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## Sport as a medicine for health and health inequalities

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# PROPOSITIONS

belonging to the PhD thesis

## SPORT AS A MEDICINE FOR HEALTH AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Essays on the role of physical activity and sport participation in socioeconomic inequalities in health and health care costs

by Willem I.J. de Boer

1. Increasing sport participation among low socioeconomic groups may contribute considerably to reducing socioeconomic health inequalities. (Chapter 2)
2. In order to improve an individual's health through physical activity as a 'personalized preventive medicine', it is important to take into account that person's characteristics (such as the Body Mass Index level) as well as specific aspects of physical activity (such as the type and amount). (Chapters 2 and 3)
3. Since neighborhoods with a low socioeconomic status are associated with relatively high health care costs, policies aimed at improving the socioeconomic determinants of health, including physical activity behavior, may be important in containing health care costs. (Chapter 4)
4. Sport participation may explain socioeconomic health inequalities more than moderate to vigorous physical activity in general. (Chapter 2)
5. Sports club membership may explain socioeconomic inequalities in health care costs more than moderate to vigorous physical activity in general. (Chapter 5)
6. Improving public health and containing health care costs often seem to be opposing policy objectives, but increasing sport participation, especially among the vulnerable socioeconomic groups, can be an important means of contributing to both. (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5)
7. In the long run, the health and social costs of decreased physical activity may outweigh the potential short-term benefits of Covid-19 containing measures that reduce the possibilities for sport and physical activities. (Chapter 6 and Schoemaker & De Boer (2021))
8. There seems to exist a 'health club paradox': while for more than any other type of sport 'health benefits' are the main reason to practice fitness activities, the long-term health effects of fitness activities seem to be smaller than for other types of sport. (Chapter 2)
9. As a relative small, but substantial percentage of the population was able to increase physical activity levels, and policy makers increasingly recognized the importance of sport participation as a preventive medicine, the Covid-19 pandemic can be added to the long list of occasions where 'for every disadvantage there is an advantage'. (Chapter 6 and Johan Cruyff)
10. Society could benefit greatly from sports economists turning an unhealthy obsession for sport outcomes into a sporty obsession for health outcomes.
11. The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge. (Bertrand Russell)