



**Participation in physical activity among adolescents with
autism spectrum disorder**

- the perspectives of adolescents, parents and professionals
av

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract

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Findings from previous research show generally lower levels of physical activity (PA) among adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The reasons for the low PA participation are complex and depend on several factors, often described as barriers to PA. However, the overall picture concerning participation in PA among adolescents with ASD remains incomplete, as it lacks the adolescents' own perspectives. The mission to promote healthy PA habits is shared by several actors, including the family or parents and the education, health and municipal services. In order to understand and comprehensively describe these adolescents' PA participation, different PA contexts and perspectives need to be included. The overall aim of this thesis was therefore to study participation in PA among adolescents with ASD from the adolescents' (study I), parents' (study II) and professionals' (study III) perspectives. The findings from study I showed a conditional participation behaviour in PA among adolescents with ASD. In studies II and III, the results revealed a need to give PA issues increased priority and support through collaborative efforts. Complementary roles are needed to promote participation in PA. In study IV, the feasibility of using a Q-sort tool to map conditions for participation in PA was investigated. The results showed that Q-sort is a feasible method that can be used to offer tailored support according to the adolescents' individual-specific conditions for participation. In conclusion, a condition-controlled behaviour when participating in PA was described in all four studies. When promoting participation in PA, these individual-specific conditions for participation need to be recognized and tailored support offered.

Keywords: Autism spectrum disorder, adolescent, child, physical activity, physical education, participation, socio-ecological model

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