

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND LIFESTYLE HABITS OF ADOLESCENTS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC: RESULTS OF THE *SUGAPAS* PROJECT

Gruodytė-Račienė R.¹, Čapkauskienė S.¹, Pokvytytė V.¹, Avgerinos A.², Thrasyvoulos T.³, Douka S.³, Heck S.⁴, García-Roca J.A.⁵, von Seelen J.⁶

¹Lithuanian Sports University, ²European University of Cyprus, ³Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, ⁴European Physical Education Association (EUPEA),

⁵Fundación Universitaria San Antonio, ⁶School for Health in Europe network foundation (SHE)

Background

The lifestyle of children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic has been affected dramatically by restrictions, causing a substantial decrease in physical activity (PA) and extensive increase in sedentary activity time (Xiang et al. 2020).

The purpose of this study was to investigate PA and lifestyle habits of adolescent students in a sample of European countries involved in the *SUGAPAS* project (*Supporting Gamified Physical Activities in & out of Schools*), an Erasmus+ funded project aiming to design and implement mobile games which should trigger students' health-related habitual behavior.

Research methods and organization

In total, 948 adolescents (boys n=473), aged 12-17 years, from Lithuania (n=214), Greece (n=143), Cyprus (n=156), Spain (n=196), and other EU countries (n=239) volunteered to participate in this survey which was conducted online due to the ongoing pandemics and related school closures.

In order to evaluate PA and lifestyle patterns of the respondents, a two-part questionnaire was used: to estimate roughly the frequency and duration of involvement in PA for a typical week as well as perceived level of fitness (1), and the weekly frequency of participation in 27 different leisure management activities (2).

Results

As a result, a vast majority of the participating adolescents perceived that they are comparatively of average or lower level of fitness and fail to accomplish the international guidelines of PA for health.

The analysis of leisure-time management further revealed that the participating students prefer mostly sedentary activities (meetings with friends, social networking, using screens for entertainment, etc.) instead of choosing sports and active recreation.

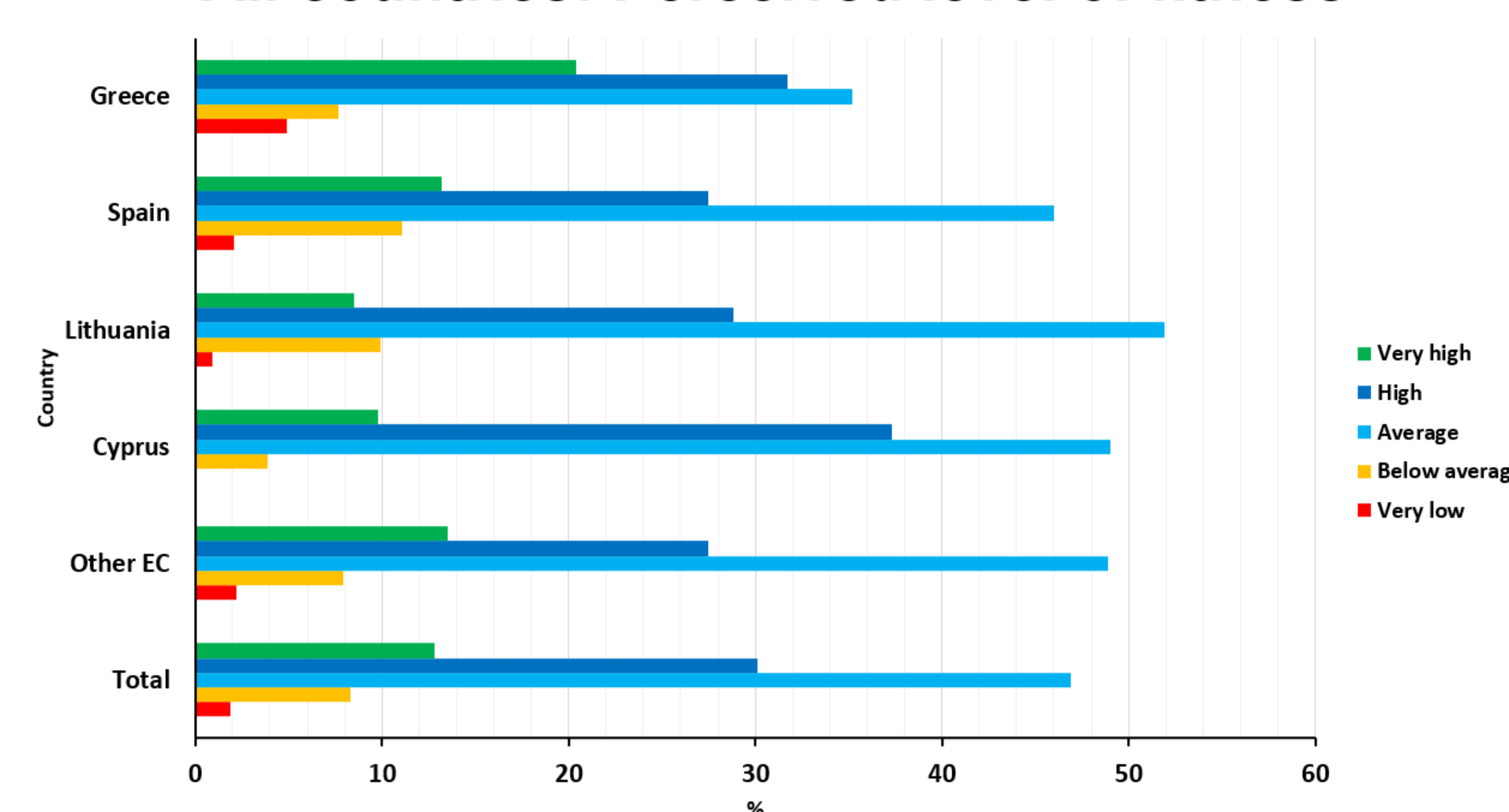
Conclusions

Consequently, there is an urgent need for implementation of physically active lifestyle interventions to minimize the negative impact of school closures due to COVID-19 pandemic on students' health. One of such strategies may be based on the results of the *SUGAPAS* project that provides a digital tool to students allowing them to decide for a healthier lifestyle.

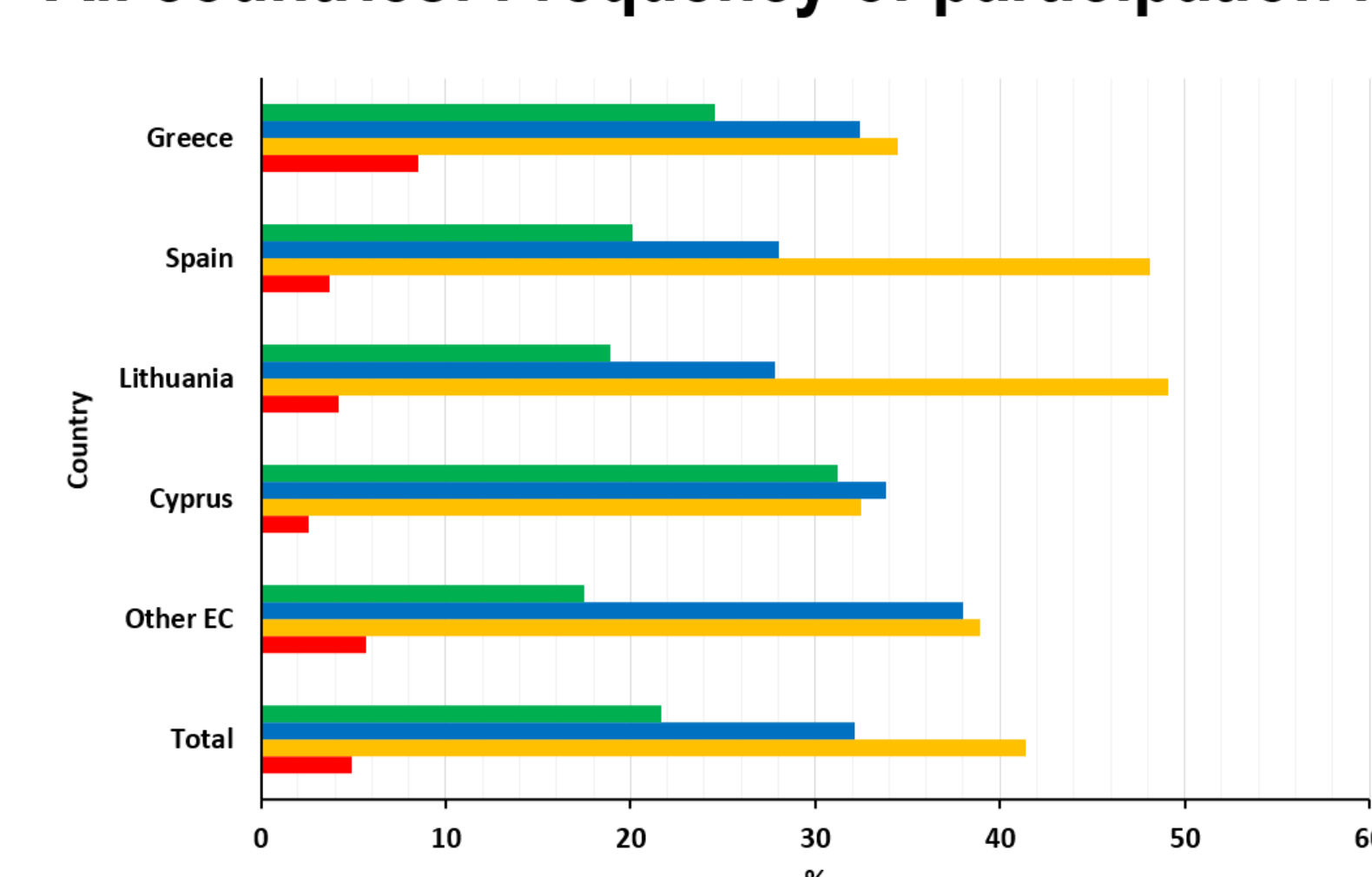
References

Xiang M., Zhang Z., Kuwahara K. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents' lifestyle behavior larger than expected. *Prog Cardiovasc Dis*, 63(4): 531–532. doi: 10.1016/j.pcad.2020.04.013

All countries: Perceived level of fitness



All countries: Frequency of participation in PA



All countries: PA-Hours of participation/week

