

IC - (20886) - SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF RESTORATIVE EXPERIENCE

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Background and objectives

While the restorative benefits of being in nature are well documented, inter-personal differences may exist in the extent of restorative experience. One of the factors that might lead to inter-personal differences in restorative experience, and in the judgment of nature contribution to personal well-being is the social and cultural context. The aim of the present research was to study how social and cultural context affect the perceived benefits of forests, and the restorative experience while being in a forest.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

The research was composed of two studies. In the first study a questionnaire was distributed to a representative sample of Israel population to identify the role of socio-demographic context in perceptions of forest contribution to well-being. In the second study a questionnaire was distributed among forests visitors to identify the ways social and cultural context is related to restoration while being in a forest.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Study 1: Perceived contribution of forests to emotional well-being was significantly higher among women than among men, and among secular compared to religious people. Study 2: Most of the respondents (93.5%) reported visiting the forest with other people. The social configuration of the visit was not found to be related to the emotional level. Nevertheless, lower level of positive emotions was found among those who came to the forest with children, compared to those who were not accompanied by children.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The applied aim of the study is to provide recommendations regarding how to produce higher awareness of the public and of professionals in the fields of health, culture, and sports concerning the potential contribution of forests.

Few studies thus far have paid attention to the social context of restoration. This study adds to the understanding of how social and cultural context may affect restorative nature experiences, and judgment of nature contribution to the well-being

Palavras-chave : restorative expereince, social context, cultural context, forests