

# Physical activity surveillance across the life-course: from data to policy

Abstract citation ID: ckac093.006

## S02-1 Physical activity and sedentary behaviour of children aged 6-9 in Europe: an analysis within the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI)

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## Background

Children are becoming less physically active for a variety of interrelated reasons. The availability of opportunities for safe active playgrounds, recreational activities and active transport has decreased, while time spend on sedentary screen-based activities has increased. This study aimed to evaluate physical activity (PA), sedentary and sleep behaviours of children aged 6-9 years in Europe using data from the WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI).

## Methods

The fourth COSI data collection round was conducted in 36 countries from 2015-2018 using a standardized protocol including a family form completed by parents with specific questions about diet and physical activity-related behaviours.

**Results**

Nationally representative data from the 24 countries, who filled in the non-mandatory family record form, were included. Information on PA, screen-time and sleep behaviours of 137,807 children were analysed. Pooled analysis showed that: one in two children walked or cycled to school every day; one in two children were members of a sport or dancing club; around 40 % of children spent at least two hours per day watching TV or using electronic devices; around four in five children were actively or vigorously playing each day; around 88 % of children slept for at least nine hours per night. Country specific analyses showed pronounced differences in prevalence estimates between countries.

**Conclusions**

While the severity of the problem varies between countries, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviours are common across the European Region. Policy makers across the Region must do more in order to increase opportunities for young people to participate in daily activities. Furthermore, they should explore solutions to reduce the amount of time spend on sedentary activities, in order to halt the rise in overweight and obesity.

**Keywords:** Screening time, screen-based activities, sleeping behaviour, family record form, parental questionnaire