

www.ark.ac.uk



ARK

Northern Ireland

ACCESS RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE

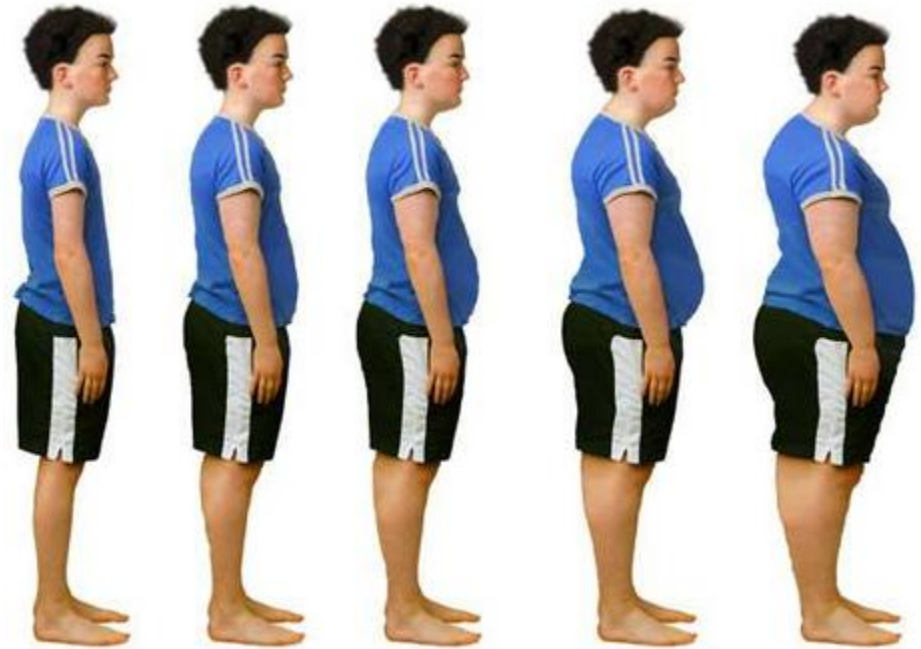
Get Up and Go?

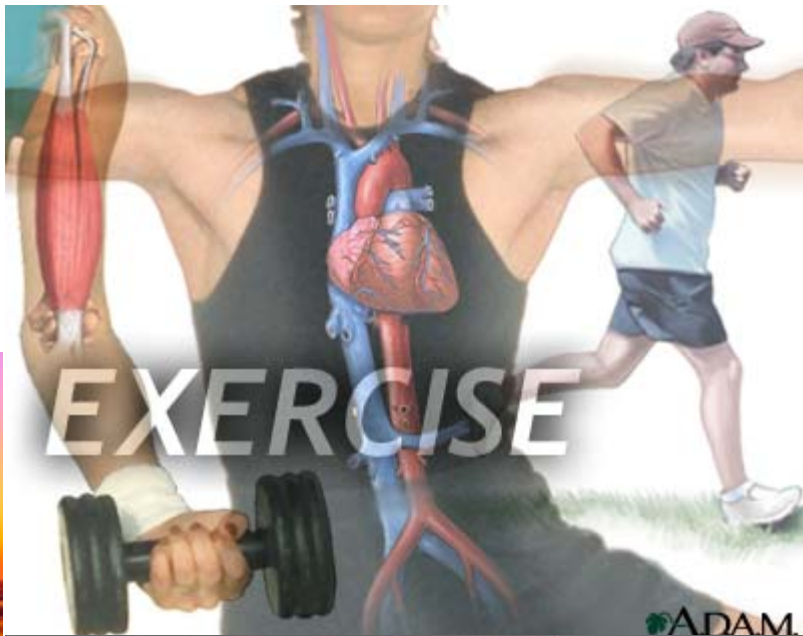


Sport and Leisure Time in Northern Ireland
Dr Katie Liston and Dr Paula Devine

- **Research design**
- **2009 Northern Irish Life and Times Survey (NILT) in which a module on sport and leisure was administered for the FIRST TIME**
- **Part of International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) administered in over 40 countries worldwide**

- Longevity and ageing population
- Increasing emphasis on ‘sport for all’ as preventative and corrective mechanism for health problems like obesity
- But, ‘sport for all’ encompasses a range of activities that have differential health outcomes

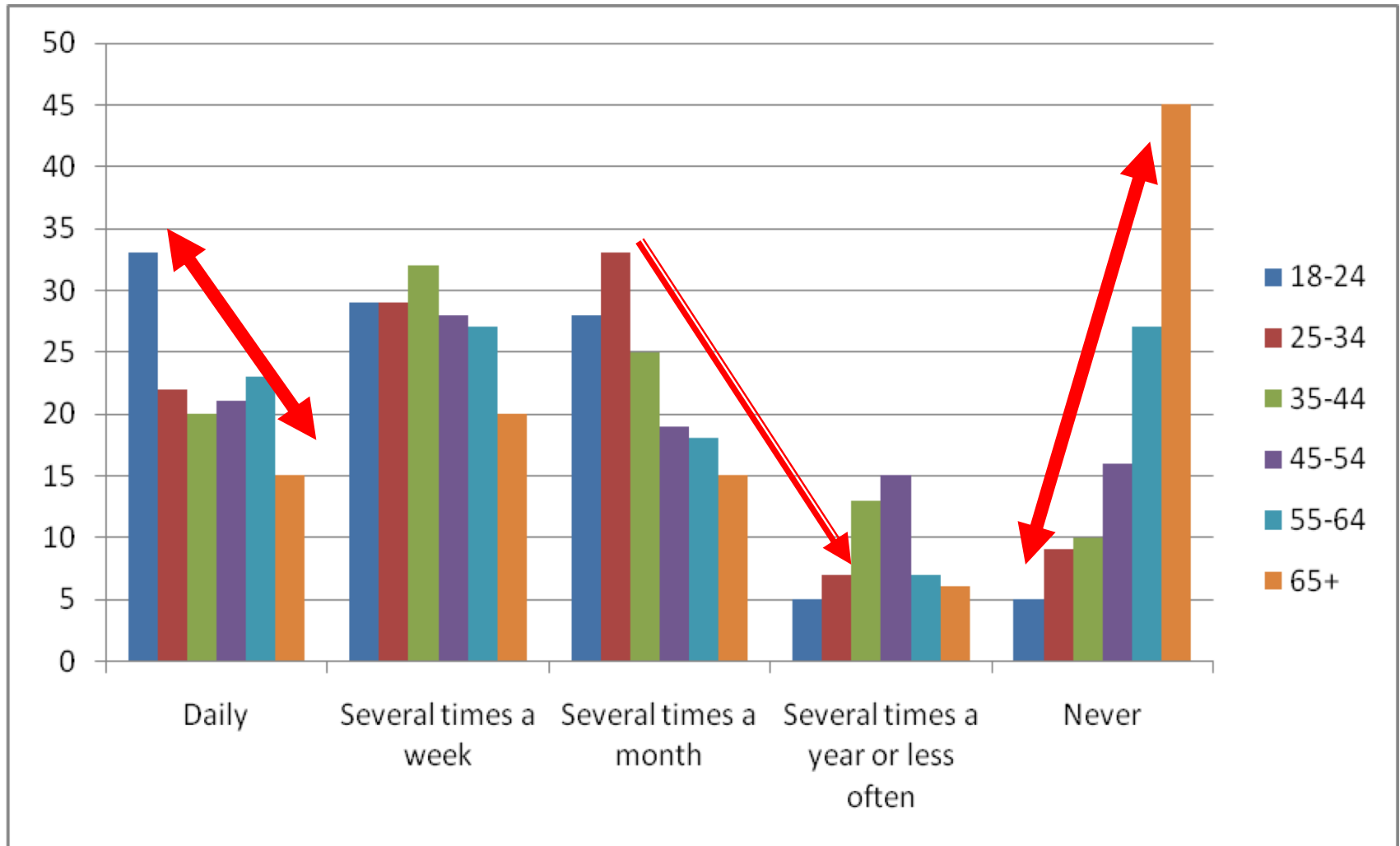




Leisure Activities

	%			
	Daily/weekly	Monthly	Annual or less often	Never
Staying in				
Watch TV, DVD, videos?	92	6	1	1
Listen to music?	79	9	6	6
Spend time on the internet/PC	52	12	6	30
Read books?	41	16	23	20
Do handicrafts such as needle work, wood work, etc	7	9	15	69
Play cards or board games?	5	12	30	53
Physical activities				
Take part in physical activities such as sports, going to the gym, going for a walk?	49	22	9	19
Socialising				
Get together with friends?	41	40	16	3
Get together with relatives	39	36	22	3
Going out				
Attend cultural events such as concerts, live theatre, exhibitions?	3	8	61	27
Go to the movies?	4	11	49	37
Attend sporting events as a spectator?	8	12	33	46

Who does what?



How do they do it?

	%
Takes part in sport or physical activity	53
Sport or physical activity taken part in most frequently	
Fitness	14
Swimming	13
Football/soccer	11
Walking	9
Golf	7
Cycling	6
Gaelic football	5
Jogging	4

- % who engage in walking is relatively lower than in Britain or the Republic
- No significant differences between sexes in levels of activity
- But there were gendered patterns of activities

Why do they do it?

Enjoyment obtained from participation in leisure activities		%		
		No, not much	Some, fair amount	A great deal
...Reading books		4	23	74
...Getting together with friends		23	22	76
...Taking part in physical activities such as sports, going to the gym, going for a walk?		3	39	58
...Watching TV, DV		3	60	37
Reasons for taking part in sports or games	%			
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important
For physical or mental health	55	35	8	3
To meet other people	31	39	20	10
To compete against others	13	25	29	32
To look good	11	27	24	38

Attitudes to Sport

- Sport has a positive role
- 87% believed that sport built children's character
- Sport aids in social integration (69%)
- One third (37%) believed that sport may create more international tensions than good feeling



Discussion Points

- **Most respondents take part in some type of sporting or physical activity**
- **Health motivations predominate**
- **So what of the ‘sport for all’ concept and its proven links to physical health?**
- **Regular, rhythmic moderate exercise is proven to benefit physical health and wellbeing. The evidence for sport is less clear**

- **44% of those who exercise regularly get a ‘great deal of enjoyment’ from it. What of the other 56%?**
- **Inculcation of healthism: health is not entirely within the control of individual people**
- **Nearly half of 65+ age group never take part in physical activity. Consequences for preventative healthcare and social isolation?**

- **Groups most likely to be physically active had more social capital i.e. an ability to generate, or benefit from, social bonds and bridges in Northern Irish society which, in turn, reinforce the social patterns and networks in their lives**
- **Putnam's Bowling Alone? Mutual reinforcement of social capital**
- **Are we getting value for money in terms of the government's investment in 'sport for all'?**