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Too much spare time?

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31st Conference of the International Association of Time Use Research,
Lueneburg Germany, 23-25 September 2009

“Too much spare time”

- An inability to effectively or productively fill “free time”
- Spare time may be associated with boredom or frustration
- It may lead to filling that time with unhealthy pursuits
- Is an indicator of social exclusion



Background

- A potential issue for unemployed, youth or students, retired, underemployed, those with ill health or disability
 - ◆ Those with an excess amount of time uncommitted to paid or unpaid work, or caring
- Barriers to effective use of spare time
 - ◆ Money
 - ◆ Ill health or disability
 - ◆ Other barriers such as transport

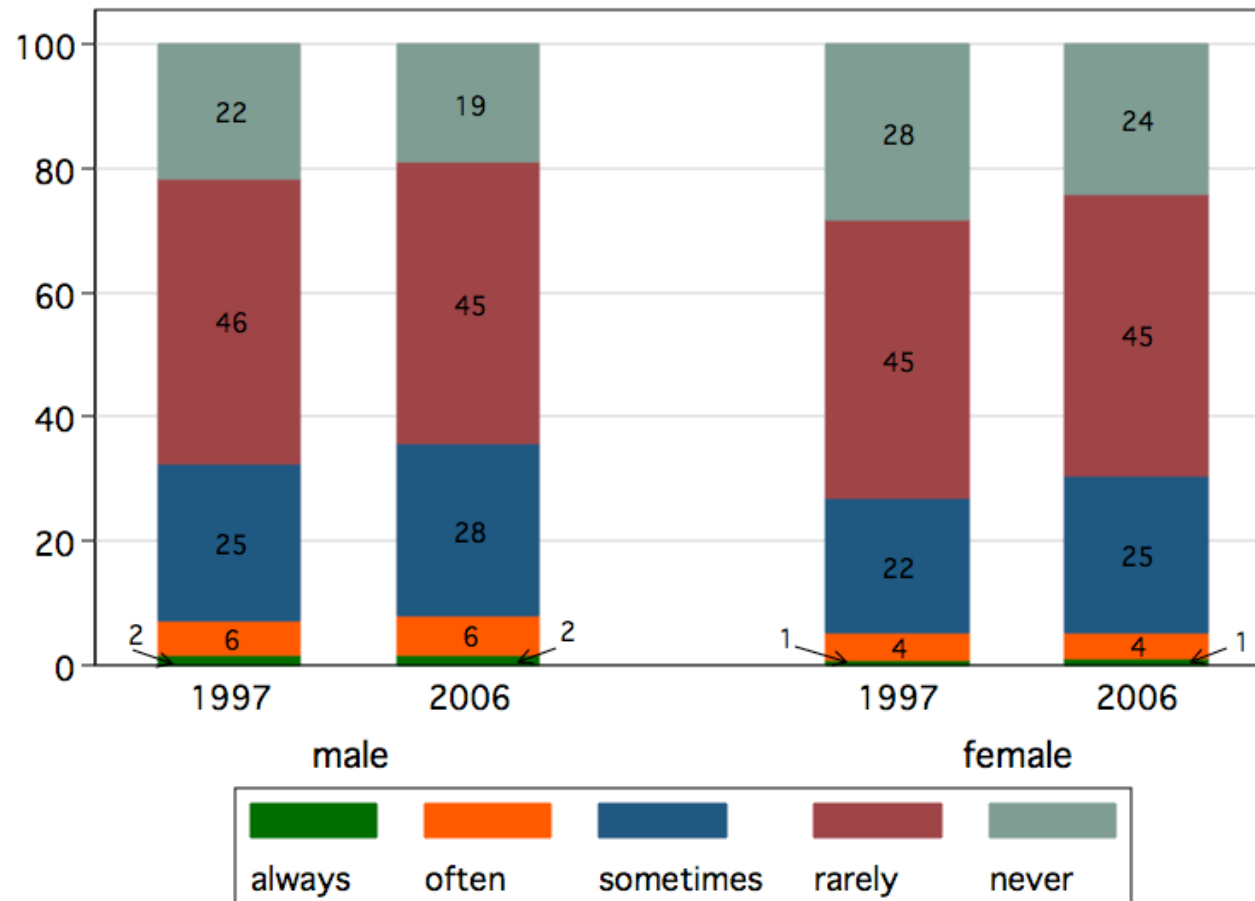


Data: Australian Time Use Survey

- 1997 (N=3,476 males, 3,784 females)
- 2006 (N=3,244 males, 3,658 males)
- Spare time question
 - ◆ **“How often do you feel that you have spare time that you don’t know what to do with?”**
 - ◆ Reasons for too much spare time
- Other information
 - ◆ Characteristics
 - ◆ Time use
 - ◆ Satisfaction with time use



Frequency of unoccupied spare time



Who experiences more unoccupied spare time ?

- Multivariate analyses
 - ◆ Logistic regression
 - p(always, often) too much spare time
 - ◆ Males and females analysed separately

- Year
- Age group
- Disability/ ill health
- Non-English speaking background
- Hours worked
- Relationship in household
- Other caring responsibilities

Also compared to analyses of time spent in leisure, recreation or social activities



Who is more likely to experience too much spare time?

● Most likely

- Young people (students and others, especially those living at home)
- Not employed or working shorter hours
- Disability/ ill health
- Non-English speaking
- Living alone (*males only*)

● Least likely

- Mothers
- Working long hours

● More spare time?

- Yes, except for male students
- Yes
- Yes
- No
- No

● Less spare time?

- Yes
- Yes



Reasons for too much spare time (%)

Of those who sometimes, often or always had too much spare time

Reasons (% of total)	Males		Females	
	1997	2006	1997	2006
Lack of money	53	46	57	49
Being sick/injured/disability	12	16	10	18
No family or friends nearby	10	15	17	21
No interests or hobbies	13	14	12	18
Unpredictable working hours		16		13
Transport difficulties		10		15
Lack of community facilities or services	8	7	7	6
Other reasons	15	5	14	7
Sample size	1,048	1,061	938	1,039



Who gives what reasons ?

Lack of money	Ill health disability	No family/ friends nearby	No hobbies / interests	Lack community facilities	Transport problems	Unpredictable work hours
Younger (oldest are least likely)	(Youngest least likely)	Females	Not employed a little less likely than those working longer hours	Dependent students living at home (males)	15-24 year olds, especially those living at home	English-speaking
English-speaking	Disability/long term health problem	Lives alone (males)		(Older people less likely)		Longest work hours
Not employed or fewer hours	Not employed or fewer hours			(Disability/ long term health problem less likely)	Disability/long term health problem	
					Non-English speaking	

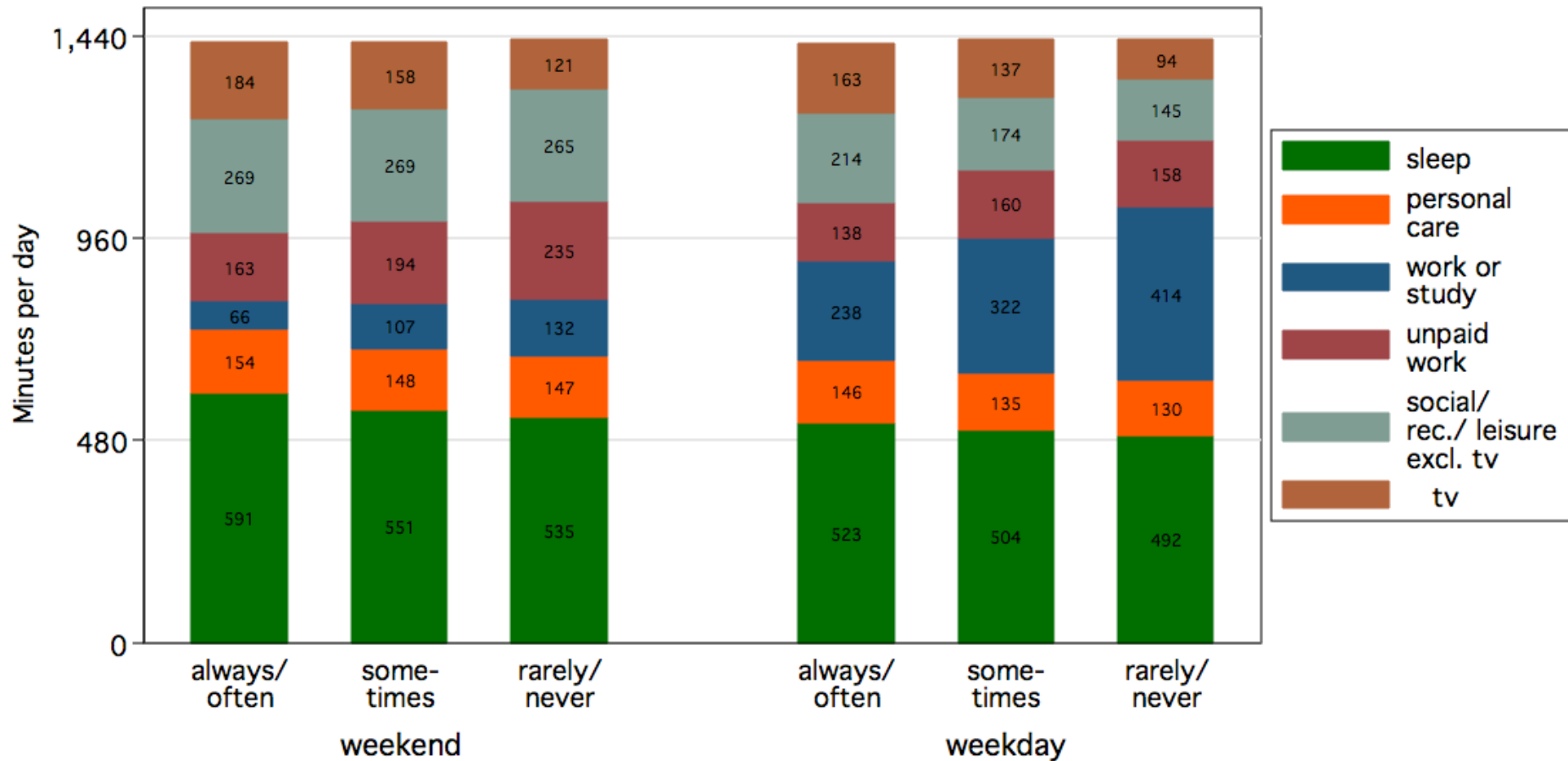


Relationships with aspects of time use

- Time spent in main activities
 - ◆ Sleep
 - ◆ Personal care
 - ◆ Paid work or study
 - ◆ Unpaid work (household work or childcare)
 - ◆ Social activities, recreation, leisure - **not TV**
 - ◆ TV



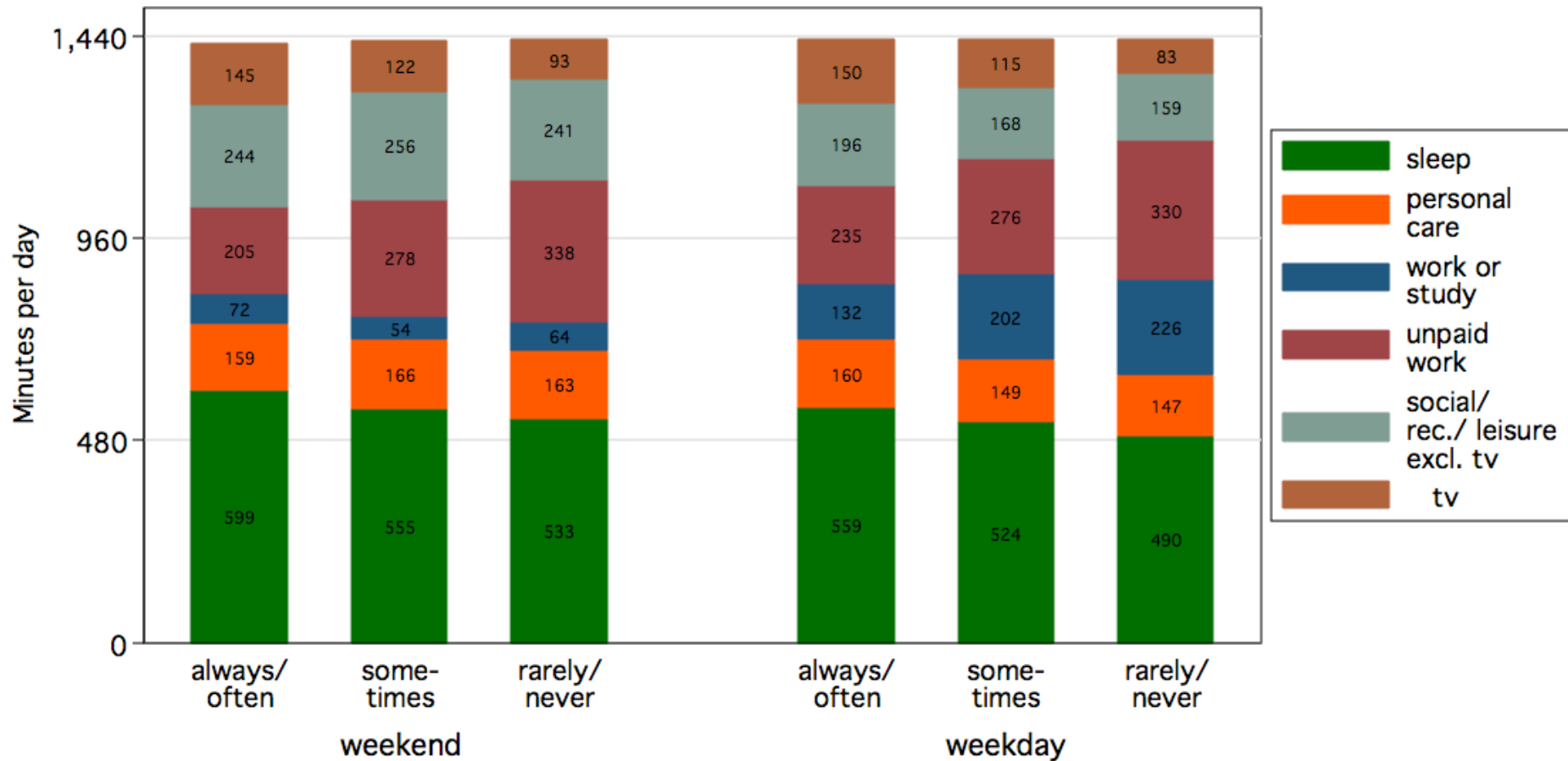
Relationships with time use - males



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Relationships with time use - females



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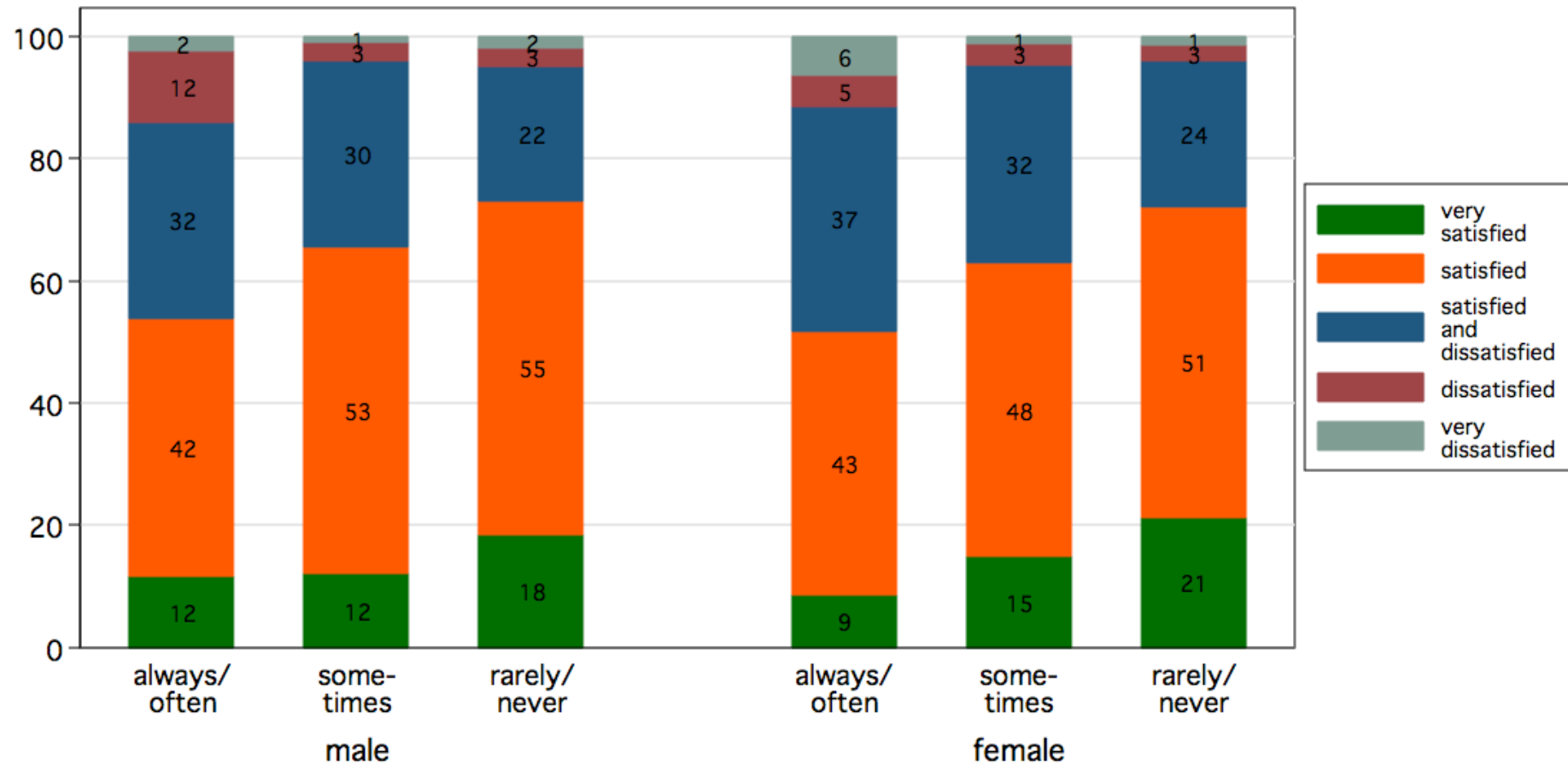
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Time use - other details

- No findings with regard to
 - ◆ Smoking, drinking, “negative social behaviours”
 - ◆ Specific types of recreation, leisure, EXCEPT for TV
- Analyses of secondary activities also showed no differences
- Satisfaction with time use?



Relationships with time use satisfaction



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Summary

- Too much spare time is an issue for a minority of people
- For some people, it is a problem
- Barriers include money, transport, ill health / disability



Discussion

- Under-utilised time could be used elsewhere?
 - ◆ Volunteering
 - ◆ Within the home
- A problem for health & wellbeing?
 - ◆ Television-watching
 - ◆ Evidence of other links to time use not apparent (eg smoking, “negative” activities)

