

The Impact of Urban Green Space Creation on Health

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Abstract

Urban green spaces, encompassing parks, gardens and urban forests, play a pivotal role in enhancing public health and well-being. This article explores the multifaceted impact of urban green space creation on human health. It examines the physical, mental and social health benefits derived from access to green spaces in urban settings. Drawing upon scientific research and case studies from various cities worldwide, the article highlights how green spaces mitigate urban environmental challenges, promote physical activity, reduce stress and foster community interaction. Moreover, it discusses the implications for urban planning and policy-making, emphasizing the importance of integrating green spaces into urban development strategies to create healthier and more sustainable cities.

Keywords: Urban green spaces • Public health • Urban planning • Social interaction • Mental health

Introduction

In an increasingly urbanized world, where concrete jungles dominate skylines, the importance of urban green spaces cannot be overstated. Defined as areas deliberately preserved or created amidst urban sprawl, green spaces include parks, gardens, woodlands and other forms of natural landscapes. Beyond their aesthetic value, these spaces serve as crucial promoters of public health and well-being, offering a diverse range of benefits that significantly impact urban residents' quality of life. One of the most tangible benefits of urban green spaces is their contribution to physical health. These areas provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, jogging, cycling and sports, promoting regular exercise among city dwellers. Studies consistently show that access to green spaces correlates with increased physical activity levels, which in turn reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disorders and diabetes. The presence of greenery also improves air quality by absorbing pollutants and mitigating urban heat island effects, thus creating a healthier environment for residents.

In addition to physical health benefits, urban green spaces significantly impact mental well-being. Nature has a restorative effect on the human mind, reducing stress, anxiety and depression. Access to green spaces has been linked to improved mood, cognitive function and overall psychological resilience. The tranquility offered by natural environments serves as a counterbalance to the stressors of urban living, providing opportunities for relaxation, reflection and emotional rejuvenation. Moreover, exposure to greenery enhances feelings of happiness and life satisfaction, fostering a positive outlook on life among urban residents [1].

Literature Review

Beyond individual health benefits, urban green spaces contribute to social cohesion and community interaction. These spaces serve as meeting points where people from diverse backgrounds converge, fostering social connections and a sense of belonging. Community gardens, playgrounds and recreational areas within green spaces encourage social interactions among residents, thereby strengthening neighborhood ties and promoting social

integration. Such interactions are crucial for building resilient communities and enhancing overall urban livability. Recognizing the multifaceted benefits of urban green spaces, city planners and policymakers are increasingly integrating green infrastructure into urban development strategies. Incorporating parks, green corridors and rooftop gardens into city planning not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of urban areas but also promotes public health and environmental sustainability. Policies aimed at preserving existing green spaces and creating new ones are essential for ensuring equitable access to nature across different socioeconomic groups within cities [2].

The creation and preservation of urban green spaces have profound implications for public health and well-being in cities worldwide. From physical health benefits like promoting exercise and improving air quality to enhancing mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, green spaces play a pivotal role in creating healthier urban environments. Moreover, they contribute to social cohesion by fostering community interaction and enhancing overall urban livability. Moving forward, prioritizing the integration of green spaces into urban planning and policy agendas is crucial for building sustainable cities that promote the holistic health of their residents. Through thoughtful design, strategic implementation and robust policy support, urban green spaces can continue to serve as invaluable assets in the quest for healthier, more livable cities in the 21st century [3].

Looking ahead, several challenges and opportunities arise in the context of urban green spaces. As urbanization accelerates globally, cities face pressures such as land scarcity and competing development interests, which threaten existing green spaces. Effective urban planning must balance these challenges with the imperative to preserve and expand green infrastructure. This requires innovative approaches, such as retrofitting green spaces in underutilized urban areas, integrating green roofs and walls into building designs and reclaiming derelict spaces for community gardens and parks. Furthermore, ensuring equitable access to green spaces is paramount. Disparities in access based on socioeconomic status and geographic location must be addressed through inclusive planning processes and policies that prioritize green space provision in underserved neighborhoods. Community engagement and participatory design approaches can empower residents to advocate for and co-create green spaces that meet their specific needs and preferences [4].

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Received: 02 May, 2024, Manuscript No. jbes-24-139087; **Editor Assigned:** 04 May, 2024, PreQC No. P-139087; **Reviewed:** 15 May, 2024, QC No. Q-139087; **Revised:** 20 May, 2024, Manuscript No. R-139087; **Published:** 27 May, 2024, DOI: 10.37421/2332-2543.2024.12.535

Discussion

Advancing scientific research on the health benefits of urban green spaces is essential for guiding evidence-based policies and interventions. Longitudinal studies exploring the cumulative effects of green space exposure on health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations, can provide valuable insights. Additionally, interdisciplinary research that examines the intersection of urban planning, environmental science, public health and social equity will inform holistic approaches to green space development

and management. While the benefits of urban green spaces are universally recognized, their implementation must be tailored to local contexts and cultural preferences. Different cities face unique environmental, social and economic challenges that influence green space planning and management strategies. Learning from successful case studies and best practices globally can inspire innovation and adaptation in diverse urban settings, promoting cross-cultural exchange and collaboration [5].

Climate change poses significant challenges to urban green spaces, affecting vegetation health, water availability and overall ecosystem resilience. Cities must adopt strategies to enhance the climate resilience of green spaces, such as selecting drought-tolerant plant species, implementing water-efficient irrigation systems and creating diverse habitats to support local biodiversity. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity within urban green spaces is crucial for ecological balance and resilience against environmental stressors [6].

Conclusion

Urban green spaces are indispensable assets that promote health, well-being and sustainability in cities worldwide. From improving physical fitness and mental resilience to fostering social cohesion and environmental stewardship, green spaces contribute to creating vibrant and resilient urban communities. As cities continue to evolve, integrating green infrastructure into urban planning and policy agendas will be essential for addressing current and future urban challenges while enhancing the quality of life for all residents. By embracing a holistic approach that values nature as an integral part of urban living, cities can achieve a sustainable balance between growth, development and the preservation of green spaces. Through collaborative efforts among policymakers, urban planners, community stakeholders and researchers, cities can harness the transformative power of urban green spaces to build healthier, happier and more equitable urban environments for generations to come.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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How to cite this article: Laurance, Berkes. "The Impact of Urban Green Space Creation on Health." *J Biodivers Endanger Species* 12 (2024): 535.