



Erasmus+

Never too Late to Get Fit! – Get Fit!
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ERASMUS+ SPORT PROGRAMME

Action: Support to Collaborative Partnership in the field of Sport



Never too Late to Get Fit!

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On-line research in all project partners' countries to identify senior people expectations, problems and ideas according to physical sport activities and group exercises

Status: Final

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Introduction

Physical activity, health and quality of life are closely interconnected. The human body was designed to move and therefore needs regular physical activity in order to function optimally and avoid illness. It has been proved that a sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor for the development of many chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular diseases, a main cause of death in the Western world. Furthermore, living an active life brings many other social and psychological benefits and there is a direct link between physical activity and life expectancy, so that physically active populations tend to live longer than inactive ones. Sedentary people who become more physically active report feeling better from both a physical and a mental point of view, and enjoy a better quality of life.

The human body, as a consequence of regular physical activity, undergoes morphological and functional changes, which can prevent or delay the appearance of certain illnesses and improve our capacity for physical effort. At present there is sufficient evidence to show that those who live a physically active life can gain a number of health benefits, including the following:

- A reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Prevention and/or delay of the development of arterial hypertension, and improved control of arterial blood pressure in individuals who suffer from high blood pressure.
- Good cardio-pulmonary function.
- Maintained metabolic functions and low incidence of type 2 diabetes.
- Increased fat utilisation which can help to control weight, lowering the risk of obesity.
- A lowered risk of certain cancers, such as breast, prostate and colon cancer.
- Improved mineralization of bones in young ages, contributing to the prevention of osteoporosis and fractures in older ages.
- Improved digestion and regulation of the intestinal rhythm.
- Maintenance and improvement in muscular strength and endurance, resulting in an increase in functional capacity to carry out activities of daily living.
- Maintained motor functions including strength and balance.
- Maintained cognitive functions and lowered risk of depression and dementia.
- Lower stress levels and associated improved sleep quality.
- Improved self-image and self-esteem and increased enthusiasm and optimism.
- Decreased absenteeism (sick leave) from work.

- In very old adults, a lower risk of falling and prevention or delaying of chronic illnesses associated with ageing.

This activity aims to present the findings of focus group survey result about senior people's attitudes and participation in physical activity and sport.

The principle objectives of this research are:

- To provide a robust picture of attitudes and participation of senior people aged 50+ in partners' countries with regard to recreational physical activity and sport,
- To identify current barriers to participation and potential levers for change,
- To determine the proportion of senior individuals engaged in levels of physical activities in 5 partner countries (Slovenia, Italy, France, Portugal, Turkey),
- To determine recommendations that will inform future policy and communication,
- To provide a consolidated data analysis with national research findings.

The measurable nature of sports and physical activity participation will provide real insight for the project consortium to identify existing situation, expectations, needs and facilities in local environments for physical sport activities and group exercises. Findings will be used to develop WO&MEN FIT! Group Exercise Program aimed at encouraging active participation of senior people.

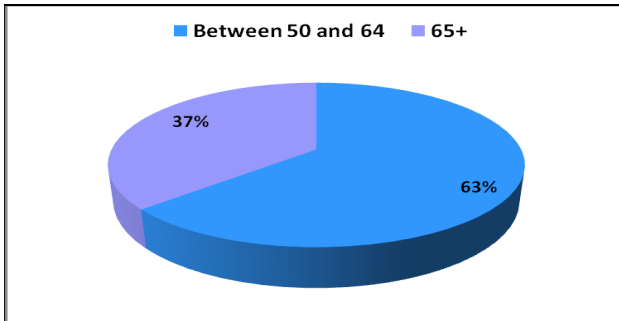
Method

Several conceptual and methodological issues must be considered when attempting to measure levels of physical activities in older adults as outcomes of interventions. These pertain to:

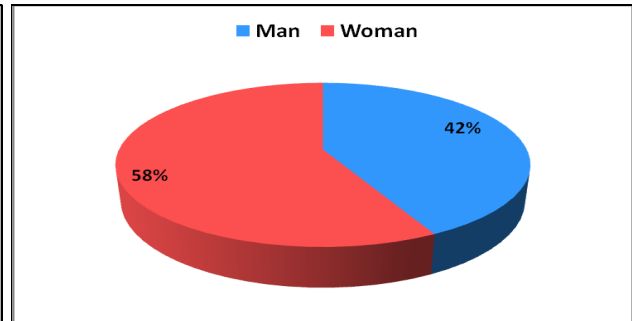
- 1) Assessing appropriate types and amounts of the activities assessed,
- 2) Designing questions and methods to facilitate accurate reporting,
- 3) Minimizing socially desirable responding,
- 4) Enhancing sensitivity to change.

Project consortium developed questionnaire to address senior people expectations, problems and ideas according to physical sport activities and group exercises. Researchers from Project partner organizations discussed each issue and indicated how addressed it in the development of the GetFit questionnaire (see Appendix-1).

219 people had participated online and face-to-face survey in 5 countries (France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey). 63% of them are between 50 and 64 years old. 58% of participants are women and 42% are men.

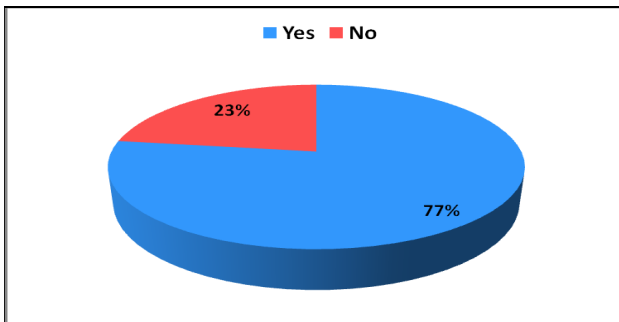


Graphic-1: Age of participants

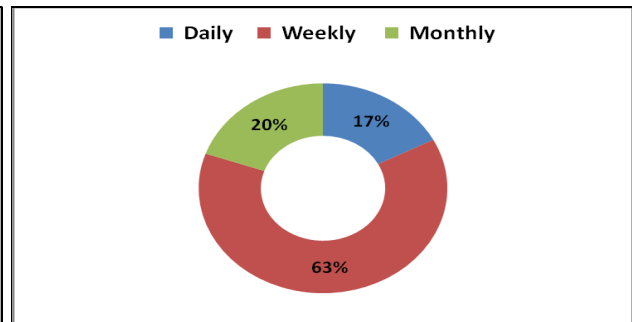


Graphic-2: Gender of participants

According to survey results, 77% of participants practice exercises or play sports regularly. Most of them practiced exercises or played sports weekly (63%).

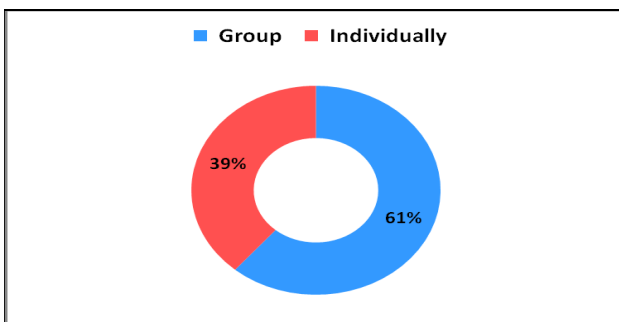


Graphic-3: Regularly practice exercises or play sports

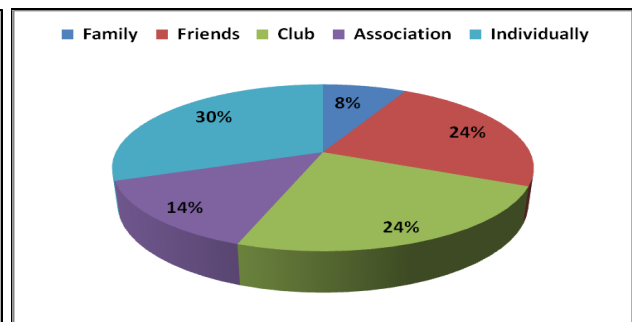


Graphic-4: Practice exercises or play sports frequency

Participants prefer practice physical and sport activities with a group (61%) such as friends, sport club members.

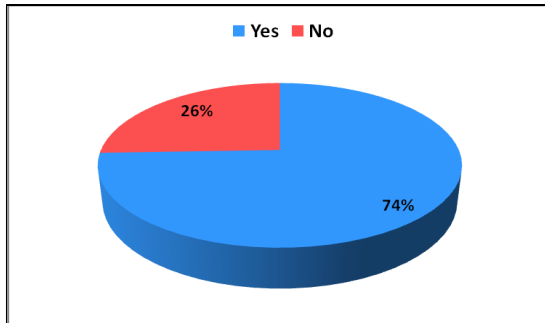


Graphic-5: Practice physical or sport activities preference

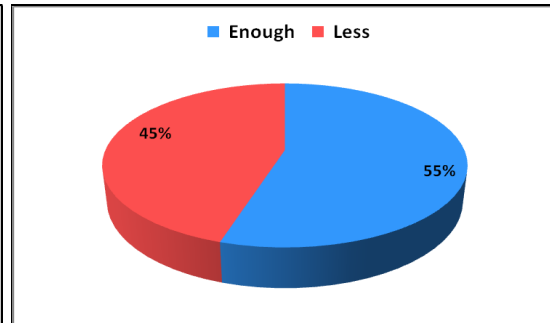


Graphic-6: Practice physical or sport activities with whom

74% of participants knows how to warm up their body before sport, and 55% of them feels that they get as much exercise as they need.

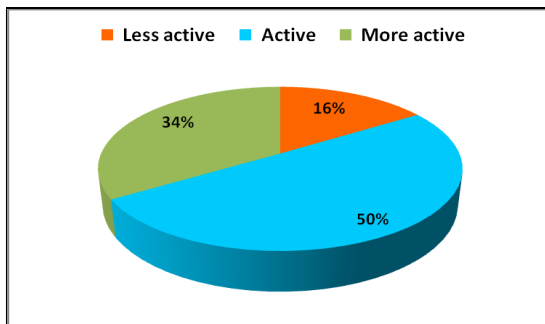


Graphic-7: Warm up body before sport

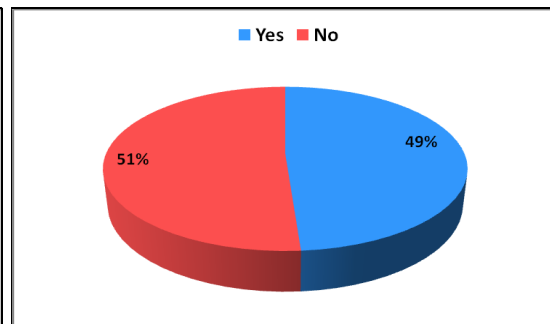


Graphic-8: Get enough or less exercise as need

Compared to other people in participants' age, 50% of them say they are physically active and only 16% of them think they are less active. Almost of them seen a doctor before starting a new sport.

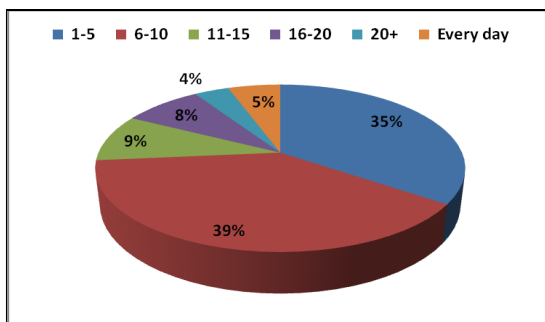


Graphic-9: Activity comparison with other people

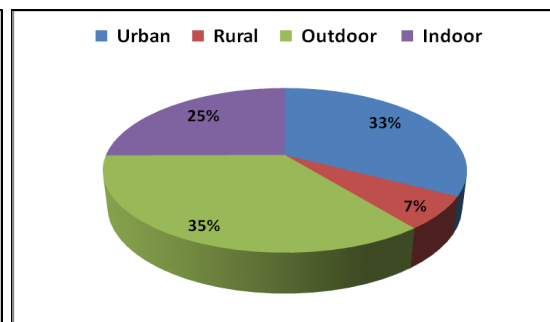


Graphic-10: Visit doctor before start a new sport

According to the participants' answers, frequency of their participation in sport and physical activity, 39% of them practice 6-10 days and 35% of them practice 1-5 days in the past four weeks. They prefer to practice physical or sport activities outdoor (35%) and urban (33%).

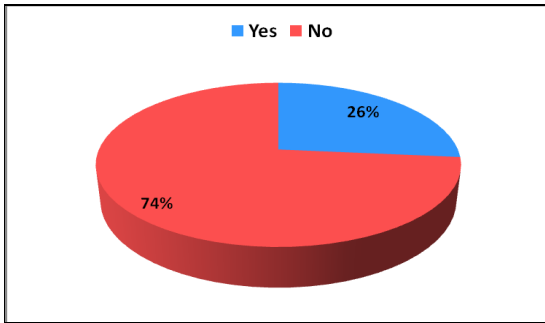
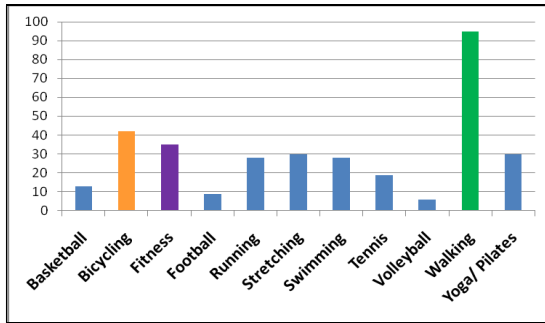


Graphic-11: Frequency of participation in activities



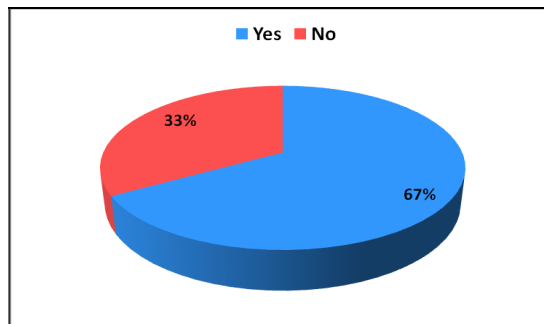
Graphic-12: Practice places of activities

Participants done different sport and physical activites during the past 4 weeks but most 3 of them are walking (95 people), bicycling (42) and fitness (35). 74% of them don't feel any difficulty during sport.



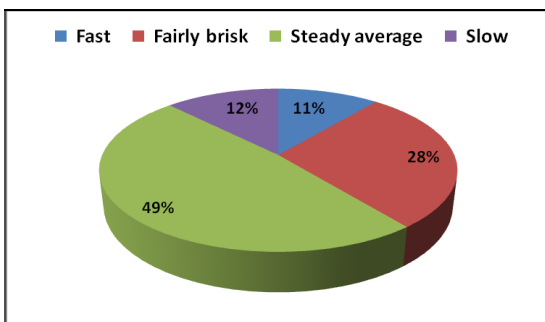
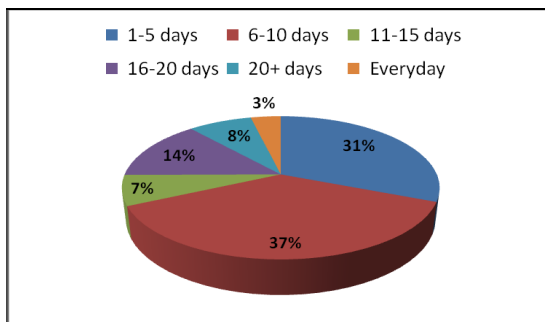
Graphic-13: Sport activities during the past 4 weeks Graphic-14: Feeling of difficulty during sport

67% of participants aware of the adequate equipment and gear to practice physical or sport activities considering health and safety.



Graphic-15: Awareness about equipment and gear considering health and safety

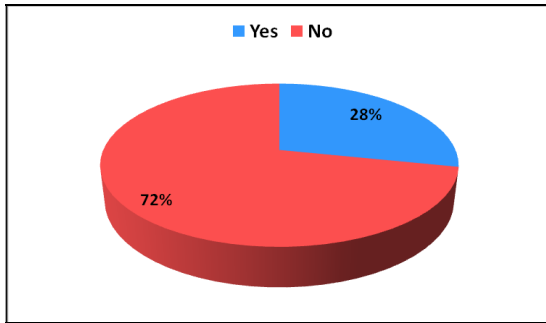
According to the answers of the participants, 37% of them practicing continuous walks (30 minutes minimum) 6-10 days in the past four weeks, and 49% of them describe their usual walking pace as steady average.



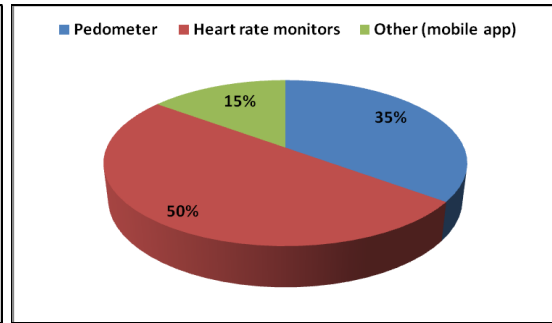
Graphic-16: practicing continuous walks frequency

Graphic-17: Walking pace style

Only 28% of participants monitor and track their physical or sport activities with heart rate monitors, pedometer and mobile applications.

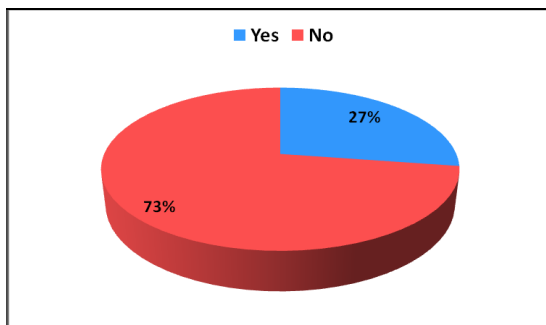


Graphic-18: Monitor and track activities

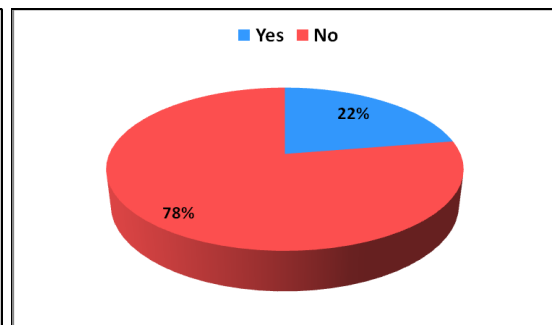


Graphic-19: Using devices to monitor and track

27% of participants use checklist system including indicators such as level of cholesterol, heart beating, weight, etc.) and 22% of them practice a specific type or physical or sport activities to address a specific medical condition such as chronic diseases, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, arthritis etc.

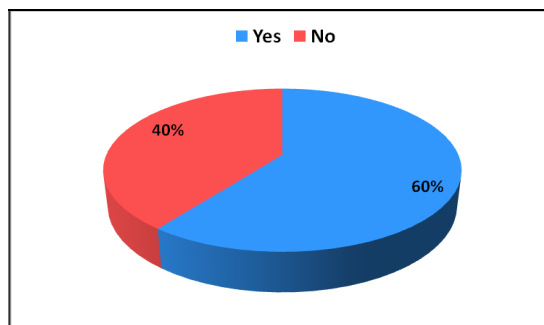


Graphic-20: Use checklist system



Graphic-21: Practice for specific medical condition

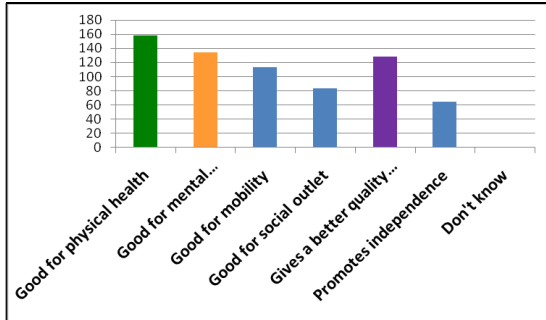
Most of the participants (60%) healthy eating goals combined with their physical or sport activities, such as high, medium or low calories burning activity.



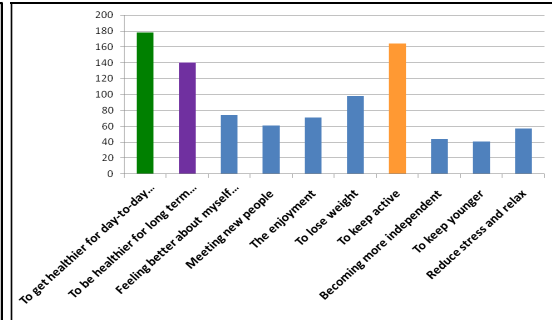
Graphic-21: Healthy eating goals combined with activities

Participants think that main benefits of exercise and physical activities for senior people are good for physical health (158 people), mental health or self esteem (134) and give a better quality of life (128).

To get healthier for day-to-day wellbeing, to keep active, to be healthier for long term wellbeing are three main motivations to increase your current levels of exercise and physical activity.

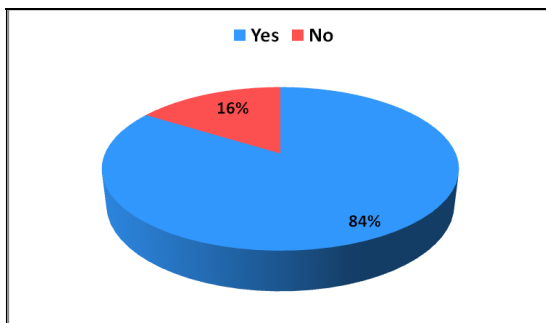


Graphic-22: Main benefits of exercise and activities

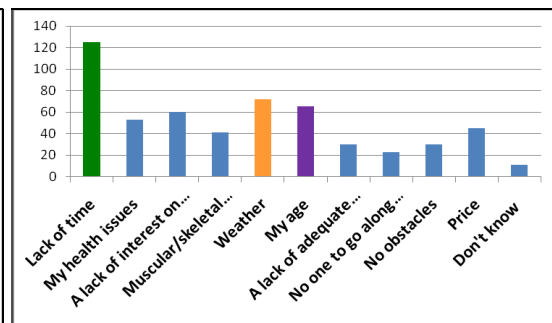


Graphic-23: Three main motivations

Most of the participants (84%) are aware of the risks that you can face when they do sport and lack of time, weather and their age are three main obstacles to increase your current levels of exercise and physical activity.

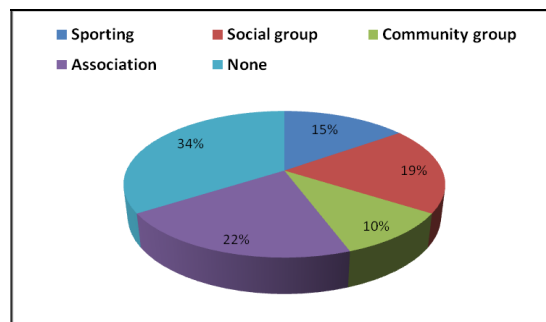


Graphic-24: Awareness about risks during exercise



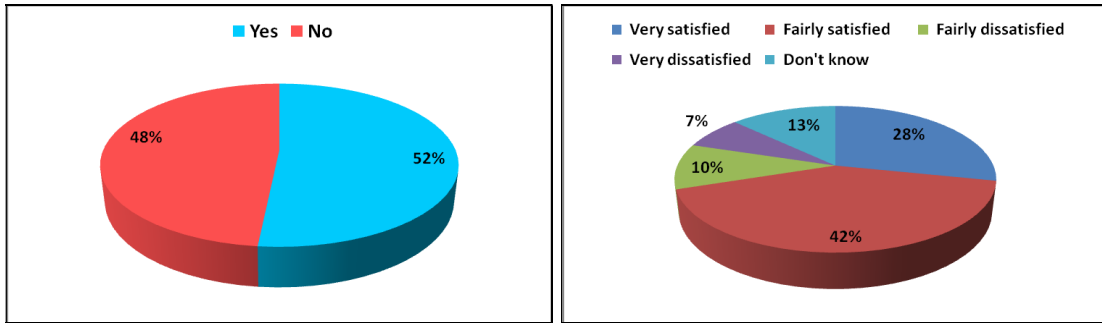
Graphic-25: Three main obstacles

34% of the participants are not members of any social, sporting, community group or club and 22% of them are member of senior associations.



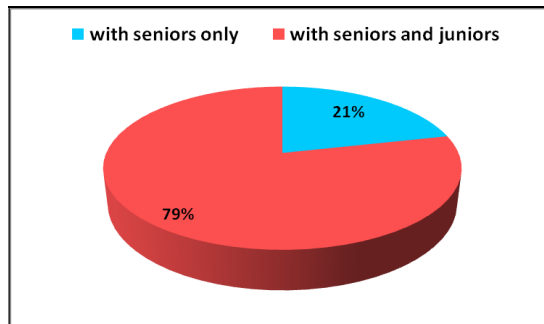
Graphic-26: Members of any social, sporting, community group or club

52% of the participants think that there is a special policy for sport and ageing in their cities and 70% of them are satisfied from facilities for physical activity or exercise targeted to senior people in their areas.



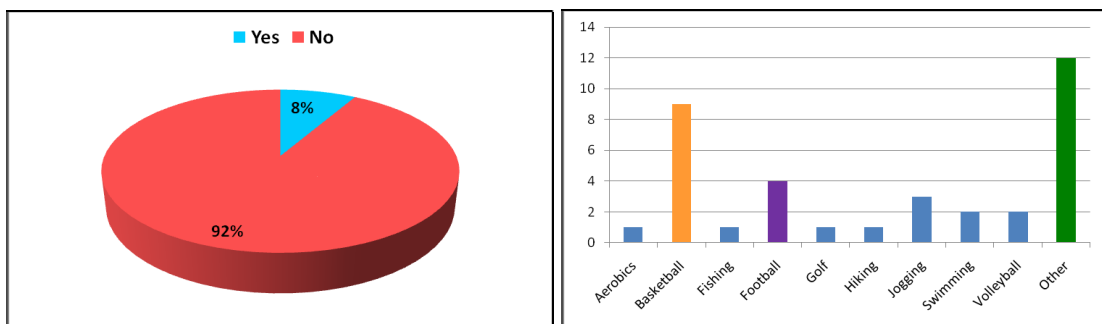
Graphic-27: Special policy for sport and ageing rate Graphic-28: Satisfaction with local facilities

79% of the participants prefer to do sport with an intergenerational group.

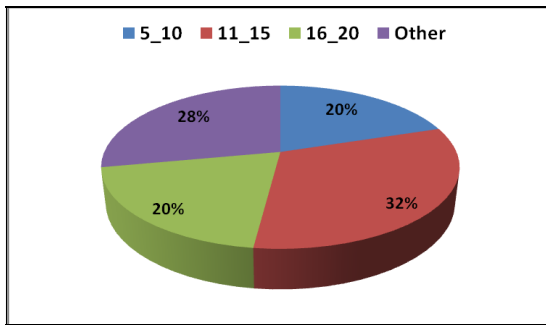


Graphic-29: Do sport preferences with intergenerational group

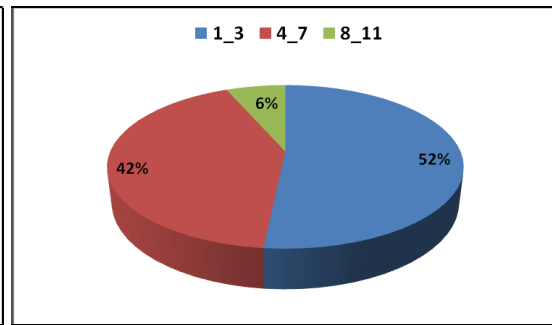
Only 8% of the participants practiced professional sports such as basketball, football, jogging, swimming and volleyball for less than 10 years (48%) at professional level with 1-3 hours (52%) or 4-7 hours (42%) trainings in a week.



Graphic-30: Participant practiced professional sports Graphic-31: Practised professional sport disciplines

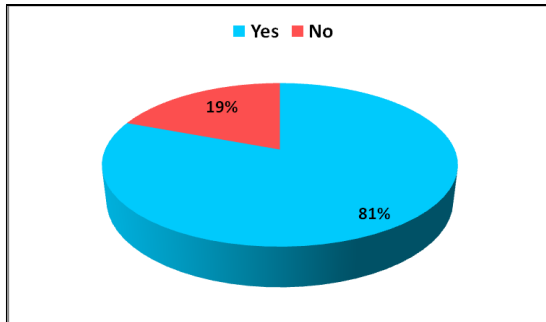


Graphic-32: Years of practiced professional sports

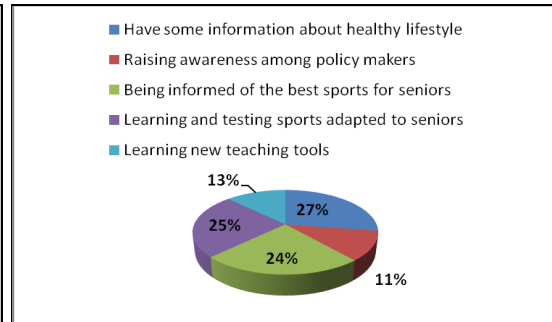


Graphic-33: Hours at week for trainings

81% of the participants have interest to join the piloting phase of the project where WO&MEN FIT! group exercises to have some information about healthy lifestyle, learning and testing new types of sport adapted to seniors and being informed of the best sports for seniors.



Graphic-34: Interest in participate piloting



Graphic-35: Expectations from piloting

Conclusion

1. People who are over 50 years old practice exercise or play sports weekly but it should be daily activity such as 30 minutes continues walk by steady average pace.
2. Physical and sport activities with a group can increase by this project and senior people should motivate to be member of social, sporting, community groups or associations to make exercise and sport activities together.
3. How to warm up senior people's body before sport is more important to decrease the during exercise.
4. It is important to inform senior people to visit them a doctor before starting a new sport.
5. Awareness of participants to use the adequate equipment and gear to practice physical or sport activities considering health and safety should increase with pilot trainings.
6. Senior people should motivate to use heart rate monitors, pedometer and mobile applications to monitor and tracking their physical or sport activities. If possible, this use should be support with a checklist system and healthy eating goals.
7. Pilot training is important to increase motivation of senior people and believe themselves to practice exercise and physical activities to keep physical health, mental health or self esteem and to be healthier for long term wellbeing and get a better quality of life.
8. Lack of time, weather and senior people's age should not be the obstacles to increase their current levels of exercise and physical activities so trainers should inform them about the possibilities to make exercise and activities both in indoor and outdoor public places with intergenerational groups.
9. Physical activities and sport activities such as carry bags, dance and bowls should be try with seniors who will participate pilot activities to build strength and improve balance of them.
10. Most of the participants have interest to join the piloting phase of the project where WO&MEN FIT! group exercises to have some information about healthy lifestyle, learning and testing new types of sport adapted to seniors and being informed of the best sports for seniors. Those should be consider and prepared for the pilot training.



Annexes

Annex-1: Survey Questionnaire

Please think about all the activities you did in the past four weeks, socially, casually or for specifically to improve your health and fitness.

1. What is your age?

- Between 50 and 64
- 65+

2. What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman

3. Do you practice exercises or play sports regularly?

- Yes
- No

4. How frequently have you practiced exercises or played sports regularly?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

5. Do you practice physical or sport activities with a group or individually?

- Group
- Individually

6. Whom do you practice sport with?

- Family
- Friends
- Club
- Association
- Individually

7. Do you know how to warm up your body before sport?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you feel that you get as much exercise as you need, or less than you need?

- Enough
- Less

9. Compared to other people your age, would you say you are physically more active, less active, or about as active?

- Less active
- Active
- More active



10. Have you seen a doctor before starting a new sport?

- Yes
- No

11. What is the frequency of your participation in sport and physical activity? Please indicate how many days of practice in the past four weeks.

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+
- Every day

12. Where do you usually practice physical or sport activities?

- Urban
- Rural
- Outdoor (public parks, etc.)
- Indoor (gymnasium, fitness club)

13. Which sport activity have you done during the past 4 weeks?

- Aerobics
- Basketball
- Bicycling
- Bowling
- Dance
- Fishing
- Fitness
- Football
- Golf
- Hiking
- Jogging
- Racquetball
- Rowing
- Running
- Skiing
- Stretching
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Other
- Yoga/ Pilates
- Aqua-gym

14. Did you feel any difficulty during sport?

- Yes
- No



15. Are you aware of the adequate equipment and gear to practice physical or sport activities considering health and safety?

- Yes
- No

16. What is the frequency of your participation in sport and physical activity? Please indicate how many days you have been practicing continuous walks (30 minutes minimum) in the past four weeks.

- 1-5 days
- 6-10 days
- 11-15 days
- 16-20 days
- 20+ days
- Everyday

17. How would you describe your usual walking pace?

- Fast
- Fairly brisk
- Steady average
- Slow

18. Do you monitor and track your physical or sport activities?

- Yes
- No

If yes, do you use specific devices such as pedometer, heart rate monitors, fitness trackers, calories' calculator, etc.?

- Pedometer
- Heart rate monitors;
- Others (please specify):

If yes, do you use a checklist system including indicators such as level of cholesterol, heart beating, weight, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

19. Do you practice a specific type or physical or sport activities to address a specific medical condition such as chronic diseases, high blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, arthritis etc.?

- Yes
- No

20. Do you have healthy eating goals combined with your physical or sport activities, such as high, medium or low calories burning activity?

- Yes
- No



21. What do you consider to be the main benefits of exercise and physical activities for people of your age, generally? (Multiple answers are possible)

- It is good for your physical health
- It is good for your mental health or self esteem
- It is good for your mobility
- It is good for your social outlet
- It gives a better quality of life
- It promotes independence
- Don't know

22. What are the three main motivations to increase your current levels of exercise and physical activity?

- To get healthier for day-to-day wellbeing
- To be healthier for long term wellbeing
- Feeling better about myself generally
- Meeting new people
- The enjoyment
- To lose weight
- To keep active
- Becoming more independent
- To keep me younger
- Nothing
- Don't know
- Reduce stress and relax

23. Are you aware of the risks that you can face when you do sport?

- Yes
- No

24. What are the three main obstacles to increase your current levels of exercise and physical activity?

- Lack of time
- My health issues
- A lack of interest on my part
- Muscular/skeletal problems
- Weather
- My age
- A lack of adequate facilities locally
- No one to go along with me
- No obstacles
- Don't know
- Price

25. Are you a member of any social, sporting, community group or club?

- Sporting
- Social group
- Community group
- Association (about sports, active ageing, seniors)
- None



26. Is there a special policy for sport and ageing in your city?

- Yes
- No

27. How would you rate your level of overall satisfaction with facilities for physical activity or exercise targeted to senior people in your area?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

28. Do you prefer to do sport with an intergenerational group or in a group composed with seniors only?

- With seniors only
- With seniors and juniors

29. Do you have practiced Professional Sports?

- Yes
- No

30. What sport professional discipline you practiced?

- Aerobics
- Basketball
- Bicycling
- Bowling
- Dance
- Fishing
- Football
- Golf
- Hiking
- Jogging
- Racquetball
- Rowing
- Running
- Skiing
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Other _____

31. How many years have you practiced your sport at a professional level?

- 5-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- Other _____



32. How many hours at week for trainings?

- 1-3
- 4-7
- 8-11
- Other _____

33. Do you have participated in international competitions on behalf of your Sports Federation?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which federation?

34. Would you like to cooperate voluntarily with a sports organization?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which is the reason?

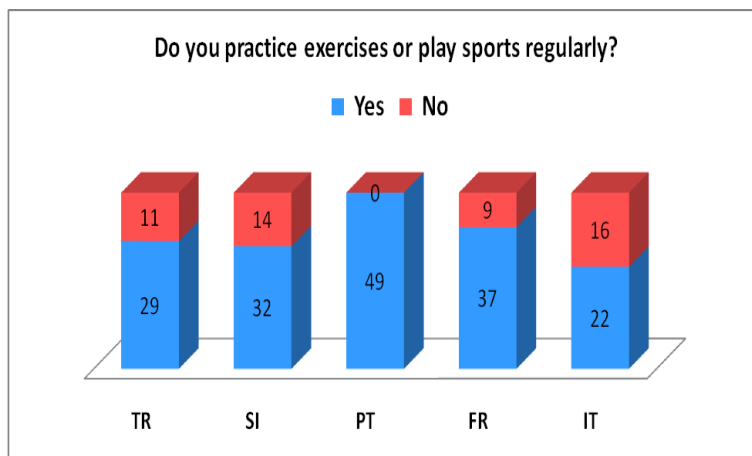
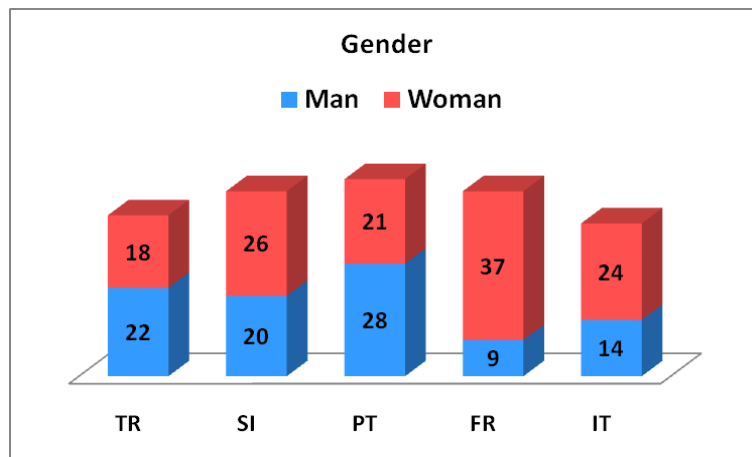
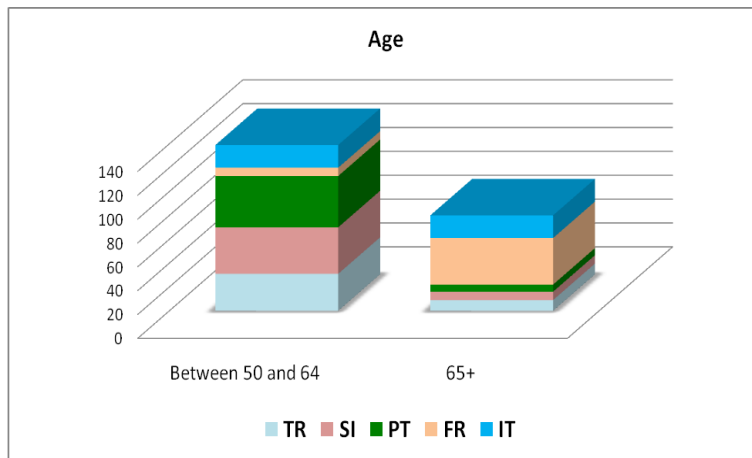
35. Do you have an interest in participating in the piloting phase of the project where WO&MEN FIT! group exercises will be implemented?

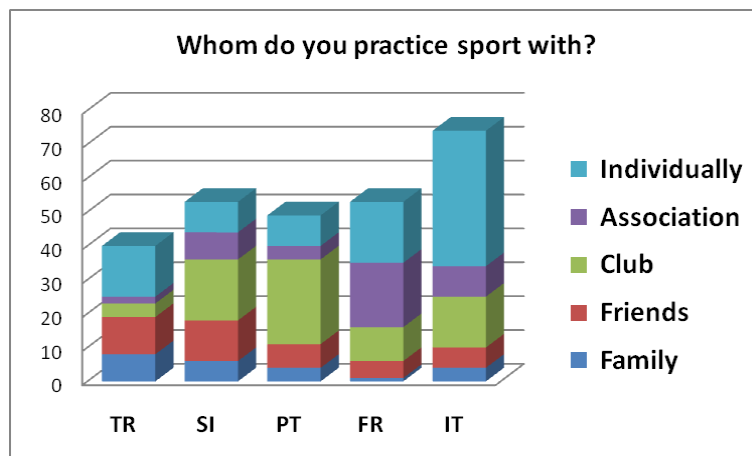
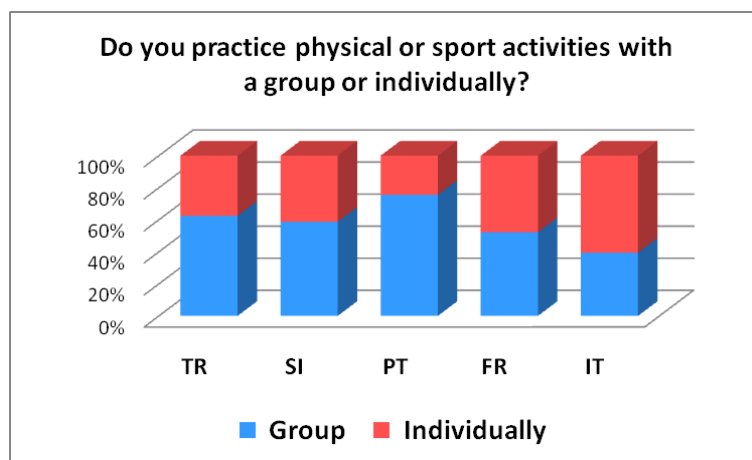
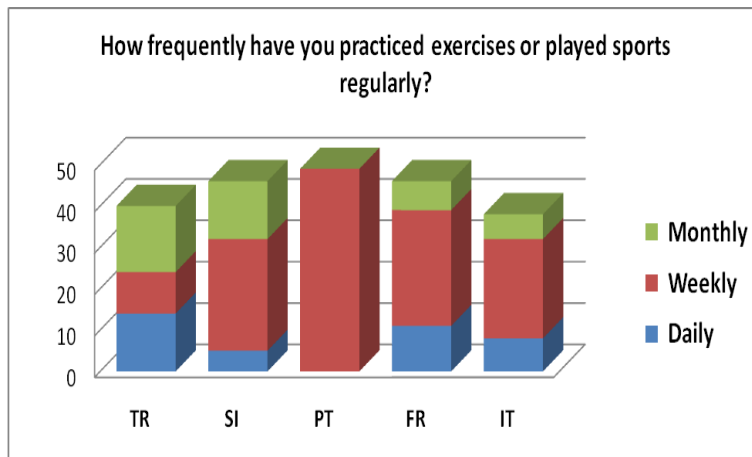
- Yes
- No

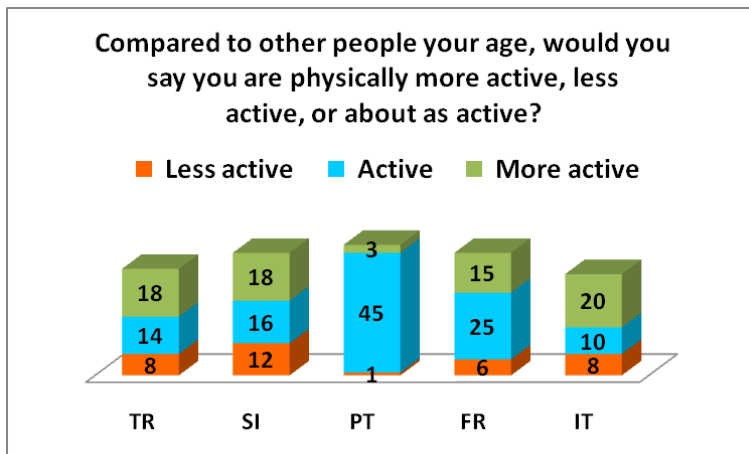
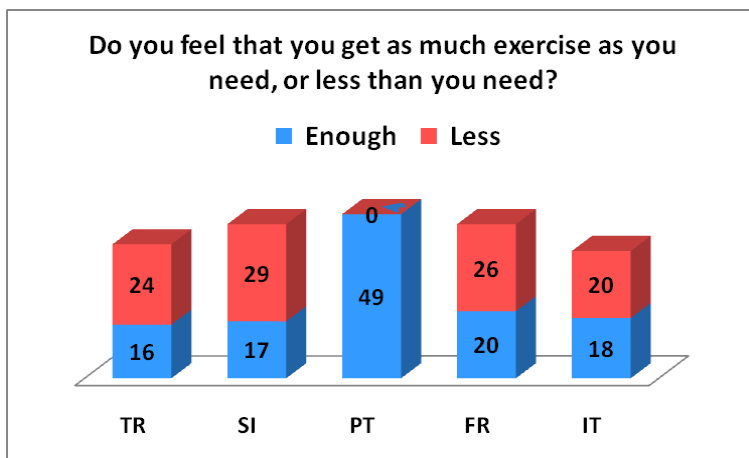
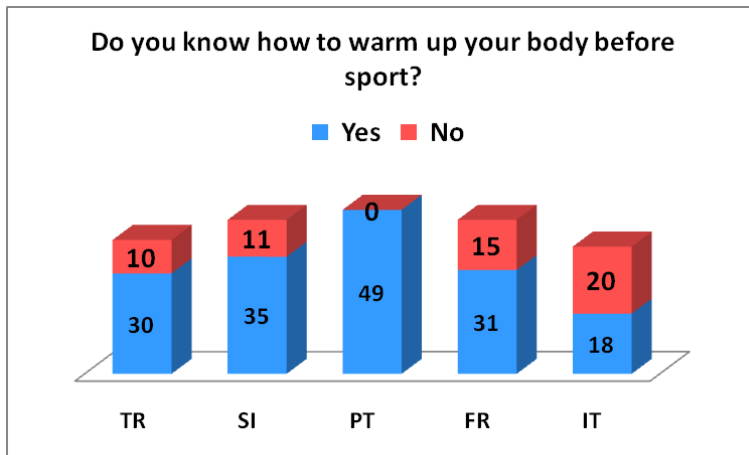
If yes, what do you expect from this project?

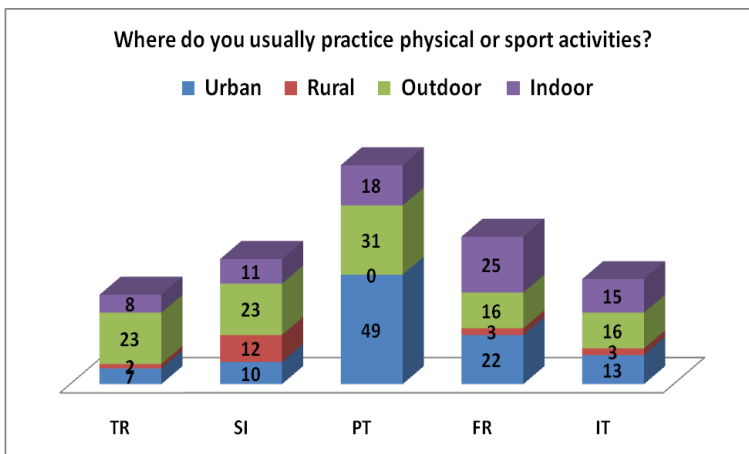
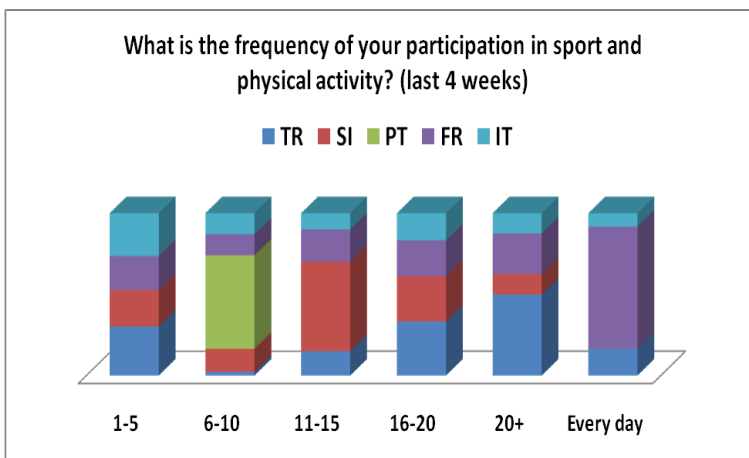
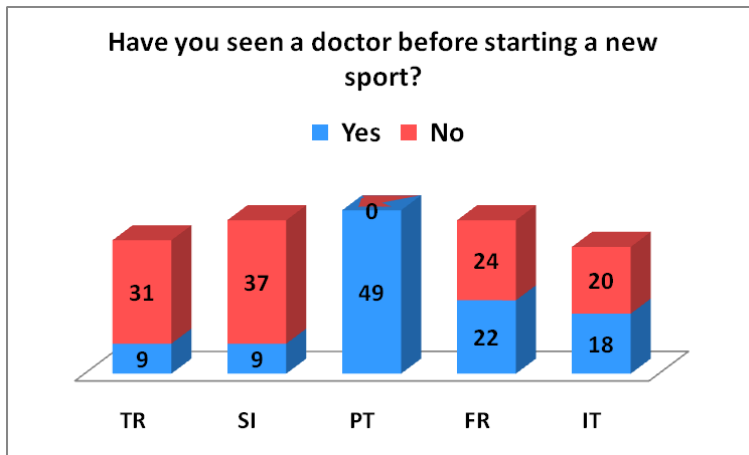
- Have some information about healthy lifestyle
- Raising awareness among policy makers and deciders about needs for adapted places to do sport
- Being informed of the best sports for seniors
- Learning and testing new types of sport adapted to seniors
- Learning new teaching tools or methods to train seniors
- Other

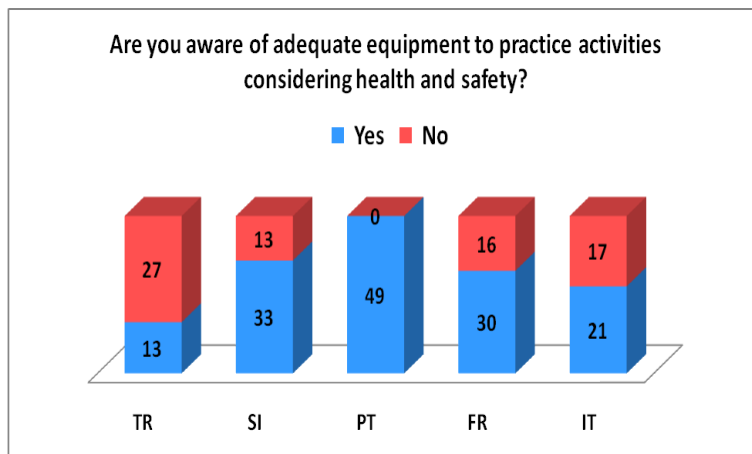
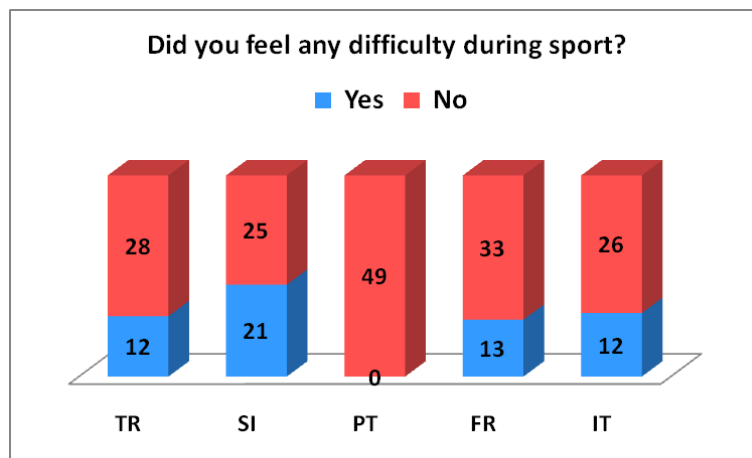
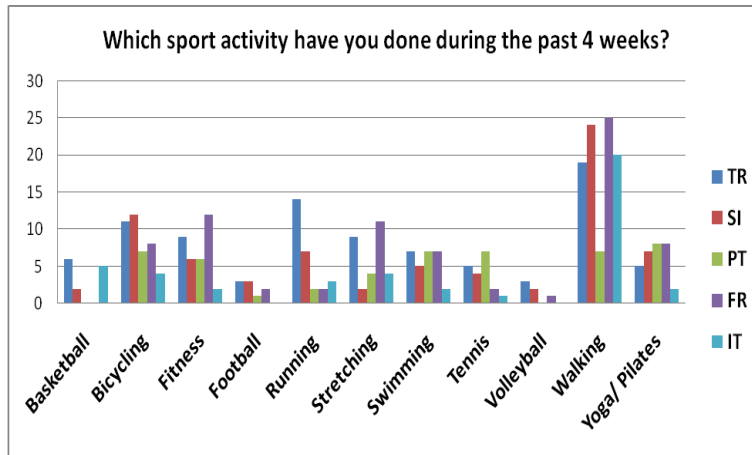
Annex-2: Survey Results with participant countries data

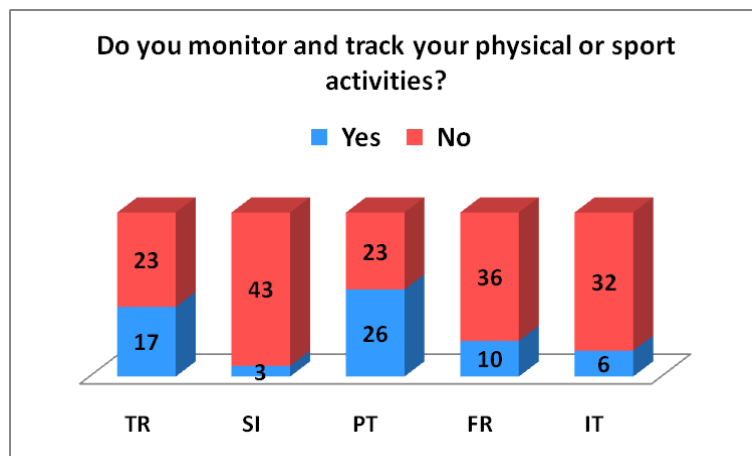
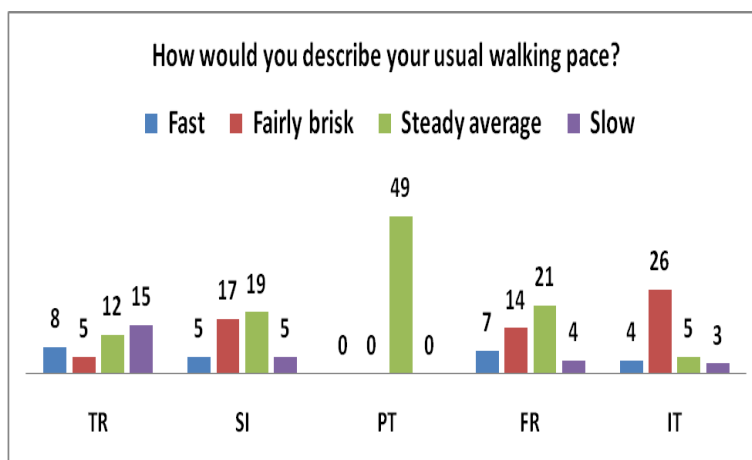
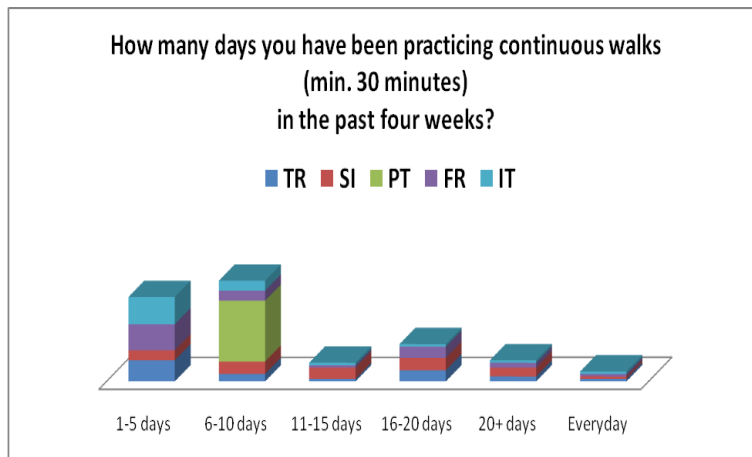


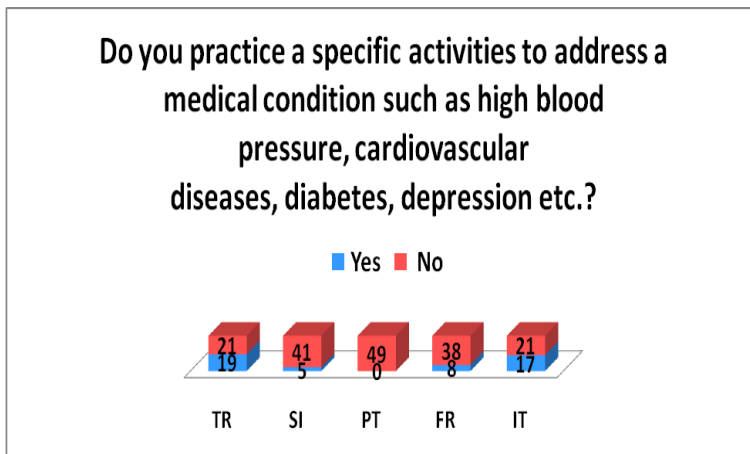
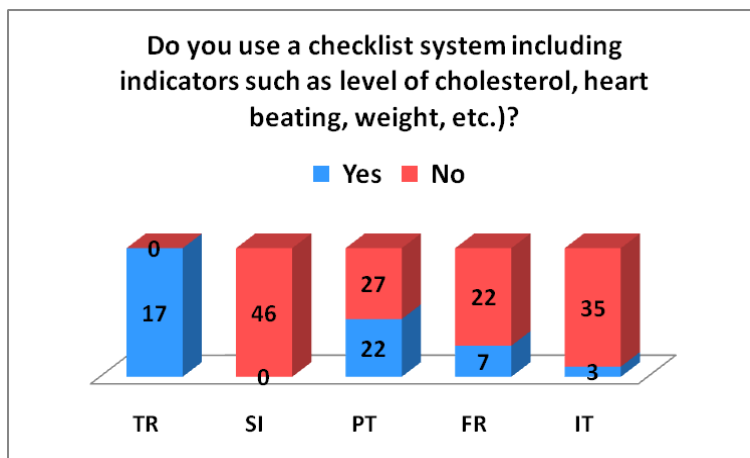
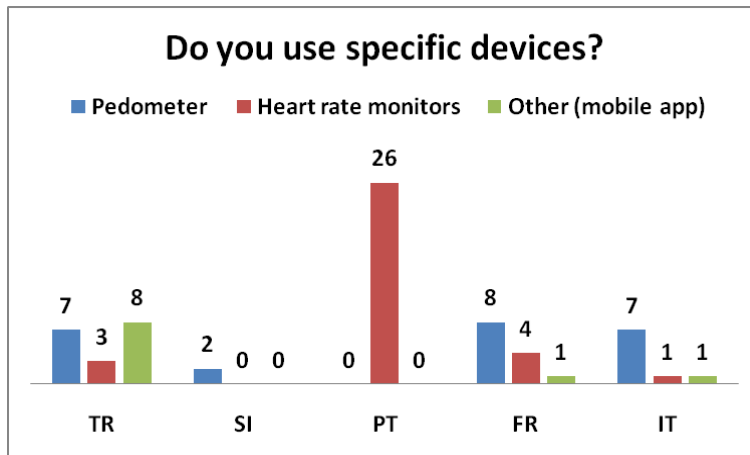


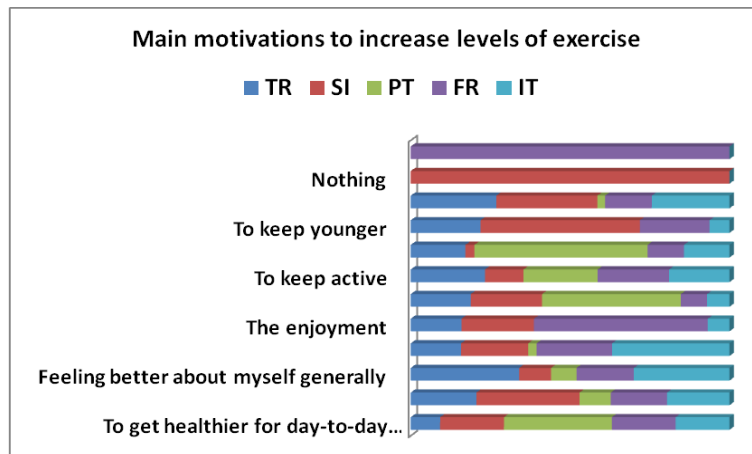
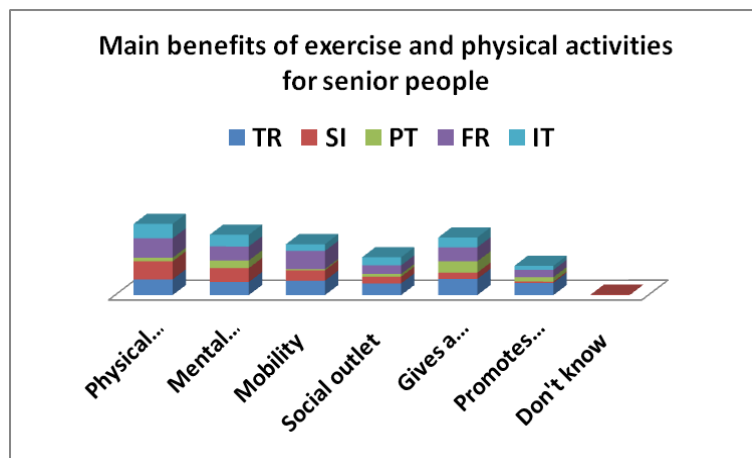
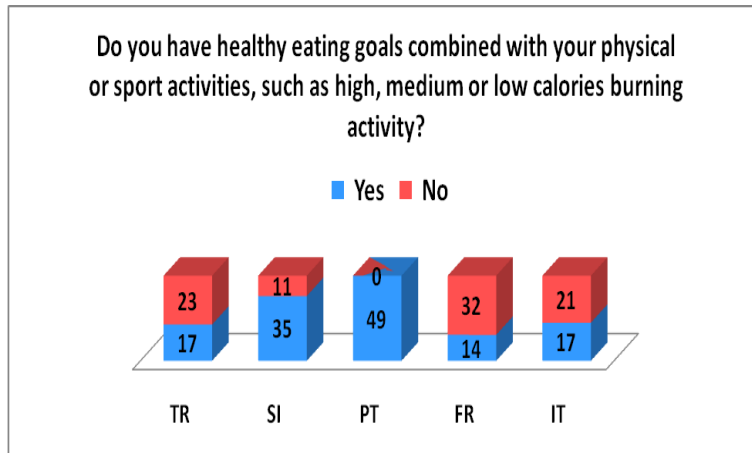


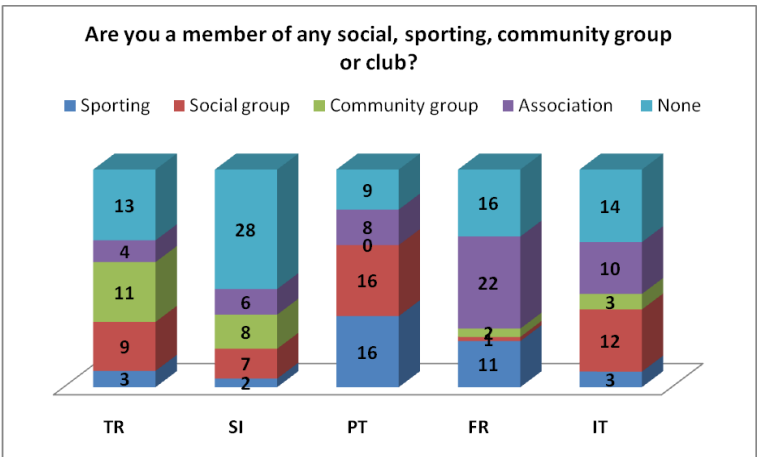
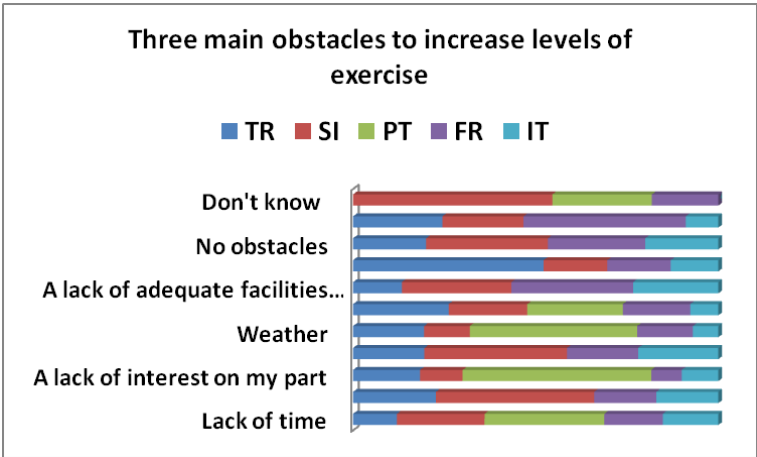
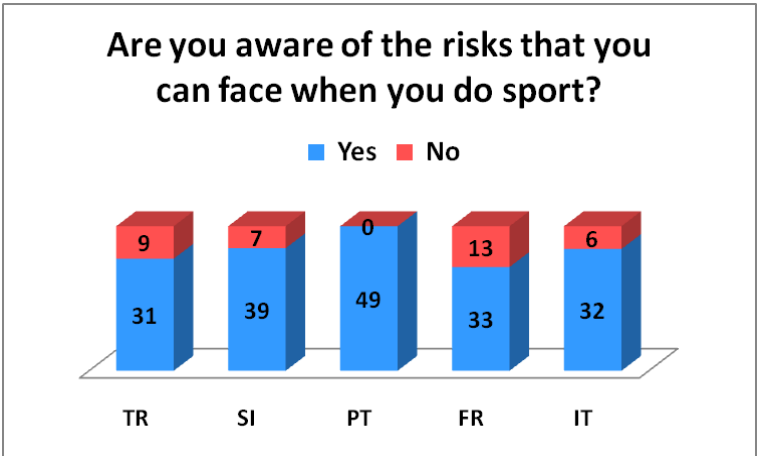


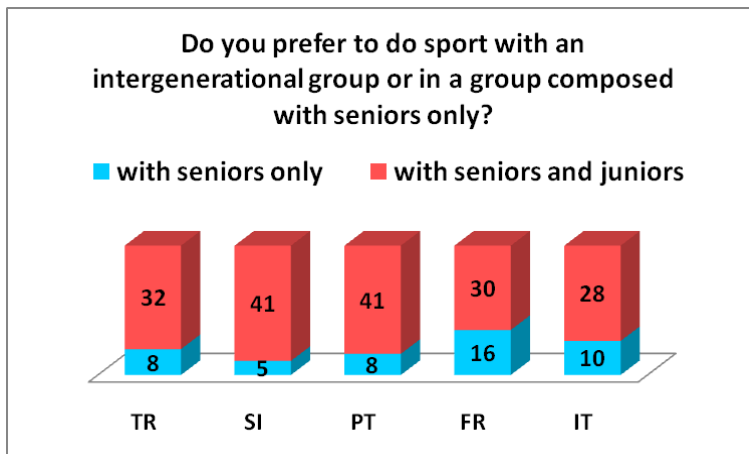
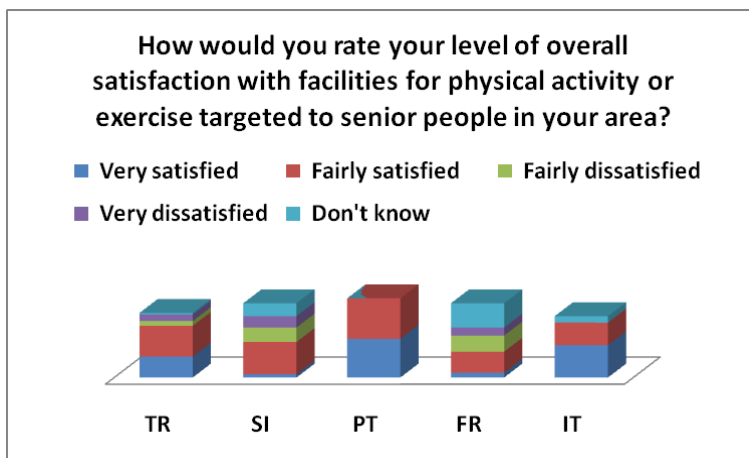
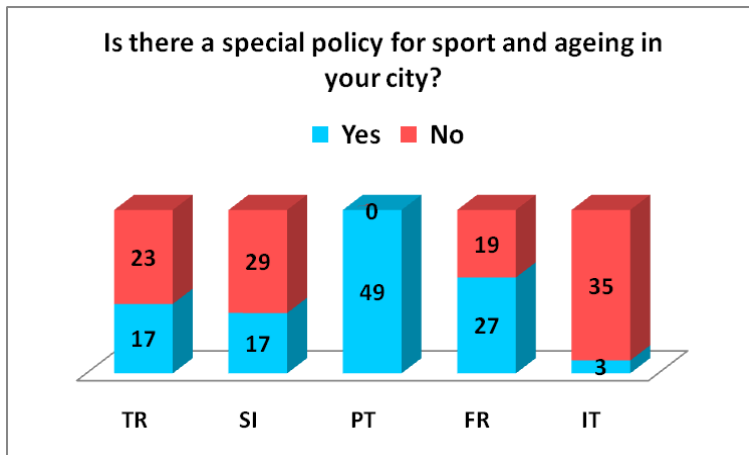


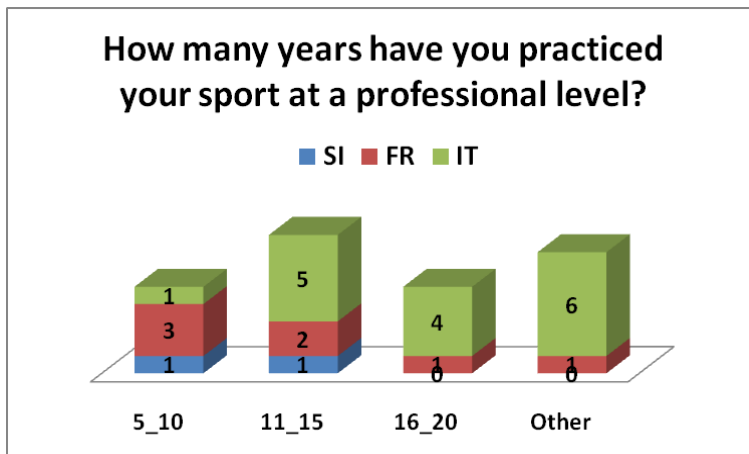
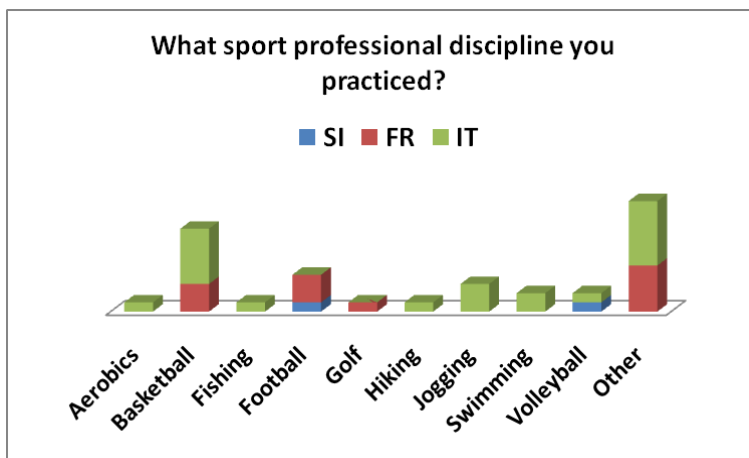
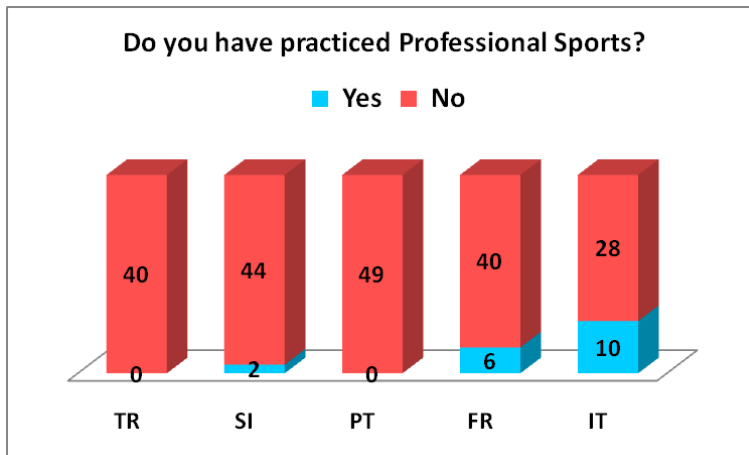


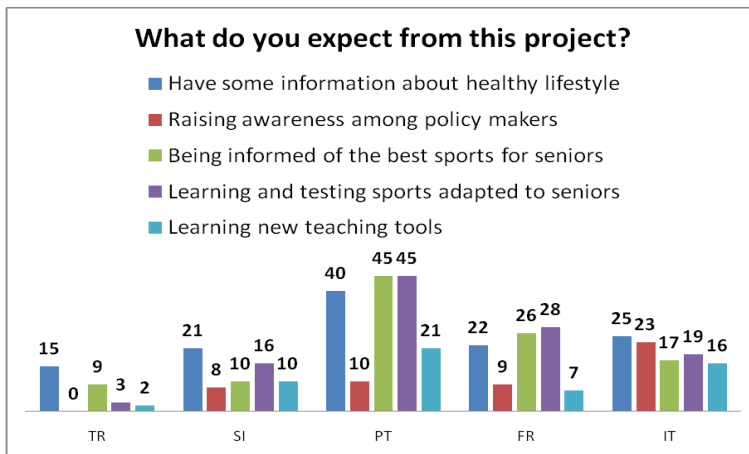
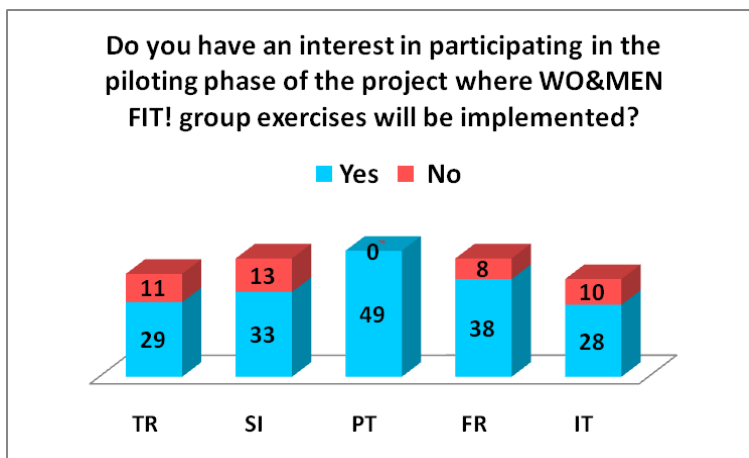
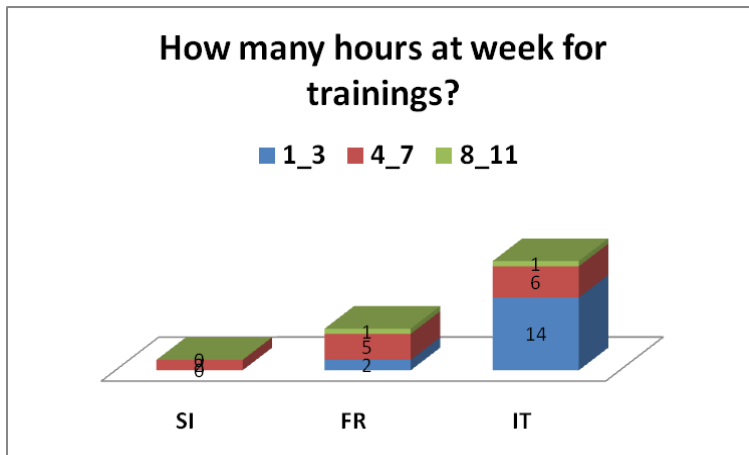












Resources

1. EU Physical Activity Guidelines: Recommended Policy Actions in Support of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity, Approved by the EU Working Group "Sport & Health" at its meeting on 25 September 2008
2. Liza Stathokostas, Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults, A Step-by-Step Guide. The Physical Activity Resource Center (PARC), 2013, ISBN 978-1-926555-99-7.
3. Anita L. Steward and others, CHAMS Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Adults: outcomes for interventions, 2001, American College of Sports Medicine.
4. Physical Activity as Sport - Participation and Attitudes of Older People in Ireland, 2007, Research Report Prepared by Ipsos MORI.
5. [http://www.physio-pedia.com/Physical_Activity_Scale_for_the_Elderly_\(PASE\)](http://www.physio-pedia.com/Physical_Activity_Scale_for_the_Elderly_(PASE))