Differences in motivational orientation, self-perceived physical fitness, exercise activity, and self-esteem between participants in different sport events among Finnish 11- to 15-year-old students.

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INTRODUCTION
In the last decade, two new concepts in the field of sport psychology are most noteworthy: motivational orientation theory and perceived physical competence. Both concepts have proven their worth in sport psychology, so it seems only logical to explore how they are related to different athletic groups.

AIMS
The aim of this study was to find possible differences in:
- Motivational orientation (MO) (task and ego orientation)
- Self-perceived physical fitness (SPPF)
- Self-esteem (SE)
- Exercise activity (EA)
- Exercise intention at the age of 20 (EI)

RESULTS 1: I – T – I+T (boys)
Boys participating in individual sports scored lower on task orientation, self-perceived physical fitness, exercise activity and exercise intention in comparison with both boys participating in team sports and boys practicing both individual and team sports.

RESULTS 1: I – T – I+T (girls)
Girls participating in individual sports scored lower on self-perceived physical fitness and exercise intention in comparison with girls practicing both individual and team sports. Girls in individual sports also scored lower on exercise activity when compared with both girls practicing only team sports and with girls in both individual and team sports. The difference in ego orientation could not be substantiated by Scheffe’s post-hoc test.

METHODS
The data were collected as part of the 1998 WHO cross-national study on Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children.

Subjects
4864 children, representing Finnish children in the 5th, 7th, and 9th grades in compulsory comprehensive school (mean ages 11y9m, 13y9m, and 15y9m; 49% male, 51% female). Subjects were classified based on their sport preferences (table 1).

TABLE 1: Frequency of sport preference

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>individual</th>
<th>team</th>
<th>individual + team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
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<td>296</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>2119</td>
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<td>116</td>
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<table>
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<th></th>
<th>no-contact</th>
<th>contact</th>
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<td>1020</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>2242</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Instruments
- Perceptions of Success Questionnaire (Roberts & Treasure)
- Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Questionnaire
- Lintunen’s Perceived Physical Competence Scale
- Single-item measures were used to measure exercise activity and exercise intention

Statistics
Analyses were exploratory and performed separately for boys and girls, using ANOVA and Scheffe’s post-hoc multiple comparison.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION
Finnish boys participating in team sports or in both team and individual sport seem to be better off than boys in individual sports only as they have better scores on most of the variables. For Finnish girls a similar conclusion can be drawn on the difference between participants in both team and individual sports versus participants in individual sports only. Analogous results were found for the second comparison with boys in contact sports or in both contact and no-contact sports doing better than their counterparts practicing only no-contact sports.

Limitation:
- Cross-sectional => no causal relationships can be drawn

Strengths:
- Nationally representative sample
- 73 different sports included
- Inclusion of a mixed sports participation group

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