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Summary

Regular physical activity (PA) is one of the primary factors in maintaining health in modern society. Over the last years university students have been identified as being a risk group. Following the World Health Organization's core strategy of health promotion in settings the study examined the prevalence of PA regarding leisure time, exercise and side jobs as well as the kinds of activities students are involved in and looked at correlations between exercise, health resources, stress-perception, health and well-being. The study was conducted at Georg-August-University Göttingen.

20 qualitative problem-focussed interviews were conducted followed by a quantitative online-survey (n=4233). Students were classified into different activity-groups depending on the frequency, intensity and duration of their activity plus their activity in the past.

Nearly every second student reports an inactive lifestyle. Most students are barely physically active in their free time apart from exercising. Women are less active than men and exercise with significantly lower intensity. Students suffer from physical complaints. Women report significantly more bodily complaints and are significantly less satisfied with their health status compared to men. Strong connections between regular physical exercise and health resources, health status and long-term well-being can be found. The more students exercise, the more health resources they have and the better their health status and well-being. Students, who exercise regularly, also have extra-resources, e.g. exercising as a coping strategy or an additional social network and social support in the field of sport which are able to reduce negative effects of stress on health and well-being. The findings underline

that students are not a highly active population group without any health complaints. Further research has to be conducted taking the high relevance of regular physical exercise for health promotion measures in university settings into account.