



Why do young people drop out of sports?

Time-use and environmental determinants of dropout of soccer and tennis

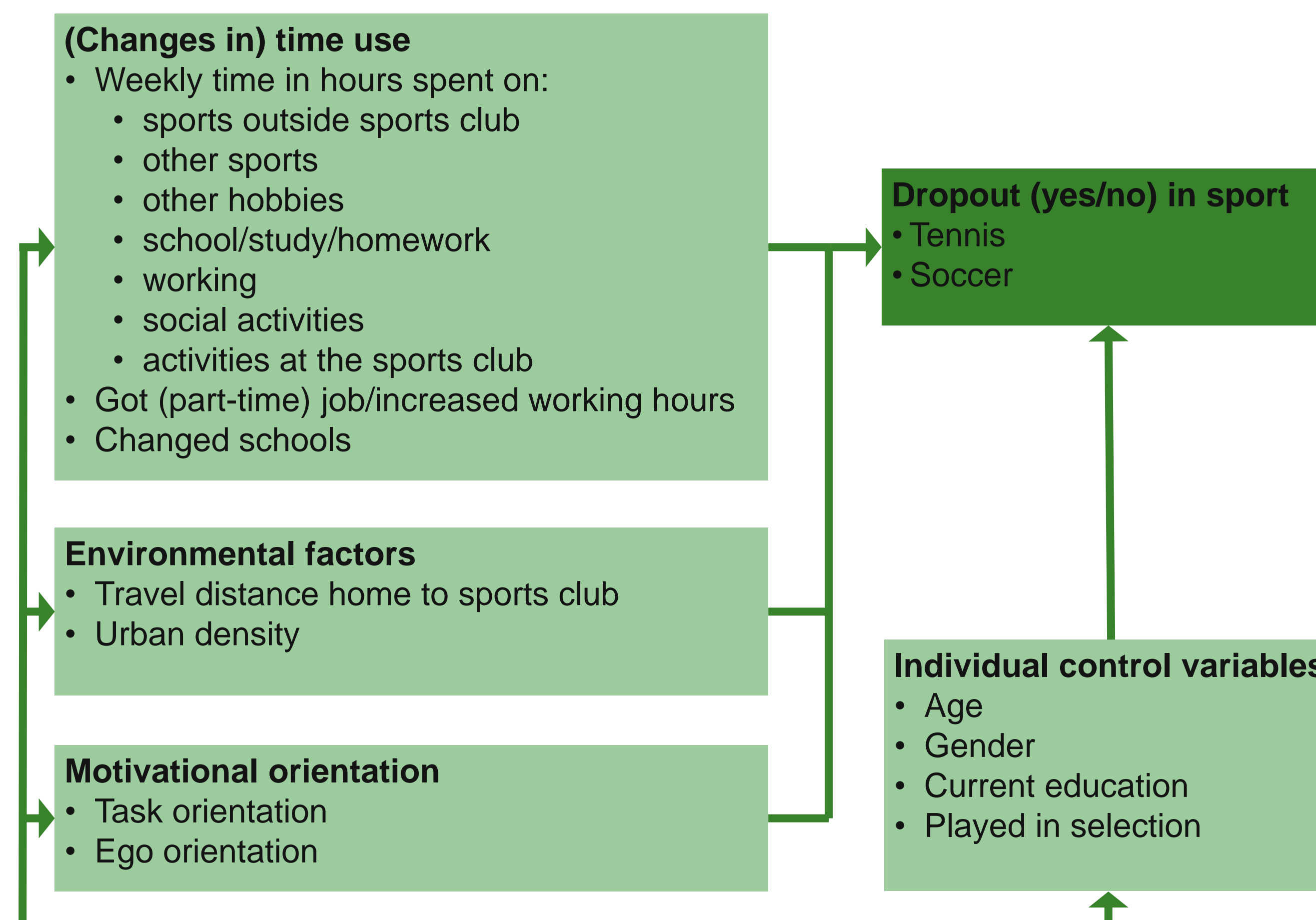
Ineke Deelen, Carlijn Kamphuis, Dick Ettema

Background

Many young people drop out of organised sports. Time pressure and competing priorities are often mentioned as reasons for dropout. However, time use factors as well as environmental determinants, such as travel distance to the sports club, have been largely neglected in the current literature on dropout of youth sports. In order to develop interventions to keep young people involved in (organized) sports and to provide sports clubs insights into reasons behind their decreasing sports membership rates, it is important to gain more insight into the underlying characteristics of time pressure and competing priorities, as well as the possible associations with environmental factors on dropout.

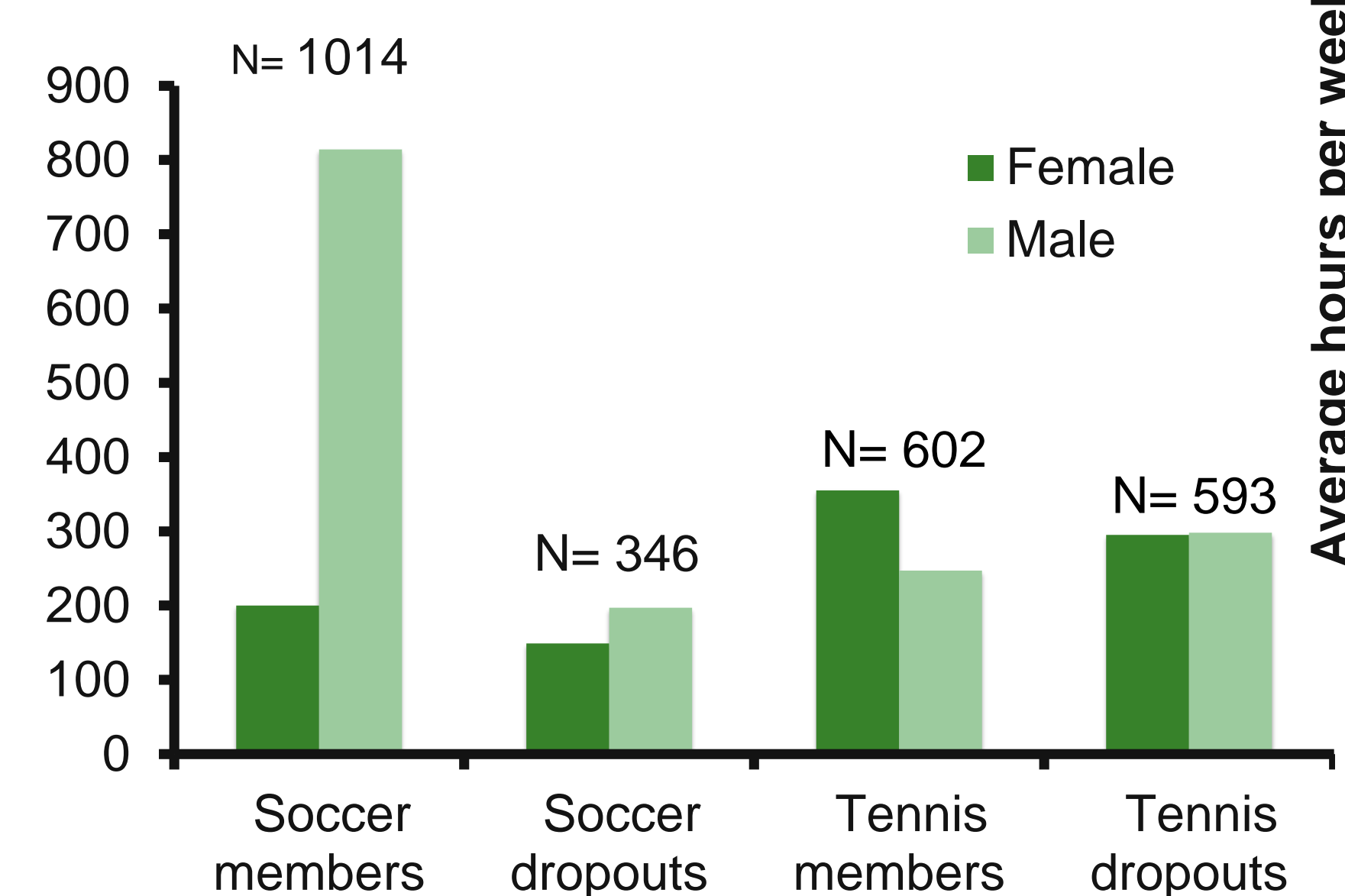
Aim: to investigate to what extent (changes in) time use characteristics, and environmental factors are associated with dropout in tennis and soccer among adolescents.

Conceptual model

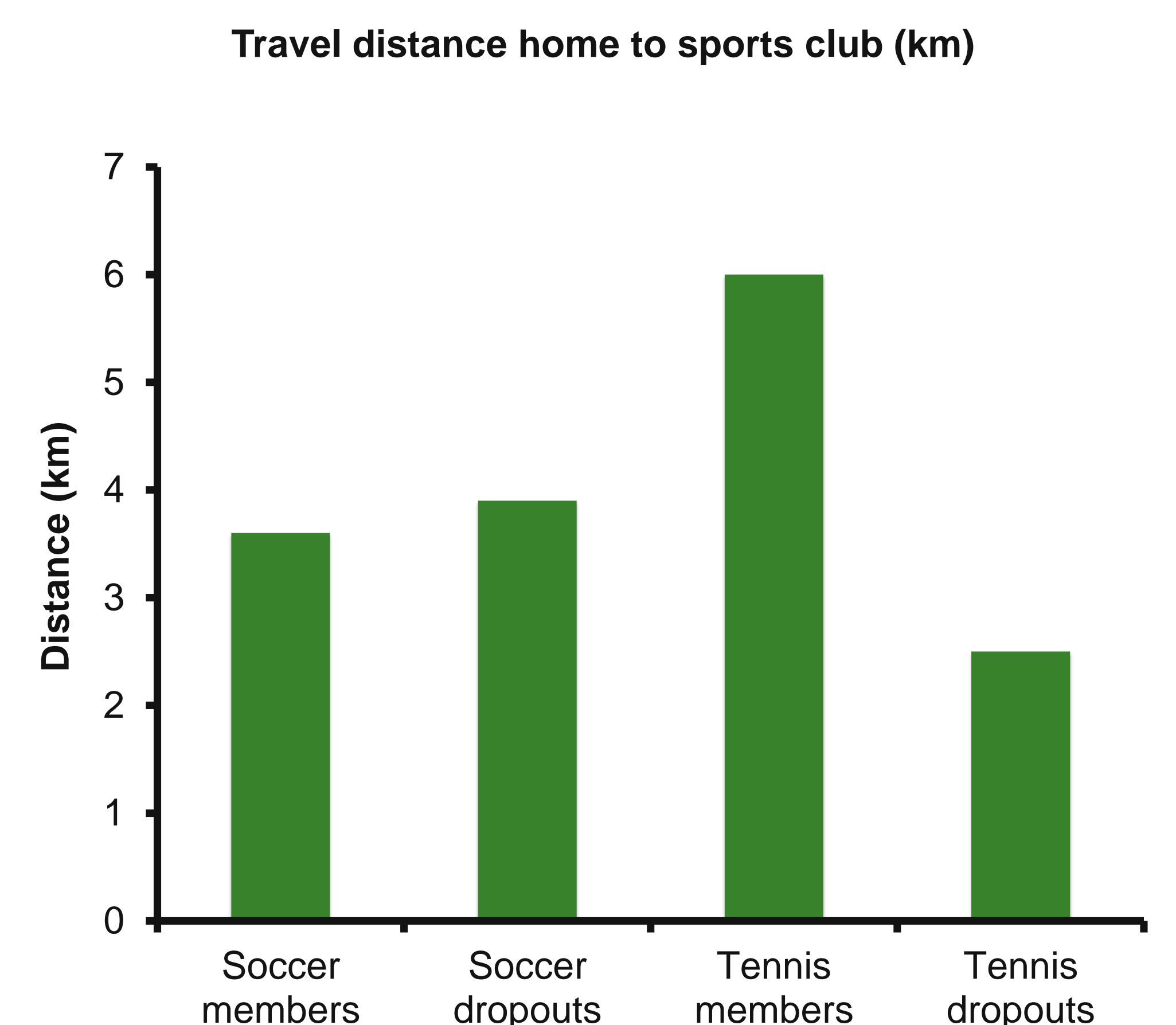
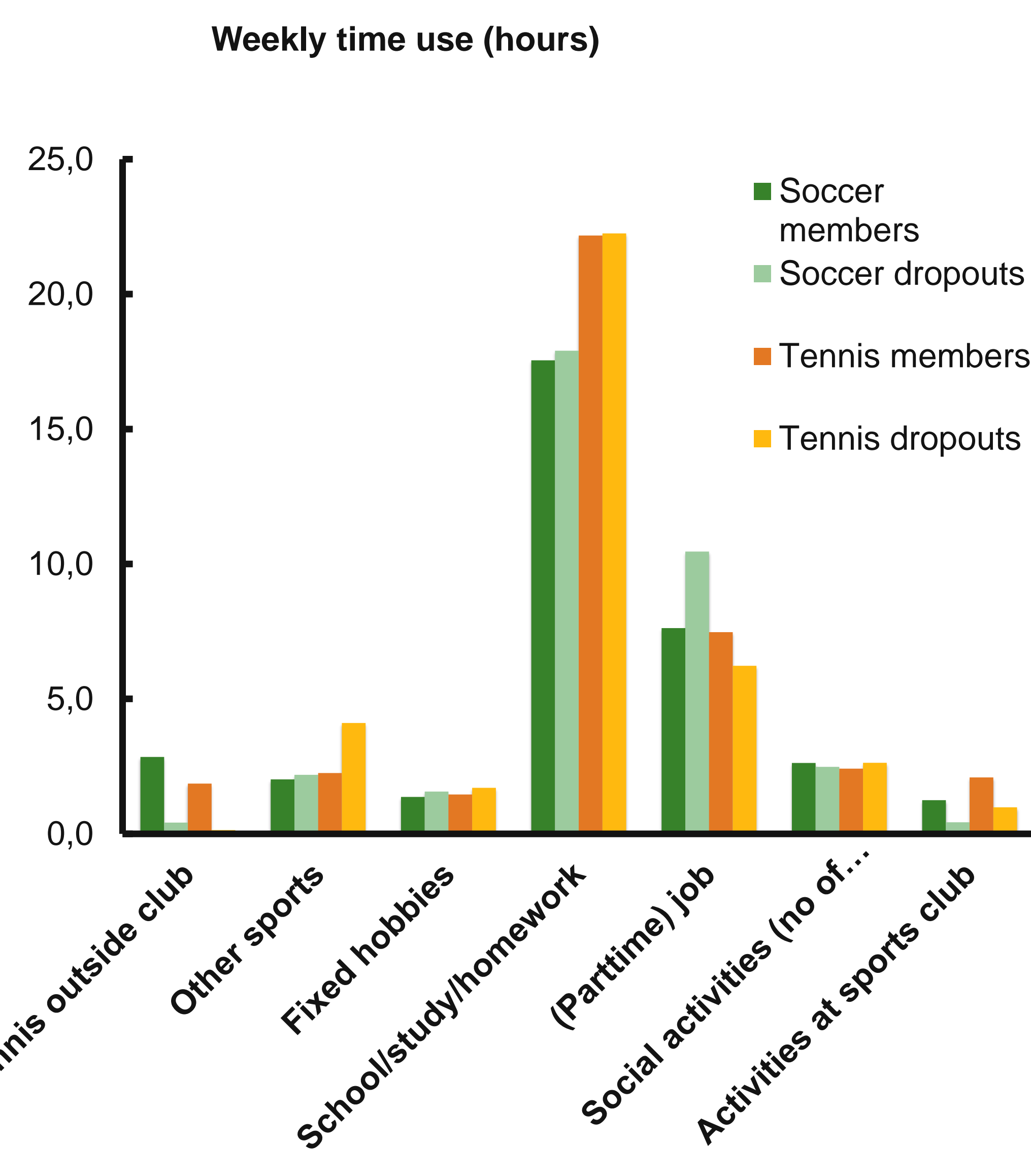


Methods and study population

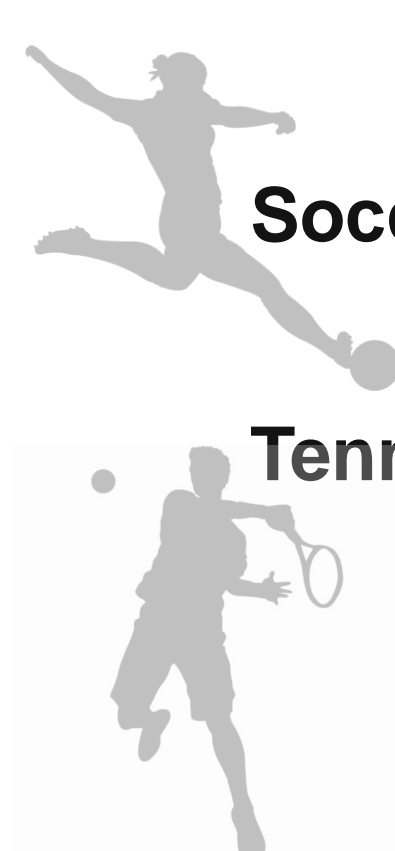
- Online questionnaire among soccer members, soccer dropouts, tennis members, tennis dropouts in the Netherlands
- Boys and girls aged 13 – 2, total N = 2555
- Travel distance (in km) from home to sports club was measured objectively, using Google's Geolocation API based on full addresses



Results: descriptives

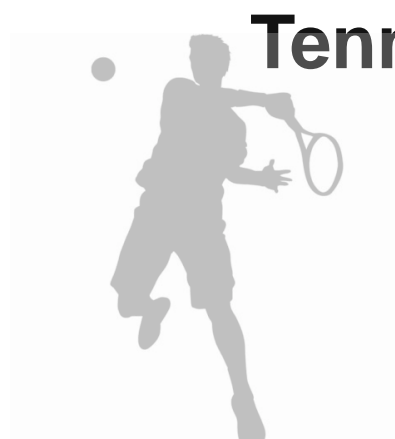


Results: probability on dropout (binary logistic regression)



Soccer players who...

- are girls (Exp. B = 1.78)



Tennis players who...

- have changed schools (Exp. B = 2.92)
- are middle high educated (vs. high educated) (Exp. B = 1.77)
- spent more time on other sports than tennis (Exp. B = 1.22)
- spent more time on social activities (Exp. B = 1.17)

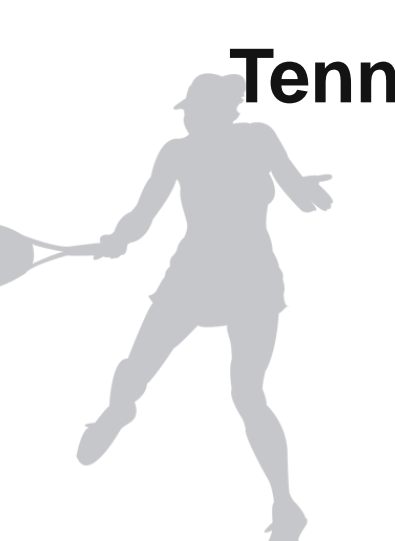
Higher probability on drop out



Soccer players who...

- spent more time on activities at sports club (Exp. B = 0.89)
- have a higher ego orientation (Exp. B = 0.85)
- have a higher task orientation (Exp. B = 0.77)
- played in selection (Exp. B = 0.69)
- spent more time on soccer outside club (Exp. B = 0.31)
- are lower educated (Exp. B = 0.07)

Lower probability on drop out



Tennis players who...

- spent more time on activities at club (Exp. B = 0.97)
- higher travel distance (Exp. B = 0.96)
- higher task orientation (Exp. B = 0.83)
- played in selection (Exp. B = 0.59)
- started (part-time) job/increased work hrs (Exp. B = 0.48)
- spent more time on tennis outside club (Exp. B = 0.28)

Conclusions

- Determinants of dropout differ to a great extent for young tennis and soccer players.
- Time use factors were more important predictors of dropout of tennis compared to soccer. Tennis players spent more time on school than soccer players, and change of schools, more time spent on other sports, and social activities were associated with higher odds on dropout of tennis.
- Environmental factors were less important for dropout, especially in soccer, which is the biggest sports in the Netherlands and spatially widely distributed throughout the country. However, tennis players who are committed to continue with playing tennis are willing to travel greater distances.

Recommendations

- To keep young people involved, sports clubs and sports unions could:
- offer more flexibility in training and competition schedules due to other obligations and interests of youth, especially for those who go to school/have to study;
 - stimulate participation in social activities and voluntary work at the sports club;
 - stimulate intrinsic motivation (whether task or ego oriented).
- Time use variables should be taken into consideration in socio-ecological models when studying (drop-out of) sports participation.

