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Author(s): Leino, Henna M.; Hurmerinta, Leila; Sandberg, Birgitta; Kokko, Sami; Lyytimäki, Jari; Tapio, Petri; Vasankari, Tommi

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Escapism or Integration? Family Constellations Reflecting on the Leisure-Time Physical Activity of Adults

Henna M. Leino^a , Leila Hurmerinta^b , Birgitta Sandberg^b ,
Sami Kokko^c , Jari Lyytimäki^d , Petri Tapio^e  and Tommi Vasankari^{f,g} 

^aTurku School of Economics/Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS), University of Turku, Turku, Finland;

^bTurku School of Economics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland; ^cFaculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland; ^dFinnish Environment Institute, Helsinki, Finland; ^eFinland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku, Turku, Finland; ^fUKK Institute for Health Promotion Research, Tampere, Finland; ^gFaculty of Medicine and Health Technology, Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

ABSTRACT

Insufficient physical activity is an increasing threat to personal well-being and public health. While significant research has focused on the factors that encourage or restrict physical activity, the impact of family constellations on physical activity remains under-researched despite its evident impact on leisure-time physical activity (LTPA). This study aims to analyze how being embedded in a family constellation reflects on LTPA. Our data are drawn from interviews with 89 working adults living in a household with a spouse and/or children. The results indicate that individuals have both escapist and integrative motivations for LTPA, which reflect particular family constellations. This finding leads to the following LTPA dimensions: *solitary escapism*, *co-escapism*, *integrative escapism*, and *integration*. Furthermore, the mechanism is bidirectional: family affects LTPA, and LTPA reflects on personal and family well-being. Public and private actors can utilize these findings when compiling policies and recommendations and developing services intended to increase LTPA.

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Escapism; family constellation; integration; leisure-time physical activity; motives

Introduction

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 (WHO 2018) emphasizes the role of families and communities (in addition to individuals) in their call to innovate solutions for inactivity and excessive sedentary behavior: “Create and promote access to opportunities and programmes, across multiple settings, to help people of all ages and abilities to engage in regular physical activity as individuals, families and communities” (p. 34). Physical activity refers to “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure” (Caspersen et al., 1985, p. 126). Physical activity is a sum of all activities, including those during both work and leisure-time.

CONTACT Henna M. Leino  henna.leino@utu.fi  Department of Marketing and International Business, FI-20014 University of Turku, Finland.

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Insufficient physical activity is a current threat to public health globally, and megatrends of motorized transportation, urbanization, digitalization, and aging populations are likely to make the threat even worse. A sustainable society depends on individuals' health and well-being in order to remain functional (Bakar et al., 2015). Furthermore, physical activity is considered a key aspect in well-being interventions to reduce stress and anxiety and to support mental well-being (van Hierden et al., 2022). Thus, while physical activity improves physical and mental health and well-being, physical inactivity contributes to non-communicable diseases and deterioration of health (Kiviluoto et al., 2022; Piercy et al., 2018; WHO, 2018). It is important that both physical activity and *inactivity* are considered when interventions and health policies are planned.

Therefore, it is essential to study the motivating factors and the barriers associated with physical activity to understand how an individual's physical activity levels can be increased (Bauman et al., 2012). While there is substantial research on adults' motives for and engagement in physical activity (e.g., Aaltonen et al., 2012; Bauman et al., 2012), only scant research has been published on the impact of family context on physical activity. Moreover, studies of health behavior causation (Bauman et al., 2012) have widely addressed the contributions of the social environment and infrastructure, but have given less attention to the influence of family constellations (family constellation in this study referring to a family living in the same household, with or without children). Existing research has focused on the mediating role of family in health interventions or health behavior change programs (e.g., Kitzman-Ulrich et al., 2010) without considering the specific relationship between family constellation and physical activity.

In studies focusing on family, the emphasis is usually adult influence on children's physical activity (e.g., Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010) or the influence of family circumstances on adolescents (e.g., Gorely et al., 2009; Kuo et al., 2007; Ramos et al., 2017) whereas the influence of family constellations on *adult* physical activity has been largely ignored. Exceptions include John et al.'s (2022) study on the influence of family on physical activity in Hispanic families where, for example, lack of support from family and children-related challenges were challenges for physical activity, while verbal support for exercise and help with responsibilities were facilitators of physical activity. The partially related studies of Engberg et al. (2012) and Lenze et al. (2021) focus on how family and life events influence an individual's amount of physical activity or the type of changes related to physical activity, but they do not explicitly consider how family constellation underlies these changes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze how being embedded in a family constellation reflects on physical activity. We explore this by collecting data on individual adults' self-reported motives and behavior. Because we focus on the impact of family constellations, we limit the scope of the study to leisure-time physical activity (LTPA), although, by definition, physical activity includes both work and leisure time (Caspersen et al., 1985). LTPA refers to physical activity undertaken during non-work-time (Jose & Hansen, 2010). While leisure in general refers to being free from obligations (Jose & Hansen, 2010), here we only distinguish between work and non-work contexts and consider family time as leisure-time although it is not free from all obligations (such as parental and citizen obligations). Thus, in this paper, LTPA refers to overall physical activity excluding physical activity during work hours and commuting.

Knowledge regarding the influence of family constellations is essential when policies, interventions, and services are designed to increase the physical activity levels of adult citizens who engage in low levels of physical activity. This goal should be a public health priority (Engberg et al., 2012; Reichert et al., 2007). The study is expected to have implications not only for generating an understanding of motivating factors and potential barriers related to family constellations but also regarding how public and private services can be designed to take into account these lifeworld contexts of customers and to respond to their needs by eliminating the obstacles and/or reinforcing motivating factors.

Key concepts and background

Family constellations

Family can be defined as a perceived constellation of people related by birth, adoption, or marriage or as those people whom individuals designate as part of their family unit (Kenner et al., 2015). Thus, we can also distinguish between the “core family” and “extended family” (Lois, 2022), where the former typically refers to individuals living in the same household and functioning as a family, and the latter to grandparents, adult siblings, and other close relatives (such as aunts, uncles, and cousins) more loosely. In this study, we use the term “family constellation” to refer to the core family that can, in practice, comprise two adults without children, an adult with a child/children, or adults with a child/children living in the same household. Although pets may be considered family members, we refer only to human beings.

Fogarty and Mauksch (2017) have argued that understanding family systems is particularly important in health-related interventions. In this study, we focus on the influence of family constellations on physical activity engagement due to its significance as a promoter of well-being at the individual and societal levels. To understand family systems, we engage *family systems theory* which takes into consideration family dynamics—including structures, roles, communication patterns, and power relations—and interprets family as a complex system (Rothbaum et al., 2002). Individuals are affected by their relationships with each other within this system (Alderfer, 2006).

Family constellations and their influence on an individual's personality and social behavior has been studied in detail in psychology. For example, Toman (1993) explored the different parent and sibling configurations in a family and their influence on family relationships and social behavior within and outside family. He argues that early life constellations continue exerting their influence later in life as well, although changes in these constellations often occur at some point in life.

These explorations are mainly focused on how individuals that have grown up in various family constellations relate to each other within families and outside families, but the influence of these constellations and systemic elements on family members' motivations for different everyday activities remain scarcely discussed. Studies have explored the impact of outdoor activity engagement on family through routines and rituals frameworks (Izenstark & Ebata, 2022), the relationship between family context and parenting style or parental modeling (i.e., social learning by perceiving parents' behavior) on children's physical activity (Bringolf-Isler et al., 2018; Kimiecik & Horn,

2012), and the family systems approach to change in youth health behavior (Kitzman-Ulrich et al., 2010). However, the reverse impact—that is, the impact of family constellations on physical activity, still remains understudied, particularly when it comes to adults' physical activity. Studies on minors often discuss the influence of parenting style on activity or health behavior (Arredondo et al., 2006; Kimiecik & Horn, 2012; Philips et al., 2014), but the focus is rarely on parent-parent relationship, adult-adult relationship, or parent-child relationship when adults' physical activity is studied.

Leisure in the family context

The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning, grounded in Family Systems Theory, presents a framework for understanding the general role of leisure in a family context (Townsend et al., 2017). Even if not specifically tailored to physical activity, the model provides a suitable frame for building a discussion on leisure-time motives in a family LTPA context. The original model defines *core family leisure* as typically home-based, common activities that result in cohesion to family functioning, and, *balance family leisure* as out-of-the-ordinary, usually not home-based leisure patterns that result in adaptability (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001). The former satisfies the needs for stability, familiarity, and structure, and the latter needs for change, novelty, and variety.

Townsend et al. (2017) presented a refined version of this model to highlight that in addition to considering how mere family leisure *involvement* is connected to family functioning, it is relevant to consider how this involvement affects family leisure *satisfaction* and family communication and how each of these constructs affect family functioning (cohesion and adaptability) and satisfaction with family life. They also critiqued the extant use of the original core and balance framework, observing that when the model is operationalized, the core and balance elements tend to be treated as two discreet categories. However, they acknowledge that even the refined model does not account for all the complexities and diversity of family leisure behavior. As a result, Townsend et al. (2017) called for further research to study 1) the relationship between core and balance family leisure experiences and 2) family leisure involvement among different family types. The current study explores both aspects by taking an inductive approach to provide novel insights into the theme. Next, we bring together the context of family leisure and motives/barriers to physical activity to understand their relationship.

Motives for and barriers to LTPA

Motives

Understanding people's motives can help explain why they behave in a certain manner and make certain choices. Individuals' physical activity has been explored in relation to attributes of physical activity engagement and the potential influence of individual, interpersonal, environmental, and political factors, among others (Bauman et al., 2012).

Weight management, maintaining good health, social interaction, and enjoyment are important motivating factors for adults to participate in sports and physical activity (Aaltonen et al., 2012; Allender et al., 2006). Moreover, habits are decisive: a habit of physical activity in adolescence often remains a habit in adulthood (Scheerder et al., 2006), whereas inactive behavior may result from not being used to being active (Aaltonen et al., 2012). However, despite the role of habits and early experiences, it is not necessarily the family's socioeconomic status and environment in childhood that determine the motivation to exercise later in life; instead, novel motivational factors might appear after leaving the childhood home environment (Aaltonen et al., 2012). This implies that it is essential to study the family context *of adults* as an element that influences an individual's motivation to exercise and his/her habits related to physical activity.

Bauman et al.'s (2012) review found inconclusive relations (or no report given) between marital status and physical activity. The reviewed studies did not address single-parent status or family structure beyond marital status, although these conditions can be relevant to the chances of an adult to engage in physical activity. This suggests that an individual-level scrutiny regarding marital status might not explain differences in physical activity and gives rise to the need for a wider perspective for understanding family-level LTPA. For example, John et al. (2022) showed that the physical activity levels of adult individuals in a family were enhanced by partner-given verbal encouragement and help with responsibilities; moreover, themes such as “exercising with someone” and “exercising to appease children” were mentioned as factors that facilitated physical activity.

Barriers

While motivation often results in action, alone it may not be decisive if there are barriers to or a lack of enabling factors for action. Insecurity regarding one's appearance and a lack of confidence and competence in core skills have been identified as barriers to physical activity (Allender et al., 2006). Aaltonen et al. (2012) emphasized poor health or having a disease, lack of time, and weather conditions as further obstacles. A dislike for exercising, feeling too tired, and a lack of company, money, or time have also been associated with physical inactivity in research participants above 20 years old (Reichert et al., 2007).

Studies that have examined the family impact on physical activity, have pointed to both family-level enhancing factors and challenges. In the family context, factors that often become barriers to LTPA include a lack of support, challenges posed by children, and competing responsibilities (John et al., 2022). These barriers are frequently related to inequalities within families; for example, if one parent has more responsibility for child care than the other, this will restrict the possibilities of that parent, typically the mother, to engage in physically active leisure (Miller & Brown, 2005). Living context (urban vs. rural) and parents' perspectives on family leisure or amount of duties may pose limitations on what kind of family leisure is possible; sometimes purposive leisure is emphasized over purpose-free leisure (Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Trussell & Shaw, 2009). John et al. (2022) observed more positive descriptions of partner interaction regarding physical activity support in family dyads (parent-parent) in which both partners were

physically active than in dyads in which both were not physically active. These findings exemplify the three dimensions of the established leisure constraints framework, which presents leisure as constrained by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural factors (Godbey et al., 2010). The family context involves all three dimensions, making it relevant to study family influence in relation to support for and barriers to LTPA.

Methods

Data collection and participant recruitment

To understand how family constellations reflect on adults' LTPA, we examined individuals' self-reported motives for, possible barriers to, and behaviors regarding their physical activity by adopting a qualitative approach, which Townsend et al. (2017) recommended for the study of relationships in core and balance family leisure patterns. To collect data, we conducted interviews following the established Gioia methodology (Corley & Gioia, 2004), which allows results to be derived from qualitative data inductively but systematically (see Data Analysis section).

As part of a larger research project, we interviewed working-age individuals in two large cities, Tampere and Turku, in Finland between October 2019 and February 2020, immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ethics Committee for Human Sciences at the University of Turku, Finland approved this research (ID: to 6/2019). Participants were informed of the research orally and in writing and of their rights to withdraw from the research at any time, and signed consent forms were collected. We used purposeful sampling, which has been argued to add trustworthiness of the data and results (Campbell et al., 2020). Family representatives with different backgrounds were invited through three heterogeneous work organizations. These organizations comprised a hypermarket where employees work in shifts with no remote work; a primary school, where employees work regular hours at school and have some freedom to choose their work location; and a university, where employees engage in classroom teaching and in-person meetings but can otherwise work remotely. This sampling method yielded a group of interviewees with wide variation in terms of their work flexibility, family constellations, and possibilities for LTPA.

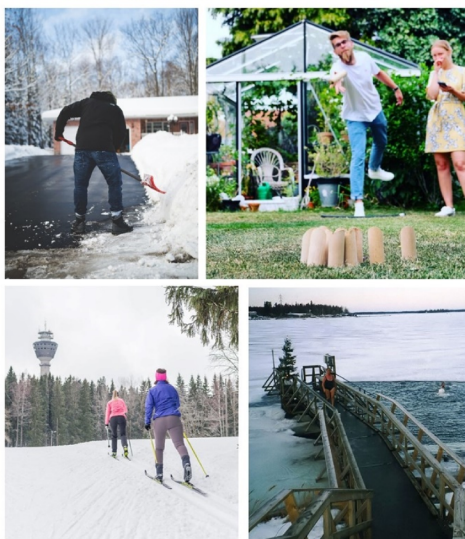
We invited all employees in the selected organizations to participate in the interviews using a research invitation placed on a bulletin board or transmitted in an e-mail to employees. All volunteer participants were interviewed. When material saturation was not yet reached (each interview still generated novel information and insights into the research theme), we continued the call to participate in the research and recruited more participants. Interviews were conducted during the interviewees' working hours, which resulted in some variation in duration. In the hypermarket, the interviews were shorter due to the time limits imposed by the employer; thus, we needed more interviewees to reach saturation.

We conducted semi-structured interviews and used projective techniques (Donoghue, 2000; Porr et al., 2011) to elicit multidimensional recall and self-reporting by the interviewees. The interviewees were shown cards with Creative Commons pictures relevant to their cultural and living environments that represented different kinds of activities in four categories: transport modes, exercise and sports activities, recreational activities,

and active chores (based on Freire et al., 2019). Examples of these pictures (Figure 1) included playing leisurely games on the summer cottage lawn, cross-country skiing, hiking on trails in forests/wetlands, swimming in freezing water (hole made in the ice), and scooping snow in the yard, which are activities characteristic of Finnish culture. The picture cards also depicted more general activities and chores common in Finland and across the world, such as jogging, group exercise, swimming, cycling, hoovering, and gardening. The pictures/photos functioned as ice-breakers, provided concrete points of reference, and encouraged more detailed responses. The cards also indicated to the interviewees that LTPA can be widely interpreted and does not only concern arranged hobbies or activities, thereby making many interviewees realize that they were physically active in certain areas that they otherwise would not have considered.

The semi-structured thematic interview format ensured that we obtained comparable data on the main themes from each interviewee, but simultaneously left room for additional and open-ended questions that were employed depending on the interviewees' answers and on spontaneous needs to specify certain issues related to their answers. This is particularly important when the study is concerned with themes such as motives to LTPA, which may be partially or fully latent or unconscious in the individuals (Morris & Roychowdhury, 2020). The interview scheme covered themes such as the influence of close others on the interviewees' LTPA, children's hobbies, typical and favored modes of physical activity and emotions related to them, possible barriers to these modes, possible company during LTPA, family context, and care responsibilities. Examples of these thematic interview questions are as follows: Which pictures describe your physical activity the most and why?; Do you exercise alone or with someone—whom?; How do close others affect your physical activity/activeness?; How would you like to be physically active (refer to the pictures if appropriate)?; What hinders you in being physically active in these ways?; What would need to happen/change for you to be able to undertake

Pictures relevant to the interviewees' cultural and living environment



Pictures of non-culture-specific activities



Figure 1. Examples of projective pictures presented in the interviews.

these activities?; and, What is your family situation/context like (who belongs to your family, and who do you take care of)?

Description of data

The data were obtained from 104 interviews. The average duration of the interviews was 40 min. The aggregate duration of the interviews was 23 h 38 min. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The anonymity of interviewees was ensured by using pseudonyms for all participants in the data.

We imported the transcribed data into QSR NVivo software and began data processing by coding the data with case classifications (e.g., family and living, potential children's ages, gender, age group, and organization). A "case" refers to an interviewed person, and we coded the demographic information of all 104 cases. Then, we excluded the cases labeled "Single without children" in the same household (12 cases) and cases labeled "Not applicable" (3 cases: individuals still living in their childhood home or with their sibling). The details of the included data ($n=89$) are presented in Table 1. The data represent the typical gender division in the organizations involved in this research. Females were a majority in these organizations (particularly in the hypermarket and primary school); moreover, men were less willing to participate in the interviews than women. The number of interviews was relatively high since there was a great variation in the interviewees' descriptions regarding their LTPA and we wanted to gain sufficient data to ensure that we thoroughly understood the impact of family constellations; thus, we considered the saturation point to be reached at a relatively late stage of the data collection.

Data analysis

We coded all motivations for LTPA in order to draw an overall picture and separated motives indicating the influence of family (or its lack, thereof) for a closer analysis.

Table 1. Demographics of the data.

	<i>n</i>	Total	Primary school	Hypermarket	University
	89	100%	23	36	30
Gender					
Female	64	72%	16	28	20
Male	25	28%	7	8	10
Age					
18–34	31	35%	3	24	4
35–51	48	54%	16	6	26
52–68	10	11%	4	6	0
Family and living					
Spouse and children	51	57%	12	10	29
Spouse, no children	31	35%	9	22	0
Single and children	7	8%	2	4	1
Ages of children in family					
Grown up children	14	16%	7	7	0
No children	17	19%	2	15	0
Baby or toddler, aged 0–6 years	28	31%	4	6	18
Young child, aged 7–12	19	21%	5	5	9
Teenager, aged 13–17	11	12%	5	3	3

Thus, we coded motives and in addition descriptions of “Physical activity and company,” “Kin care and physical activity,” and “Physical activity during kids’ hobbies.” Next, we utilized the NVivo cross-query function to explore how these different themes appear when examined in relation to the classification “Family and living” and to ascertain if there are some prominent phenomena apparent in the data.

When the classification “family and living” (expressing whether the person had a spouse and/or children) was explored with LTPA-related motives, we discovered two main types of motives: integrative and escapist. Escapist motives relate to extraordinariness, experientiality, eudaimonia, and hedonism. Eudaimonia refers to living life fully and actualizing one’s human potential, and hedonism refers to the focus on happiness and aiming for positive affect and the absence of negative affect (Arnould & Price, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Sandberg et al., 2023). Integrative motives typically relate to issues characterized by ordinariness and a utilitarian perspective (Babin et al., 1994; Carù and Cova, 2003; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000).

We used the Gioia methodology (Corley & Gioia, 2004) to systematically induce upper-level categories from the single subcategories of the coded motivations to identify abstract patterns that describe the motivations for LTPA and their relationship with the family context (Gioia et al., 2013). In practice, the Gioia methodology guides the analysis from the open coding of informant terms, codes, and categories (first-order analysis) to seeking similarities and differences among the many categories and looking for a deeper structure and theoretical level of themes (second-order analysis). Further, it prompts the search for connections among these second-order themes to locate patterns that can be described as “aggregate dimensions.” Based on this methodology, a graphic data structure is composed, which represents how the researchers moved from raw data to larger themes and a theoretical level of analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). Following this logic of the Gioia methodology, we present the data structure and the findings pertaining to these categories in more detail in the next section.

After identifying how the participants’ motivations for LTPA manifested in the data, we further analyzed the possible barriers to LTPA since the data indicated that despite motivation for LTPA, it was not always possible to indulge in. We analyzed how the “Family and living” conditions of the interviewees was related to what was reported as a barrier to LTPA. We focused on the barriers that arise from being embedded in a family constellation, aligning with the purpose of this research. As the analysis and interpretations were conducted by three independent researchers, the researchers triangulated the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the insights were critically discussed within the research group. When slight differences in the interpretations arose, we discussed them thoroughly and altered the interpretation, if needed, until we reached unanimous agreement.

Findings

Motives for and dimensions of LTPA behavior

The data analysis identified the interviewees’ motives for and barriers to engaging in physical activity, focusing on those participants who had a spouse, child(ren), or both. As the analysis presented below demonstrates, the main finding was that family context gives rise to escapist and integrative motivations for LTPA. We consider that activities

that take place in the home environment or involve following a routine, such as cleaning the house or taking children to extracurricular classes, represent activities that relate to *integrative motivations*. In contrast, activities that provide experiences extraordinary to everyday life or a sense of eudaimonia or hedonism stem from *escapist motives*. Importantly, however, the interpretation of escapism depends on individual circumstances, such as needs, desires, motives, and characteristics of the home context.

The relationship between motivation and physical activity appears to vary dynamically depending on the family constellation. Family context, such as the existence of, age, and number of children and being a single parent or a couple, and family dynamics were related to what the interviewee individually considered an escapist or an integrative motive. The results also highlighted how the family constellation encouraged, enabled, or hindered the individual's engagement in physical activity.

We categorized the identified dimensions of behavior in the data as *solitary escapism* (me alone), *co-escapism* (us alone), *integrative escapism* (us together and apart), and *integration* (us), as presented in Figure 2. We describe these forms of family-related adult LTPA in detail in this section, using illustrative quotes to support our analysis.

Solitary escapism

Solitary escapism involved two forms of behavior—either referring to an individual engaging in physical activity alone outside the home or with someone other than a family member (Figure 2; Appendix 1). The motivation can also be related to the exercise itself, but the key motive in this form of physical activity was to get a break either from being in the home environment or from taking care of the family and/or everyday chores. The interviewees often reported that exercise is an additional benefit and the key benefit is to get a break from the ordinary or from worries or responsibilities:

It's a kind of time to myself when I go alone for a walk. Sometimes there are days when I need to go for a walk by myself. I spend a lot of time with people at work and with my daughter at home, so I have very little time to myself. (Carol)

Many of the respondents revealed how the possibility for solitary escapism into physical activity indirectly influenced the well-being of the entire family:

Both of us [spouses] need the physical activity for a recovery and stress relief. We both experience that there is a chance to be [physically] active also in this busy everyday life, [...] If only one side of the couple needs it, it can be that [the other doesn't] support it, because they don't understand: 'So, I will stay here alone again with, taking care of everything and you just go, like, somewhere.' So, it's a pretty big resource in that way, and we always try to find time for both of us, so that we could go do the physical activities. (Grace)

This reveals how the dynamics between spouses influenced the possibility of engaging in solitary escapism and how allowing this escapism (or not) further influenced the family dynamics and family well-being, thereby having a bi-directional influence. The data also reveal that the existence, number, and ages of children are related to whether parents can engage in solitary escapism by affecting both the valence and frequency of these possibilities. This manifests how the family constellation reflects on LTPA.

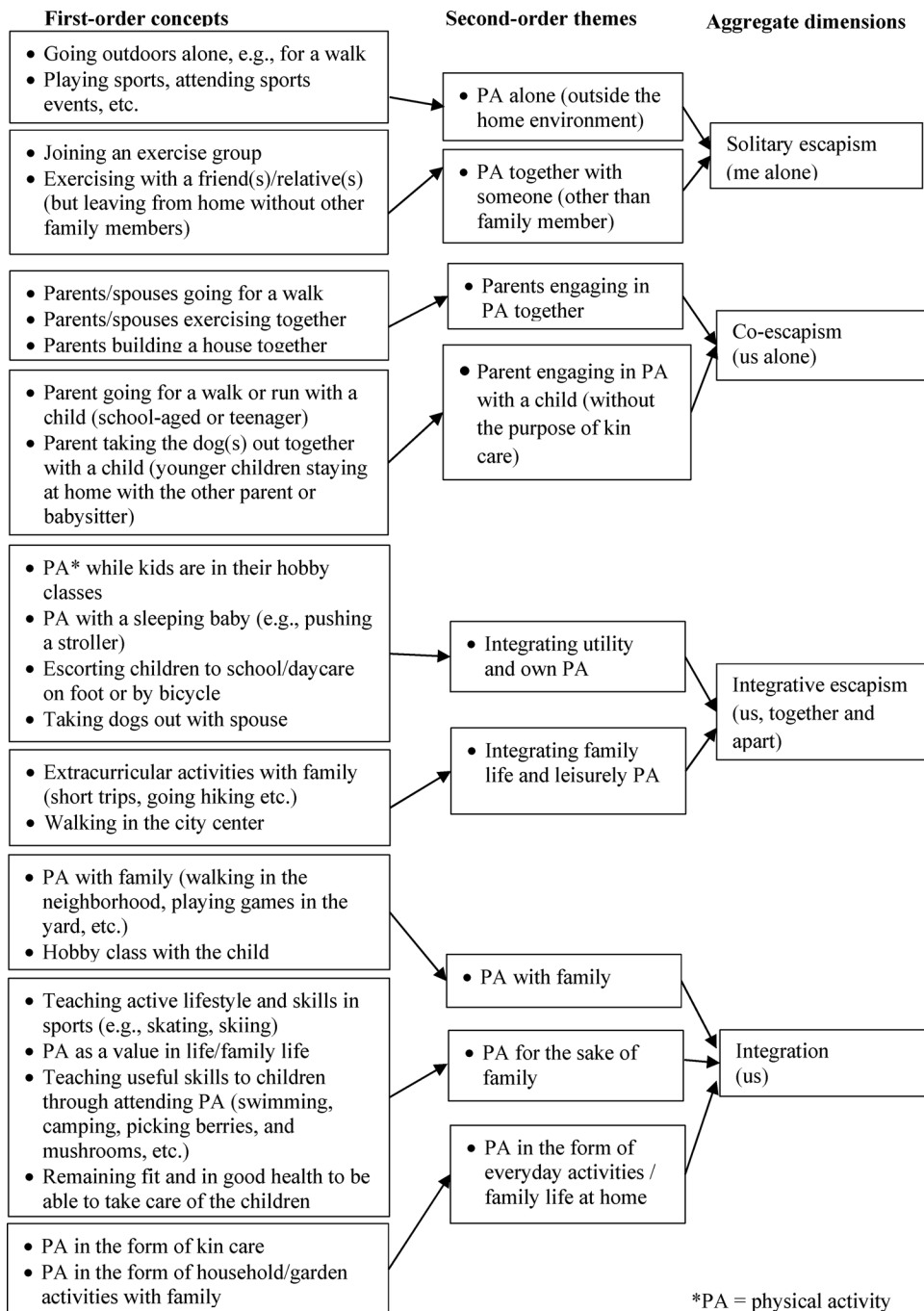


Figure 2. Data structure (see Appendices 1–4 for data supporting the interpretations).

Moreover, solitary escapism could mean hiking with a friend or exercising in a group:

I kind of hope I'd get more time now that it's not so necessary that I'm always at home. [...] I've done a lot of guided exercise during my adult life. [...] We have laughed ourselves

silly there [in the workmate exercise group] at times and we are in every way familiar to each other, so it's been really fun. (Patricia)

Co-escapism

Co-escapism means “Spouse/parents engaging in PA together” or “Parent engaging in PA with a child” without the purpose of kin care (Figure 2; Appendix 2). In this category, escapism mainly included activities that involved going outside the walls of the home. Engaging in physical activity together with the spouse meant walking, exercising, or engaging in a hobby involving physical activity. Certain respondents preferred to go out walking with the spouse and not alone: *“I don’t want to go to the woods alone, so I need someone with me, maybe my wife to go with me.”* (Brett). There was also an additional dimension in engaging in physical activity with the spouse—taking care of the relationship:

That [running] is like a lifeline for me. I do it with [my husband], which is a kind of relationship time for us and something I feel is very important to how we’ve managed at all. We are living the “rush years” full throttle, so somehow we share... that we haven’t lost the connection to each other. I think that one reason is that we have somehow found time for each other also in everyday life, and it doesn’t really need to be anything more special than that. It can just be the small things, like going for a run. (Blance)

This suggests that physical activities can have a significant role in sustaining well-functioning family and relationship dynamics. Moreover, the form of physical activity, when parents go walking or take the dog out with their child without the purpose of kin care, can be considered as having a potential influence on family dynamics, as it served as a recreational activity and represented escapism from the home environment.

Integrative escapism

Integrative escapism was a very common form of motivation for physical activity, particularly in families with small children. It refers to activities that involved activities outside home environment but involving family member(s). It manifested in the forms of “Integrating utility and own PA” and “Integrating family life and leisurely PA,” the goal being own activity or recreation either by taking care of the family needs or by combining it with family activities (Figure 2; Appendix 3). In the former category with utility emphasis, physical activity was engaged in while kids were at their hobby classes: *“When my daughter has her workout, I can go for a run in the meantime. I can combine it with that.”* (Matthew). Moreover, physical activity is also integrated with putting the baby to sleep (e.g., pushing a stroller): *“And then sometimes it’s that you just do that, push a pram for many hours and walk on those trips.”* (Vanessa). In this category, physical activity also included escorting/taking children to school or daycare on foot or on a bicycle or taking the dogs out with the spouse.

The latter category of integrating family life and LTPA included extracurricular activities undertaken together with family (short trips, hiking, etc.) and engaging in

physical activity during leisurely traveling abroad or in the home country. These extracurricular activities often contained an element that created excitement or enthusiasm:

We went [ice hole swimming] with my sister and her kids and our kids, and everyone liked it. It was an exciting atmosphere over there, at the sauna; how the system works and all of it, the icy water, was exciting. It was a fun experience. (Abbie)

Leisure travel rather automatically implied physical activity, as exploring new places means a lot of walking around or otherwise being physically active:

When we go on a trip, we do a lot of walking or common activities, rarely only lying around. [...] If we go on city holiday, then it's just walking from dawn to dusk. And with the kids, swimming and things like that. So, maybe not always sports, but some kind of activity, everyday life activity in the holidays. (Cornelia)

Integration

Just like integrative escapism, integration as a motivation for physical activity was rather common and the most typical form of physical activity in families with small children. While solitary escapism was also desired as a counterbalancing activity to family life, the most convenient and desired form of physical activity was often the kind that was performed with the family or only with the spouse if there were no children in the family. *Integration* includes activities that took place within the everyday frames and routines of family life. Physical activity with family (Figure 2; Appendix 4) included everyday activities such as playing in the yard or moving from place to place:

Well, we engage in many everyday life physical activities. With the kids, we cycle a lot, go from one place to another by bike. And then we move about and play games outside. (Ellen)

In addition, a few interviewees engaged in a hobby with the child (either in an equal role or as a coach in the child's team) or spouse.

Another essential form of integrated physical activity was physical activity for the sake of the family (Figure 2; Appendix 4), which implied that the motivation for the activity was related to creating an active lifestyle and sports skills for children:

Well, family is related to physical activity so that they, especially the children, would also get like an active lifestyle. I'd like to offer that, for them to benefit from it in the future. (Cornelia)

It was also important for parents to teach their children about physical activity as a value in life or to teach them useful skills through physical activity:

Knowing how to swim is a good thing for the future, if we want to do activities in water or the kids want to take on a hobby, where knowing how to swim is needed or if they want to go swimming with their friends. It's nice that you can swim, so we'll give them the chance through providing a start, where you get accustomed to water and then bit by bit start doing more. (Adam)

In addition, many parents felt that physical activity was (or would be) important for them in order to remain fit and in good health to be able to take care of the children:

I feel a bit guilty in the sense that if I actually did engage in some physical activity, or rather, if I were in a better shape, then I would have more energy with the little guy. (Craig)

Integrated physical activity was also found in the form of everyday activities or family life at home, referring to “PA in the form of kin care or in the form of household or garden activities together with the family” (Figure 2; Appendix 4). Physical activity in kin care typically meant helping elderly parents or other family members/relatives in their chores or gardening or playing with the kids when taking care of them:

I can take him to a playground and play. But is it for my benefit, or for his? It's more for his in this case. It's walking so he can have fun, see stuff, take him out to go to a playground to play with other kids. (Craig).

Physical activity related to household activities often integrated chores and family time:

It's a good feeling, [scooping snow] that my kids are running around and throwing snow at each other. And sometimes when you make this whole heap of snow, then they just... go there and jump over it, and then they build snowman out of it. (Edwin)

Barriers to LTPA

The data revealed several barriers to LTPA, some of which were universal and some of them inseparably related to the family context. In particular, we discovered that “Lack of time or initiation” were often co-existent or even intertwined as barriers to LTPA. “Lack of time or initiation” and the influence of “other people/child care arrangements” were highlighted in families with young children, thereby referring to the influence of family constellation:

Well, this [golf] could be one example of how I've tried to take up and try new things. But I've promised myself that since that takes up quite a lot of time, its [turn will be] when the kids are away. (Roy)

We present the barriers in Table 2, where we show examples of how lack of time or initiation inhibits physical activity and how “other people” create barriers due to the need for child care. In addition, examples of family members' differing or asynchronous needs, wishes, or activities that reflected on physical activity, are presented in Table 2.

A mediating emotional factor inhibiting the LTPA of a parent was often guilt, although childcare could be arranged:

I try to go to other people's [exercise] sessions myself at least once a week. I'd probably go even more if I didn't have a child. I kind of have a bad conscience because “mom went somewhere again.” (Karen)

Table 2. Exemplary quotes to illustrate barriers to LTPA.

Lack of time or initiation	<i>Life situation... The small kids are a terrible excuse... But getting up and going always needs organizing, so when you have so many other hobbies already, then to ask again if the other one could still be with the kids, it needs to be figured out.. [...] Where can I get skis and all the rest... In that regard, I'm maybe not the best at taking the initiative at the moment. –Gina</i> <i>You could be more active but it doesn't always come to mind - - and then sometimes, when they [the children] do suggest some activity, you have something going on, so you can't do it just then. - - The conditions, that you have a child and then, like, your own physical activities, you feel that if there's a hurry and some pressure, the first things to leave out are those, your own exercise matters. –Angela</i>
Other people/ childcare arrangements	<i>[The child] turned ten already. So, we're just, like, a unit of two there. - - [Some time ago] I was only able to, when they were at their father's place, to really go anywhere. But now I can already go for a walk for a half of an hour or something like that. –Bridget</i> <i>It's true that at the moment in our family... as nice as the one-and-a-half-year-old is, he is the one that takes the most energy from the parents. So including them [the kids] in your own physical activities or something [would be good]. –Carl</i>
Differing interests or abilities within a family	<i>She (daughter) regularly engages in PA and asks me to join her. And it could be, I like aqua jogging, but the first thought of an indoor swimming pool for me is a bit, bleh. I don't feel like going there since it's so noisy. –Monica</i> <i>I entered my child into athletics class in the summer and I've done athletics when I was little, so it's kind of connected to my life in that way. But maybe in my own life, I feel like I'm already too old for things like that. –Ellen</i>

Overall, the competing responsibilities, a need to make special arrangements and to have the adequate initiative to arrange something just for oneself, to be able to engage in LTPA were a barrier for solitary escapism and sometimes also for co-escapism (e.g., parents going without children). Therefore, integrative escapism and integration were considerably easier and more typical forms of LTPA behavior in families with small children. Notably, the nature of the barriers and the forms of integrative escapism and integration were in a flux and depended on children's age:

Last summer, I didn't really practice it [cycling] much, since I always had the pram with me. [...] But of course, when the toddler comes to a more mobile age, I want us to be outside and in the park and other things, and we'll go cycling when the weather allows it. So, it'll affect [the amount of physical activity] in a positive way as well. (Angela)

The results indicate that family and family constellations are closely related to the different kinds of motivations related to physical activity and also to the enablers and barriers that either support or inhibit some forms or the amount of physical activity.

Discussion

The results emphasize the importance of family constellations for physical activity, which highlights the complexity of LTPA in the family context. The findings indicate that individuals in a family context have escapist and integrative motivations for engaging in physical activity. While these motivations are reminiscent of the balance and core patterns of family leisure (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001; Townsend et al., 2017), we present dimensions that are finer-grained for understanding the relationship

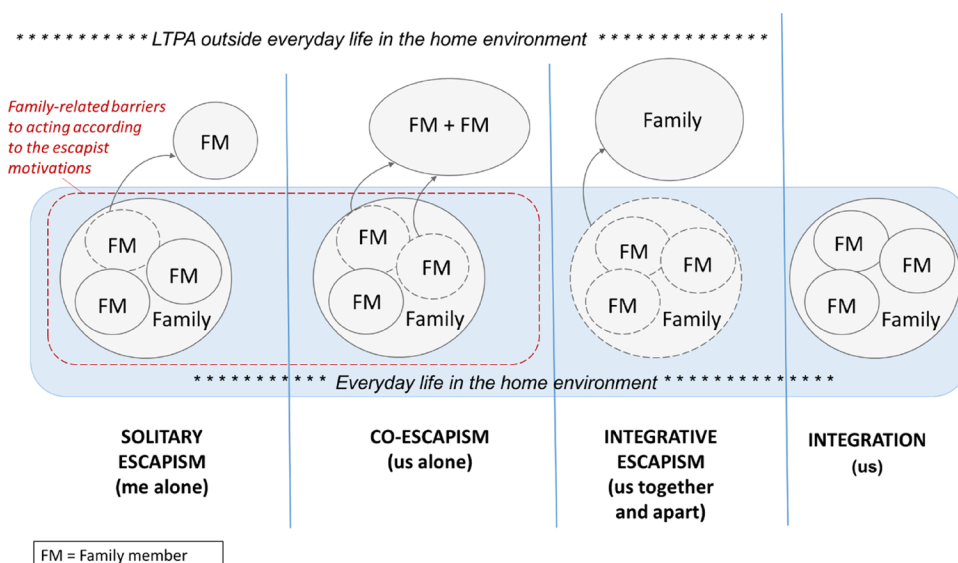


Figure 3. Manifestation of escapist and integrative motives on adult LTPA in family constellations.

between family constellation and families' leisure time. In [Figure 3](#), we illustrate how the detected forms of behavior arising from various motives embedded in and resulting from the family context include *solitary escapism* (me alone), *co-escapism* (us alone), *integrative escapism* (us together and apart) and *integration* (us).

As displayed in [Figure 3](#), if escapism is considered closely equivalent to the balance family leisure patterns of the Core and Balance Model, this study suggests that it can be divided into three further dimensions: solitary escapism, co-escapism and integrative escapism. In particular, we believe that the category of integrative escapism contributes to explaining how family leisure patterns that contain both core and balance elements must be operationalized to account for the elements' closely interrelated nature.

In addition to this categorization ([Figure 3](#)) the data indicate that the relationship between escapist and integrative motives varies *dynamically* depending on the family life situation. For example, in families with young children, physical activity with one's spouse represents an escapist activity, and physical activity with one's children/family represents an integrative activity. In contrast, in families with older/adult children physical activity with one's children can stem from escapist motivations, and physical activity with one's spouse can result from integrative motivations. Our study, therefore, contributes to the literature on family leisure by presenting a nuanced framework that accounts for the diversity of family types, as called for by Townsend et al. (2017).

Another key finding was that integrative motivations were often altruistic, such as wanting to teach one's children the importance of a physically active lifestyle or useful skills, such as swimming. This corresponds closely to the idea of purposive leisure proposed by Shaw and Dawson (2001), which refers to parents engaging in family leisure activities for their children's benefit, although the parents may not experience escapism during the activity. The *integration* category in this study reinforces the theorization of Shaw and Dawson (2001), at least regarding LTPA.

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the LTPA literature by highlighting the dynamic role of family constellations in everyday physical activity. Our data show that family constellations affect the motivation for, barriers to, and enabling factors for physical activity depending on the presence of spouse, and the presence, number, and age of children in the family. The influence of family on LTPA was also identified as bidirectional; physical activity with family members can have numerous psychological benefits and a favorable impact on family dynamics, such as improved family communication (cf. Izenstark & Ebata, 2022). Moreover, if parents have equal possibilities to engage in physical activity motivated by solitary escapism it may help create a good relationship between parents, which often reflects positively on the entire family. The same result applies to co-escapism, which also supported the maintenance of the relationship between the adults in the family and was even considered a vital factor for personal and family well-being. Thus, we make the following proposition:

Proposition 1: The possibility of engaging in LTPA has *extended well-being influences*, which affect the entire family.

This proposition contributes to family leisure research by suggesting that the leisure-time activity of a family member/members can also have (indirect) positive outcomes for those family members who are *not* involved in the activity. Family leisure *involvement* plays a central role in the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning but the model does not address the different perspectives of individual family members (Townsend et al., 2017). Therefore, Proposition 1 calls for further research to account for the relevance and impact of family members' *noninvolvement*, too (in addition to studying involvement). For instance, a child-parent dyad may engage in a leisurely balancing activity (co-escapism) or an activity that is partly leisure and partly core activity (integrative escapism), and this may (1) offer other member(s) of the family the possibility of engaging in other kinds of activities together or alone and (2) positively affect the rest of the family through the resulting good mood and well-being of the dyad.

The main challenges identified in our study, particularly in families with young children, were childcare arrangements and a scarcity of time for engaging in LTPA due to competing responsibilities, which is in line with John et al. (2022). This caused a phenomenon in which various LTPA motivations competed with each other; at times, solitary escapism contended with integration, and vice versa, which had a potential impact on tensions in the family. Equality in access to LTPA has been previously researched in the context of children and youth (e.g., Hjort & Agergaard, 2022) and women's physical activity (e.g., McGannon & Schinke, 2013), but our findings suggest that further research on parental equity regarding opportunities for LTPA (concerning both female and male parents) and its influence on family well-being is necessary. Thus, we make another proposition:

Proposition 2: Parents' equal access to LTPA impacts family well-being, where access refers to the possibility of engaging in LTPA and not the actual amount of LTPA.

Furthermore, different interpretations of the motives and nature of LTPA can exist simultaneously within a family; for example, occasionally, other family members may consider a parent-child activity as co-escapism, although the attending parent experiences it as integration or integrative escapism, thereby possibly seeing the activity in a more positive/negative light than the other parent. The interpretations regarding these issues are also likely to depend on the ethnic background to the extent that it affects gender roles and responsibilities within the family. Collectivism is valued in some cultures more than others, having an impact, for instance, on individuals' needs regarding integration versus escapism. To the best of our knowledge, however, there appears to be no previous research on the cyclical impact of family members' perspectives/attitudes on the other family member's LTPA and the influence of the amount of LTPA on family dynamics and well-being.

Our findings are consistent with the assertion by Jose and Hansen (2010) that LTPA is not necessarily considered a leisure activity by those who engage in it. The integrative forms of physical activity are not always leisurely and may be primarily based on altruistic motives (see also Shaw & Dawson, 2001); however, they do reduce sedentary behavior and are, therefore, beneficial in terms of health and well-being. Therefore, we make a third proposition:

Proposition 3: Altruistic motivations for LTPA can be effective in increasing an individual's level of physical activity.

This proposition suggests that future physical activity recommendations and individual physical activity counseling should strongly emphasize the importance of everyday chores, family activities, and "softer modes" of exercise, such as walking or playing in the park, particularly when these are individually sufficient to provide positive behavioral changes regarding physical activity (Vähä-Ypyä et al., 2022). Such recommendations could result in the double benefit of increased exercise and integrative activities, which usually have a favorable impact on family dynamics. This tendency was already partially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which sports clubs, gyms, and hobby classes were discontinued, leading to increased outdoor activities (Kiviluoto et al., 2022), at least outside/after complete lockdown, and contributing to families' LTPA together.

Conclusion

We presented a novel perspective to LTPA research by exploring the underlying motives that affect the physical activity of adults in family context. We constructed a comprehensive categorization of LTPA behaviors that dynamically stem from various family constellations.

Both public and private actors can consider the underlying escapist and integrative motivations and the resulting forms of behavior when compiling future policies and recommendations and developing services that aim to increase LTPA, also considering family restrictions and opportunities. In particular, the parents' underlying altruistic motives to arrange physical activity for the children that also results in their own

LTPA has the potential of increasing adults' LTPA levels if approached in innovative ways. For example, more services (e.g., parent-child exercise lessons) could be developed to increase both parents' and children's physical activity simultaneously, particularly in response to integrative escapism or integration motivations of physical activity. Furthermore, when interventions for increased physical activity are planned, it is relevant to acknowledge how the motivations and barriers vary depending on the differences in family context.

Further, we limited our study to examine how family constellations reflect on physical activity and did not explore other confounding factors that influence the amount and quality of physical activity among individuals and families. These factors include the natural/built environment, economic status/possibilities of the family, time of the year, and the available infrastructure and facilities (Karjalainen et al., 2023; Mehtälä et al., 2020). These should be considered in future research, combined with the family context.

Furthermore, we aimed to have a heterogeneous group of interviewees to obtain a holistic understanding, but the perspective of the extended family was not included. We suggest that future research pay attention to this aspect and discover novel research methods to reveal various individuals' perspectives to LTPA within a family unit. In addition, it would be important to discover children's perspectives toward and motivations for LTPA to improve the possibilities of engaging in LTPA in the family context. Paired interviews (e.g., Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning, 2016) offer one possible method for reflective discussion, which could also reveal possible crossing or discrepant assumptions regarding motivations and actual activities among family members. It is essential to understand the bi-directional and extended mechanisms of LTPA that influence family well-being to be able to more closely study the possible discrepancies within family units regarding the motivations for LTPA. Furthermore, the role of the extended family (such as grandparents and other close relatives) in LTPA is mostly disregarded in research and warrants further research, as relationships from outside the core family can arguably respond to the escapist motivations for engaging in LTPA if they generate extracurricular activities.

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ORCID

Henna M. Leino  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3695-5733>

Leila Hurmerinta  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4386-3749>

Birgitta Sandberg  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8690-2360>

Sami Kokko  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9436-5681>

Jari Lyytimäki  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3308-5234>
 Petri Tapio  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2226-7289>
 Tommi Vasankari  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7209-9351>

Data availability statement

Due to the nature of this research, participants of this study did not agree for their data to be shared publicly, so supporting data are not openly available.

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Appendix 1. Exemplary quotes to illustrate solitary escapism

PA alone (outside the home environment)

Going outdoors. alone, e.g., for a walk *But if I go skiing, I go alone. Or on trips to Lapland, so I sometimes have a friend with me. But my husband and I pretty much always go separately. One of us takes care of the children then. –Ellen*
I sometimes go alone too, so if I feel like... especially if it's been a really bad day, you can't really cope with all the hassle at home on top of it, so then it's nice to go for a walk, go over things in your mind in peace and quiet, and then come back after you've got, like, over them. –Patricia

Playing sports, attending sports events, etc. *Exercise/gym is my "me-time" and my source of pleasure. I get to do something that makes me sweat and feel good just by myself. Even though it's rough, but then when you really push yourself to your limit, you anyways get a good feeling about it afterwards. –Emma*

PA with someone (other than family member from the same household)

Joining an exercise group *I like it that the ice hockey training is from 9 to 10 and from 10 to 11 so it's not "something taken away" from the family. It's one of those things for why I like those [trainings]. –Adam*

[I maybe prefer to do physical activities alone or] maybe some group exercise classes could be ok. –Bridget

Exercising with a friend(s)/relative(s) (but leaving from home without other family members) *We've talked with my sister about how [if we had] free time at the same time, we could go aqua jogging at an indoor swimming pool. [...] when I was slimming a lot, then we went regularly with my sister - when we could still make more wishes about our working shifts than now. [...] With my sister, I could vent all the troubles of the week and concerning the child - me and my son lived by ourselves at the time - I could tell my sister all my troubles. –Kathleen*
I walk with the children at home in the countryside, but I'd maybe like to walk more with a friend in the city or by the riverside or places like that. Go see different places and things like that. –Rebecca

PA: physical activity.

Appendix 2. Exemplary quotes to illustrate co-escapism

Parents/spouses engaging in PA together

Parents/spouses going for a walk *At the point when our youngest child is also... like that they can be left alone and not need to be forced, always out for a walk with the dog. Then we could have a dog. Then we would walk, yeah. Then, like, we could do relationship communication at the same time. –Adam*
Walking hand in hand is really nice and in our suburb [we walk around] and yeah, sometimes also in the city and... It's also, like, something calming. To also have time with just the two of us sometimes. –Janice

Parents/spouses going exercising together *My husband and I go to the same gym. –Beverly*
And we often do [...] trips to the woods with my spouse, or on the jogging track or something, so this is also very much a part of everyday life. –Alice

Parents/spouses building a house together *It [building our house] was kind of an exciting journey, a hobby together. [...] it's nice when you get things done and the project forward, and you also get exercise at the same time. –Angela*
Last summer, we were building a terrace and [...] that really serves [as exercise]. –Tina

Parent engaging in PA with a child (without purpose of kin care)

Parent going for a walk or run with a child (school aged or teenager)	<i>Then there's the 5-year-old boy, he doesn't really have other hobbies yet, but he's started skating school now and he goes there once a week. But then he was, when he noticed that I had gone running with his big brother, very hurt that mom, why don't you take me running. I was like okay, well, come with us then. We'll first run for a bit with him with us and then leave him home and then go for a longer run with the bigger one. It's really nice, winter is bringing a bit of a challenge, since they don't have studs [for icy streets] and I don't really know if he'd go when it's really freezing anyway. –Stella</i>
Parent taking the dogs out with a child (younger children staying at home with the other parent or babysitter)	<i>He [spouse] also came along but not as much. I've anyway had the dogs before we met. My spouse likes it but doesn't go walking with me that much. I've told my older boy, a 5-year-old, "so wonderful that you've grown up like this." He always comes very energetically with me on walks. I also try to ask my friends. I've also asked my workmates to come with me on walks, we talk along the way, and I take the dogs with us. I don't really feel like it that often, arranging walks every week, so then my older son comes with me. It's really nice. I like it more to walk together with them than doing it alone. –Doreen</i>

PA: physical activity.

Appendix 3. Exemplary quotes to illustrate integrative escapism

Integrating utility and own PA

PA while kids are at their hobby classes	<i>When there's the [child's] art class on Mondays and then it lasts for one and a half hours, I've often had my bike on the rear of the car, and I've gone on a cycling trip for a bit over an hour, which is always the same course, so I know that it takes this long. –Christian</i> <i>I'm involved in the children's hobbies. While they're doing their workout, I might run around the track or something else. –Ellen</i> <i>It depends... If our son has his training session at the same time, oftentimes I then go there [the gym] for that time and they go to the ice rink. –Miriam</i> <i>When the boys are at the [ice] hall, we have a group of moms going for a walk. It's so nice. People to talk to and you don't have to go alone. –Tina</i>
PA with a sleeping baby (e.g., pushing a stroller)	<i>It's almost always, if I go walking, so I have the baby strollers with me. I do the walking in order to get the baby to sleep. Sometimes the walk is short if he falls asleep quickly, but if not, then I walk through the park, taking a slightly longer route. –Angela</i>
Escorting children to school/daycare on foot or by bicycle	<i>So, engaging in physical activities is like... you need to particularly start doing them. Sometimes it works out so that I consciously choose to start being active in the morning, for example walk to school with the kids. So, then I sometimes walk in the morning with them and when I walk back, I think that's a nice number of steps already taken, and additionally you get your head tuned up nicely, [...] I try to do that, because I notice that it's pretty hard for me to disengage [from work issues] in the middle of the day. –Blance</i>

Taking dogs out with spouse

With the wife and the dog, we like to do walks, even though we have a little dog, so it's not really always very long but a few kilometers at a time anyway. [...] like an hour to an hour and a half, it's really nice. You get to talk with the wife about daily matters and then it's nice to see the dog's joy from getting to be outside. –Bill
Then of course some amount [of PA] with the dogs. Going out [with the dogs] in the morning is the man's job in our relationship. In the evening it's... it's me or my husband or the elder son. The younger son then comes along if he feels like it. –Shirley

Integrating family life and leisurely PA

Extraordinary activities together with family (short trips, going hiking, etc.)

We go play Pokémon Go as a family. My daughter really likes it when we go on Pokémon walks. It's a pretty good way of getting her out in the first place. –Carol

And usually it [the PA] is about going to camping or something. Like, we go to eat, or take a Trangia stove with us, or something like that; they have always been nice trips. Moving about in nature and being close to nature just is.. That we're together and automatically as a unit in a way, so we and our thoughts are, like, present in that moment. –Angela

We go on small cycling trips with the family every now and then. –Carl

PA during leisurely traveling (abroad or in the home country)

I also like walking with my husband actually. For example [...] if we go to some tourist destination, [...] as a tourist, I like looking around different kinds of cities. –Carol

For instance we were everywhere, also in San Francisco. I think we walked two days for more than ten hours every day. We had a crazy number of steps, we had Fitbit, and we broke all records. So we really like it. And when we were this year with the little guy in Greece. Well, it was a little bit difficult to walk as much as we wanted because of his naptimes. –Allison

PA: physical activity.

Appendix 4. Exemplary quotes to illustrate integration

PA with family

PA with family

This scout [in our family] goes to play badminton and that also involves me a bit now that she often asks for us to go [play together] and then we have gone on Sundays to play badminton with her. [...] I'm talking about the youngest [child of the family] because that's her hobby. So, she even gets me active for that as well. –Lisa

We see each other and bustle around a lot with the family or my family or my childhood family. [...] It [PA] is like a family thing and that gives us time together and things like that. It gives a good feeling in many different ways. –Juliet

For example, in the summer, if we have guests, we are always outside. I always try to invite people to different kinds of things like this, so that it wouldn't just be sitting and talking. If godparents or some other people visit us, we always do something. We have a six-player badminton set and things like that. The children are involved, and the adults play around. The children think it's funny when the adults play around. And it's fun for me as well. It's also good for the kids. The children are in a much better mood when they've got some physical activity. –Maribel

Hobby activities with the child

Then we go, my son and husband and I go together once a week to the gym. We have that kind of hobby. –Carla
Well, the downhill skiing is, like, an activity to do in winter. It's always been the family's shared hobby. –Jennifer
Well, this is one of those family hobbies again. Or well, John decided at some point that he wants to play disk golf. Then he got all kinds of disks and even went to play at a few events and with friends just for fun. And then we have at times gone playing with the whole family. And gone through the courses. It's fun in a way, to have something to do together. And then it's pretty fun that the boy has fun, because none of us other than him know how to throw the disks. –Vanessa

PA for the sake of family

Teaching active lifestyle and skills in sports

We have a very active family, aside from me, at the moment, so it [PA] is always present. My husband is actually a former professional athlete, so exercise is a part of our way of life. –Jenny
I've got small kids, I move about and play with them quite a lot. I think that's inspiring them to exercise as well. –Ellen

PA as a value in life/family life

I exercise with the family. Exercise is a large part of our family and the way I want to raise my children and family. There are big values there. Exercise, is that a value then? A life value, could it be exercise? I notice that some people don't consider it like that. There's something about it... And I don't really know from where it comes or who has taught it to me... –Doreen

Teaching useful skills to children through attending PA

Well, it's kind of nice to do things together outside, so then we'll go somewhere where we'll get some physical activity and teach the children a little bit of... a kind of feel for the wilderness. –Cornelia
And then I thought that I'd need to go with them to the indoor swimming pool and they'd need to practice, and knowing how to swim is important, but I've got a clear repulsive feeling toward that. –Grace

Staying fit and in good health to be able to take care of the children

I would like to go to the gym. Because I need to work on my health, I mean to keep my body healthy, because he [son] is growing, he is gaining weight, then it's harder to hold him longer. And I feel that, he's maybe now fifteen kilos up maybe. I don't know, we have to have this two year check soon. And I notice that it's hard for me to carry him. [...] a kid needs a happy mother in order to be happy... Not just mother, parents. So if I'm ill, if I can't run after him, if I can't play with him, it effects his life as well. –Allison
When you start getting older, you start to think that at that age, you still want your knees to hold, and that you can play around with your own children at some point as variedly as possible. –Lucas
[...] so that I'd have the energy to be with the kids as well. To keep going. To endure all of this a lot better when there's a kind of a nice routine there. –Shirley

PA in the form of everyday activities/family life at home

PA in the form of kin care

Mostly it's playing with [my daughter] in fact. If the weather is nice, then we'll do something with her outside. She's really, like, energetic, so well, she doesn't really sit still. –Nancy
Then when you go visit the parents, you get a snow shovel handed to you. –Lucy

PA in the form of household/garden activities with family

The dog needs to be taken out three times from the fifth floor and the kid needs to be taken out at least once and possibly carried up as well. –Ruth
Cleaning, that's a kind of a routine, every Friday, it's waiting today as well. It's a part of the Friday routines and it's also a special point of interest for my son. He's very interested in cleaning and everything must be tip-top. He likes vacuuming, or what he can do, to clean and dust things. So, that's kind of a shared thing. He already asked me if we'll be cleaning today. Cleaning is a must every week and it's also a shared chore with the boy, something he takes part in. –Bridget
I like cleaning, so a kind of an incidental activity, vacuuming your home, "take when you go, bring back when you return" is a legacy from my mom, and my mom said that I must have learned to walk while holding a vacuum cleaner. –Jenny

PA: physical activity.