs, exacerbating already strained fiscal resources. These are issues confronting not just Japan but also an increasing number of countries around the world.

We at the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) believe that one way of tackling these issues is to utilize the power of sports to build a healthier, more vibrant, and more inclusive society.

Sports can lead to better physical and mental health and can also be used as a communication tool to bridge differences in age, language, and gender. Our task at the SSF is to help provide an environment where everyone can participate in sports and expand opportunities for interpersonal contact, thereby energizing and invigorating both individuals and communities. Such initiatives can not only encourage greater “self-help” efforts toward better health but also deepen understanding of others, fostering an altruistic desire for “mutual aid” and prompting the government to enhance “public assistance.”

And as people’s engagement with sports and the community increases, they will experience all three facets of sports: “participate,” “spectate,” and “volunteer.”

To achieve these goals, we undertake research activities to obtain the data needed to develop concrete, effective policy solutions. We then work with individual and organizational partners to implement those policies, actively engaging with the community to gauge their effectiveness and feeding the results back to our research team. The two pillars of our activities thus act as a feedback mechanism, enabling us to develop even better, more practical solutions confronting society.

A key component of this virtuous cycle is World Challenge Day—a day on which communities around the world encourage as many people as possible to be physically active. It provides an opportunity for not only individual participants to take up physical activity but also the host municipalities to directly engage with local residents and to promote good health and stronger community ties.

It has been thanks to our active involvement in Challenge Day that we have been able to conclude partnership agreements with a number of local governments to jointly develop and implement sports-related initiatives, and we hope to share the best, most successful practices with many more municipalities both in Japan and around the world.

It is our strong hope that our efforts to address social challenges through the power of sports will trigger similar initiatives abroad, and we intend to actively offer our insights to organizations sharing the Sports for All philosophy. At the same time, we seek to incorporate many innovative, promising practices from other countries, working closely with researchers and professionals around the globe to create a better world for all.

Kazutoshi Watanabe, President
Sasakawa Sports Foundation