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**Comparison of Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Pattern in
Hong Kong and Australia**

Abstract

This study aimed to examine and compare gender and age differences in the sports participation and physical activity patterns of children in Hong Kong and Australia. The participants (N=1,538; boys = 810 and girls = 728; ages 11-16) were recruited from primary and secondary schools in both countries. A questionnaire, modeled on the Australian Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey, was used to gather views and attitudes toward physical education and physical activities, and key influences on participation. The results indicated that 70% of Hong Kong boys and 71% of Australian boys had a positive attitude toward their Physical Education (PE) class, compared to 50% for Hong Kong girls and 58% for Australian girls. In terms of total exercise time, 40% of boys and 18% of girls in Hong Kong spend 3-7 hours per week, while 70% of boys and 57% of girls in Australia spend a similar amount of time on physical activities. Australian parents, teachers and peers were reported to have significantly higher levels of involvement in children's sport participation than their Hong Kong counterparts. The perceived barriers to physical activity participation are reflected by the items, "don't have enough energy", "don't have enough time", and "got other things to do". Hong Kong children, especially girls, highlighted that "sports is not regarded as very important in my family" as one of the constraints for not doing more exercise. Findings of a follow-up interview showed that both parents and school physical education culture play equally important role to enhance children's physical activity participation.