

Physical activity, health perception, barriers to exercise in adult non-athletes and athletes - Influence of sport during youth



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INTRODUCTION:

The vast majority of the German population has established sedentary lifestyles: Almost permanent sitting periods during work, traffic and leisure time [1-2]. Regular physical activity in youth is supposedly an important preventive factor against adopting adverse lifestyle habits later in life [3-5].

Aim: Identify differences between persons with physically active and inactive youth and to determine their present sport activity status, life style and health parameters as well as perceived barriers to exercise.

METHODS:

The nationwide “ACTivate Inactive Individuals” survey (www.dshs-koeln.de/acti-iv) served as data source for individual sport activities, sport history, motivation/barriers for sport, daily habits (nutrition, sitting times etc.) and anthropometric data (e.g. BMI). Two groups, “active youth” (+Bio; n=447, age 50±8 years, 60.2% women) vs. “inactive youth” (-Bio; n=448, age 50±8 years, 60.7% women) from the age range 35-65 yrs. were matched by age and gender. Groups were then split by actual exercise status into “non-athletes” (no/rarely sport) and “athletes” (≥ 1x training session a week); (Fig.1). Data are reported as means, standard deviations, and percentages. Statistics were performed using ANOVA, T-Test and Chi-Quadrat-Test.

RESULTS

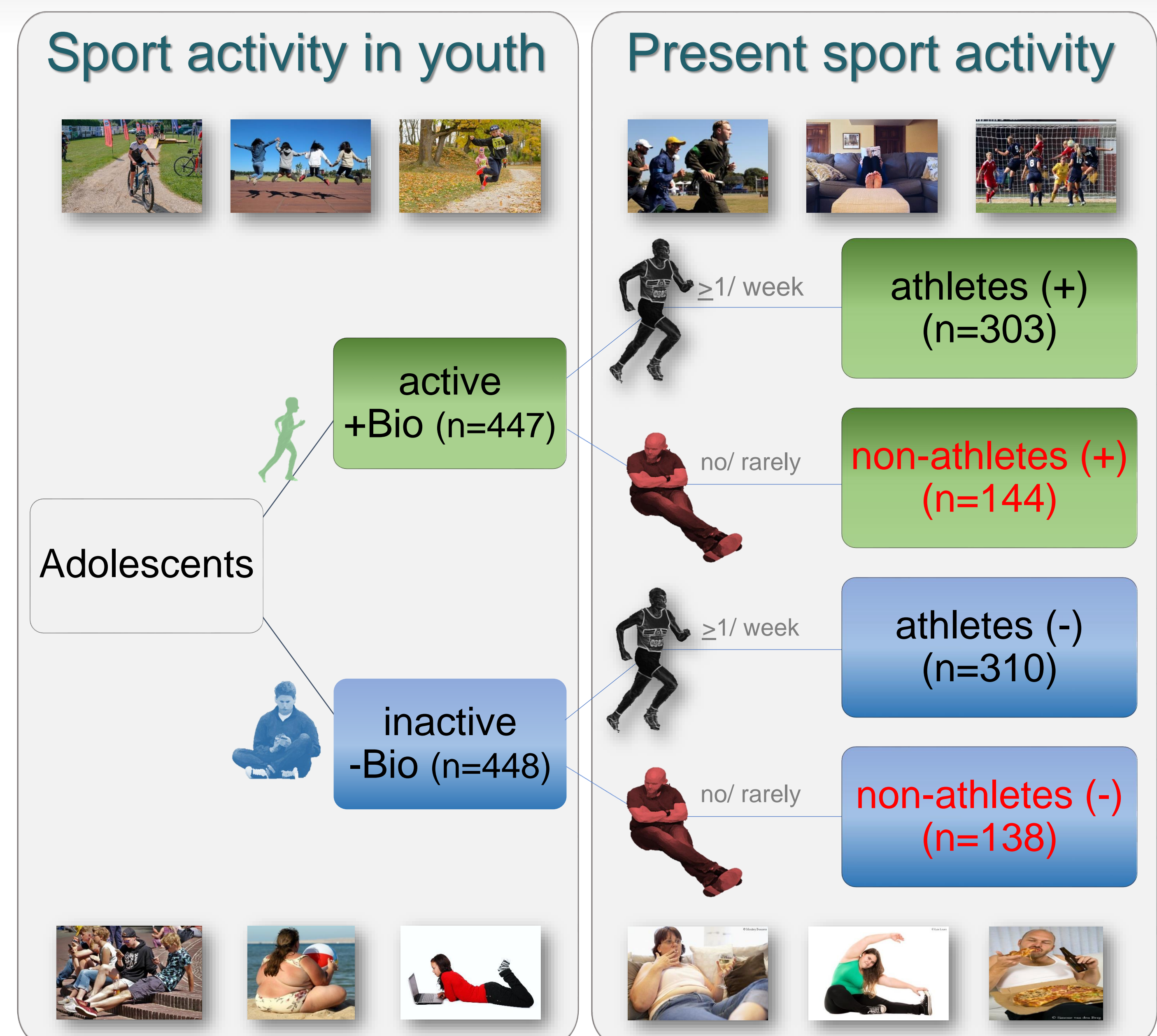


Fig. 1: Group classification sport activity in youth and adulthood

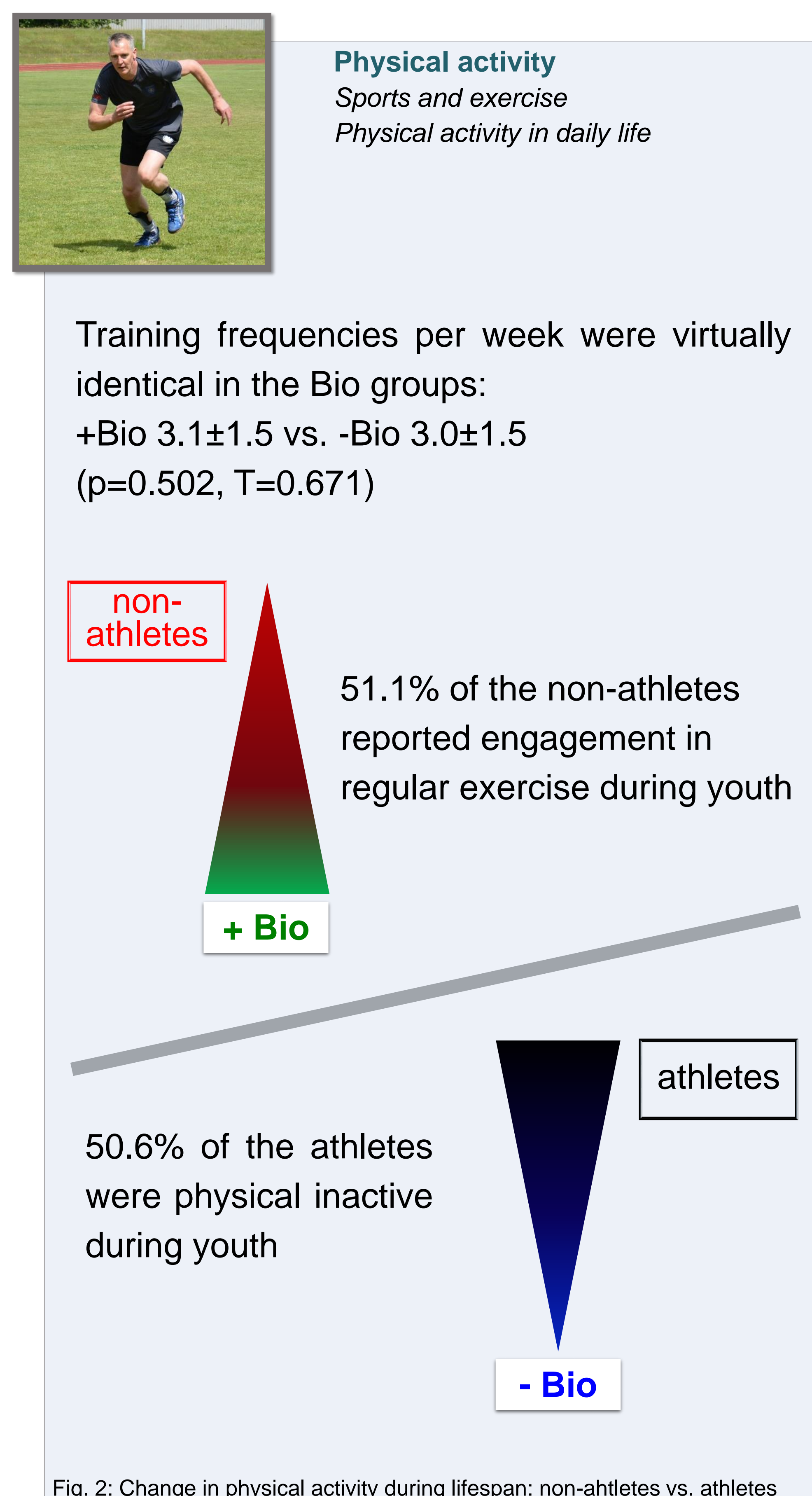


Fig. 2: Change in physical activity during lifespan: non-athletes vs. athletes

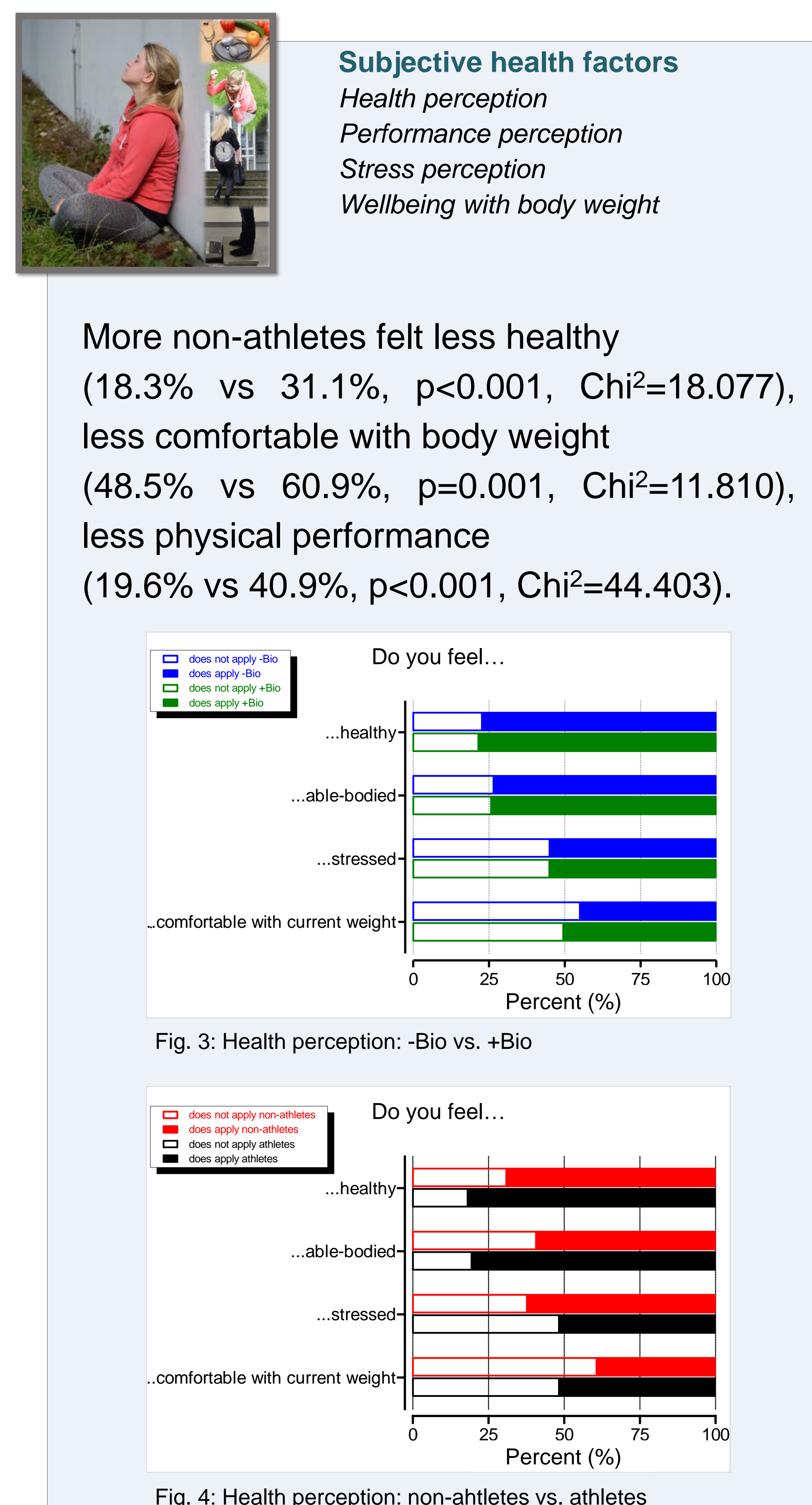


Fig. 3: Health perception: -Bio vs. +Bio

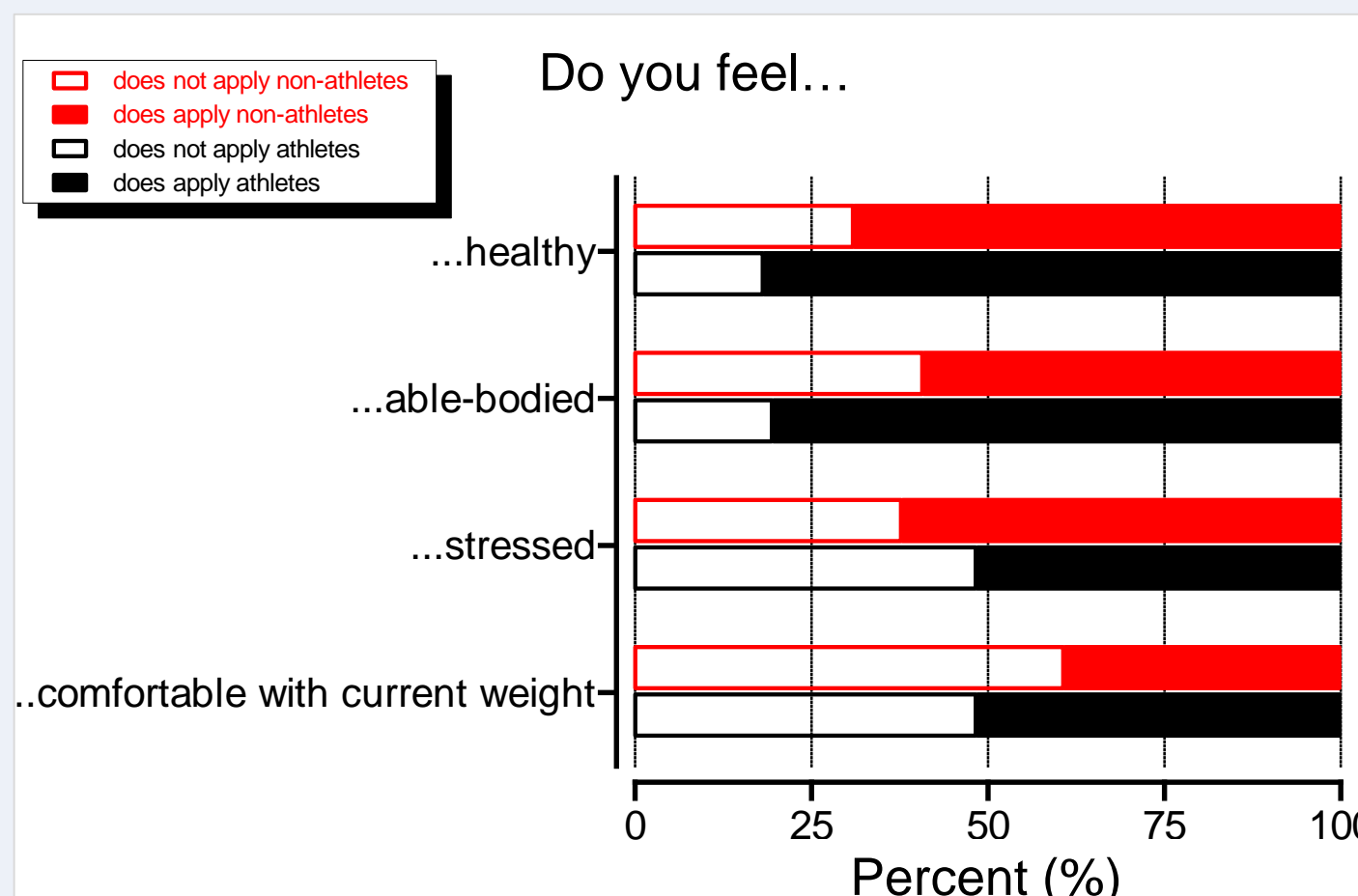


Fig. 4: Health perception: non-athletes vs. athletes

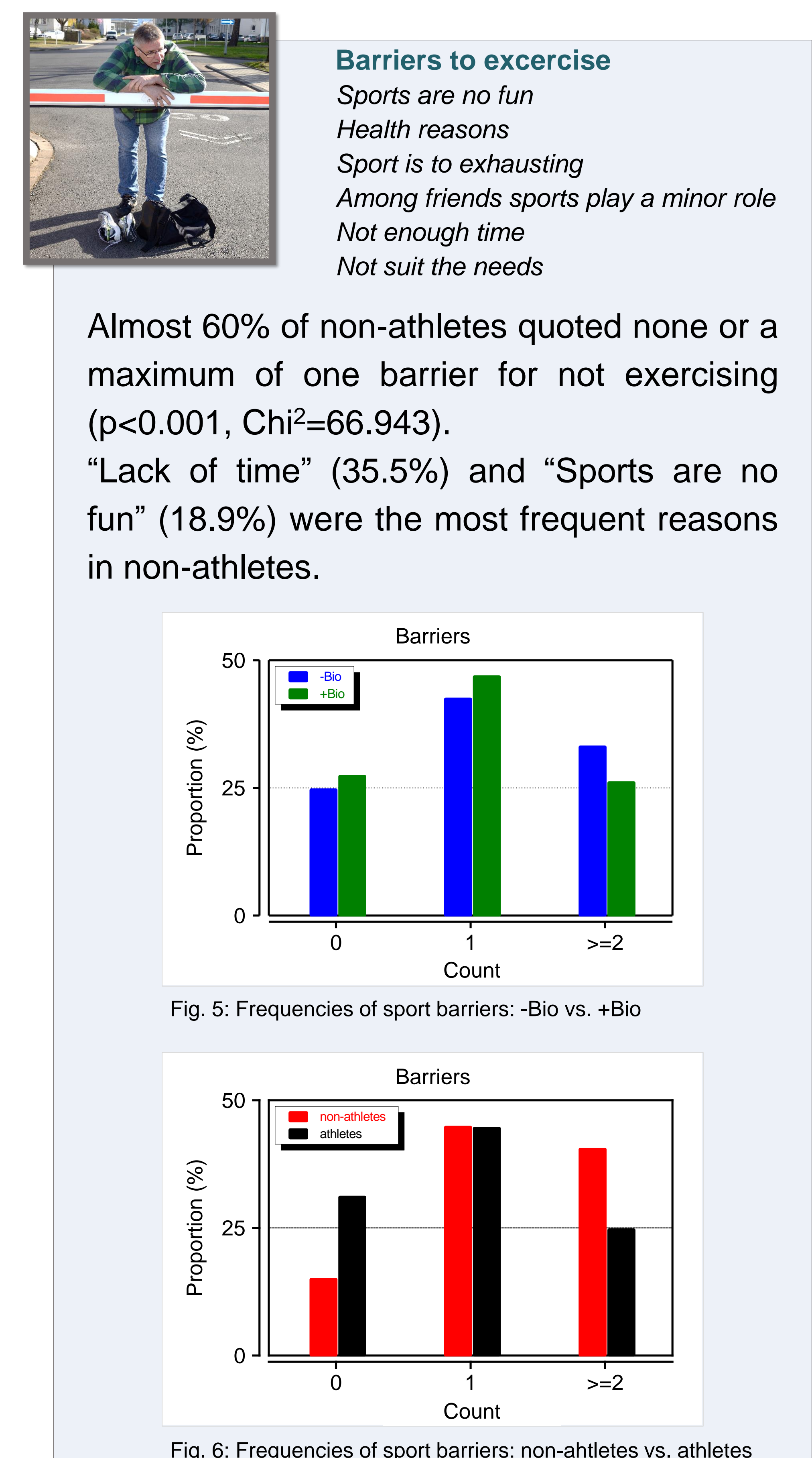


Fig. 5: Frequencies of sport barriers: -Bio vs. +Bio

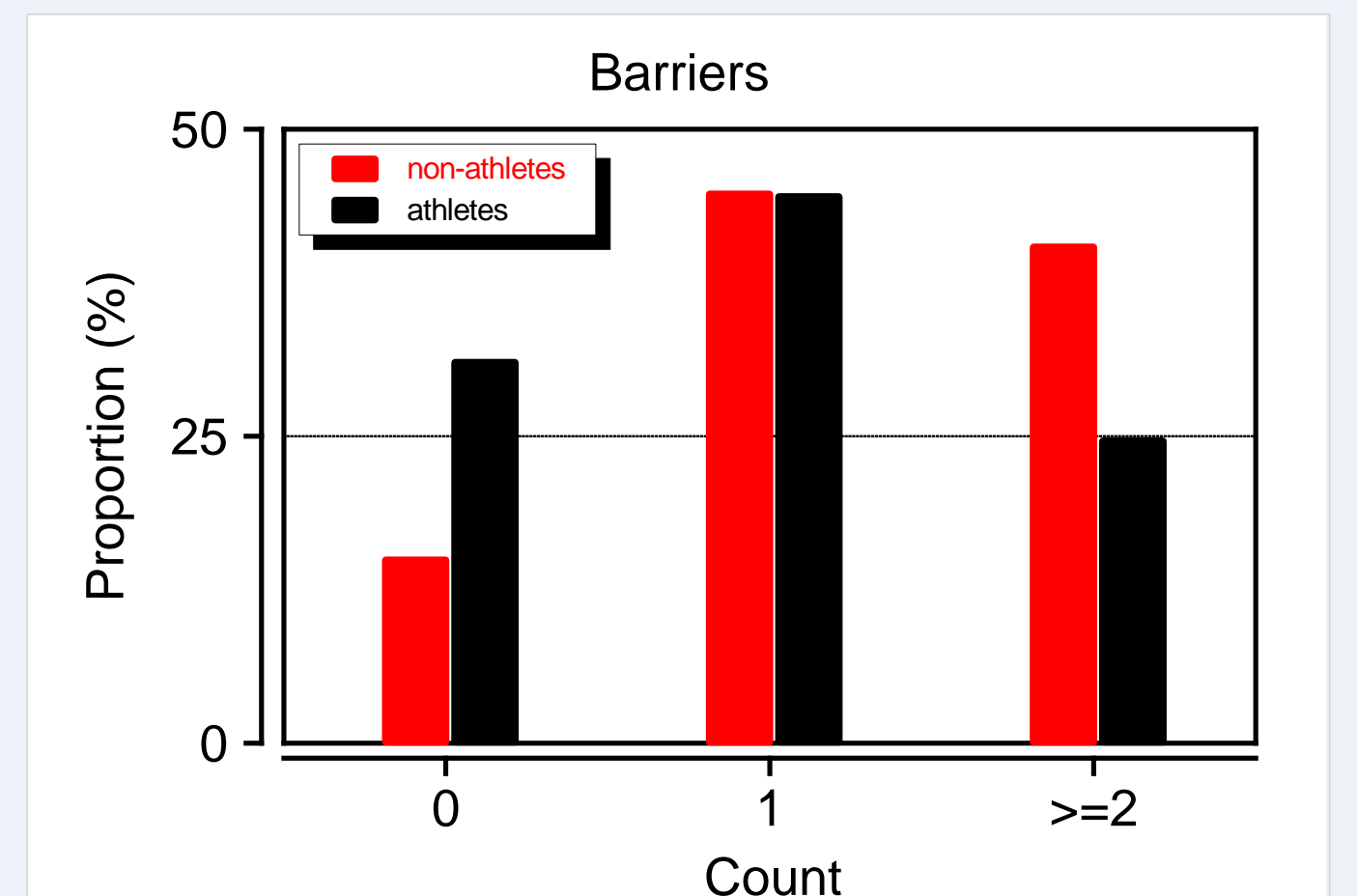


Fig. 6: Frequencies of sport barriers: non-athletes vs. athletes

Discussion

In contrast to common assumptions, this study shows only limited evidence for persisting influences of a positive sport biography during youth. Physical activity, weight status, perceived health, and fitness were similar in the +Bio and -Bio group. Moreover, a significant number of non-athletes reported regular training during youth. As expected, pronounced differences were confirmed between athletes and non-athletes. The present results underline the importance of (I) life-long exercise and (II) a culture of health and fitness by tailored health and fitness campaigns.

References

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