

The health benefits of urban green spaces, A literature review

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ABSTRACT

Green spaces are one of the most important components of cities and they have had an evolving role in the life of city residents. Reviews throughout the world have proven the power of green spaces to improve human health. This study presents the findings of a brief literature review relating to health benefits of green spaces. The review reflects material from sources that include peer-reviewed literature, library and internet. The results of the study revealed the health benefits of green space such as increased physical activity, stress reduction and recreational and sports activity. Scientists declare that green spaces increase our ability to focus, both on the tasks at hand and on our instinctively viewed surroundings. Green spaces provide ideal surfaces for a variety of recreational and sports activity and high use activities including parks and playgrounds. Access to green space is an important predictor of increased physical activity.

Keyword: *Health benefits, Green space, stress reduction, Physical activity, recreational*

1. Introduction

Studies throughout the world have proven the power of green spaces to improve human health. Green area may encourage physical activity by providing both a walking or cycling journey's end and a location for play and exercise. Humans evolved and have lived in mostly natural settings until very recently [1]. Although many residents in urban areas typically benefit from superior access to health care, education, and other services compared to their rural complements, these benefits are offset by the inactive features of modern living and the presence of urban threats to physical and psychological health [2,3]. Urbanization is often associated with social stress, physical threats, and adverse environmental exposures [4,5,3]. The physical or built environment is often described in terms of a "man-made environment". Availability of green spaces, providing opportunities for outdoor physical activities, social contacts and relaxation, might be an important environmental determinant of the health of urban residents. In the past decade, a growing number of reviews have shown relationships between green spaces and several determinants of health, such as physical activity, overweight or obesity, and stress [6, 7, 8, 9, 10]. It is important to know for whom and under what conditions green spaces in the living environment may contribute to health. Some researchers have imagined that people who spend more time in the vicinity of their home, may benefit more from green space in their living environment [11, 12]. Other researchers have explored whether social economic status influences the relationship between green spaces and health [13, 14]. Studies have shown that stressed individuals feel better after exposure to natural scenes. Improved concentration. Scientists assert that green spaces increase our ability to concentrate, both on the tasks at hand and on our subconsciously viewed surroundings. Spontaneous attention is the effortless and enjoyable awareness of sensory incentives in the environment a benefit that has been selected for throughout the course of human evolution. In the past, those who found nature naturally engaging were more likely to know where the berries were, more likely to find the critters, and more likely to escape predators. Access to green space is an important predictor of increased physical activity and reduced risk of obesity. A recent study of over 40 million people in England shows that health differences between high income and low income people are much narrow in areas with plenty green space, because it allows residents to become more physically active and reduce stress. Encouraging physically active lifestyles is a critical element of preventive health strategies and it has long

been known that behavioral change must be reinforced by supportive contexts [15]. Evidence suggests that green spaces promote a range of health outcomes, including walking and more vigorous physical activities [6, 10, 16]. A small amount of green space may be beneficial, though access to a larger overall amount of greenery within the area where a person lives could have a more considerable impact on their chances of leading an active lifestyle [17]. The experience of nature is also said to activate enhanced psychological makeover, just by quality of immersion within a green space. As a result, policymakers increasingly regard green spaces as an important component of health-promoting environments [18]. An emerging group of studies using small controlled samples has suggested that the well-known benefits of physical activity on mental health [19] could be improved among people who have access to green spaces [20, 21, 22, 23]. In short, activity in greener areas may have greater health returns than the same activity in non-green areas. Modern lifestyles are generally associated with large reductions in occupational, domestic, and transportation related physical activity, offset by only a small increase in vacation activity [24, 2]. In combination with changes in dietetic intake, these trends have led to the high current rate of fatness and associated health risks, quality of life reduction, and health care cost increases [25, 26, 27]. Urbanization and modernization are trends that will continue, investigators have suggested the cultivation of urban nature to help respond these health threats [28, 29, 30]. Hypothesized clarifications of the mental health-promoting influence of natural environments advocate that nature can help to more directed attention [31, 32] and reduce stress [33]. Humans have a characteristic relationship and need for connection with the natural world, and we have yet to fully adapt to urban environments [34, 35]. A series of studies of public housing residents in Chicago found that residents with more vegetation outside their windows reported less stress, less mental fatigue, and lower harshness of life issues, had more social ties, used common spaces more, and reported lower levels of fear, violence and other incivilities [36,37,38,39]. Lachowycz and Jones (2013) [40] suggested that both physical usage within and psychosocial benefits derived from green space contribute to improving physical health, but those benefits may be moderated by time availability for using green spaces, transportation accessibility, personal motivations, and neighborhood conditions. Recent reviews and original studies have provided some evidence in support of the benefits of green space for physical activity and fatness, though the findings are somewhat varying [10,41]. Several additional studies of physical activity and obesity have considered the impact of tree cover as one of many environmental variables considered at the same time, resulting in a wide range of findings including both significant healthy associations, and worthless associations [42, 43, 44, 45]. The literature on tree relationships with respiratory health is also mixed, as certain tree species have been linked to increased allergen exposure, while other studies have identified trees as a potential means for reducing airborne pollutants, particularly from motor vehicles [46, 47, 48, 49]. The health benefits of green space reported in general population studies and highly controlled samples may not directly translate to middle to older age adults due to systematic differences in the experience of nature. While adults over 45 years are more physically active than their peers if living in greener neighborhoods [50], it is well known that participation in physical activity decreases markedly across the life course [51, 52]. Social interactions, which are entwined with physical activity also decline as we age, yet this is another mechanism linking green spaces with better mental health [53, 50]. Meanwhile, the disturbing significances of falling among older adults [54, 55]; may make expressing out in greener neighborhoods, and utilizing green space for physical activity less attractive, thereby increasing the impact of social isolation on mental health [56,57].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review has been conducted on the basis of literature survey. Library, Internet, Various seminar papers, taskforce reports of research organization and journals on health benefits of green space have been surveyed for the purpose of accumulating information.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Green spaces provide an ideal surface for a variety of recreational and sports activity, including high use areas such as public parks, playgrounds and sports fields. The results of the study revealed the health benefits of green space such as increased physical activity, stress reduction and recreational and sports activity stress and violence reduction: Just being in, or viewing, green space for a few minutes reduces stress. This has been demonstrated by medical studies with hospital patients and the general public. Increased Physical Activity: Access to green space is an important interpreter of increased physical activity and reduced risk of fatness. Considerable evidence is now

developing that access to green space is an important predictor of a higher level of physical activity, reduced risk of fatness and longer life. Green space improved concentration and enhanced health.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The most important health benefits of green space are increased physical activity, stress reduction and recreational and sports activity. Scientists state that green spaces increase our ability to attention. Green spaces provide ideal surfaces for a variety of recreational and sports activity and high use activities including parks and playgrounds. Studies have found associations between availability of urban green space and physical activity levels. A significant proportion of dynamic physical activity in youthful takes place in urban green spaces.

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