

IC - (20961) - RESTORATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERMEDIATE ARCHITECTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

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Background and objectives

The restorativeness potential of Intermediate Architectural Environments (IAE) is the focus of this research. IAE range from courtyards, arcades, balconies to window-seats, offering retreat to the interior and contact with the exterior. IAE promote prospect and refuge, with shelter, safety, diverse controllable environmental conditions, adaptable sociability and relaxation opportunities. Literature indicates that the restorative benefits of exposure to nature dominate Restorative Environments (RE) research, with fewer studies on built settings. With people spending a significant proportion of time indoors, and predominantly in cities, RE within buildings give opportunity to relieve stress, attention fatigue, and warrants investigation.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

An initial pilot study conducted at a cultural building in Sao Paulo, which includes IAE of different spatial characteristics and environmental qualities, that are freely accessible to the public. Mixed research methods were used, including semi-structured qualitative participant interviews and building environmental surveys. This methodology was expanded in two recent studies in Sao Paulo as follows: Perceived Stress Scale, cognitive task, participants heart-rate variability, galvanic skin response, eye tracking, Restoration Outcome Scale, Prospect and Refuge questions, semi-structured qualitative questions, and daylight-thermal measurements.

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

Pilot study findings indicate that views, daylight and sociability were the main IAE characteristics contributing towards restorativeness. These were investigated in more detail in these recent studies. Data analysis will be completed by the time of the conference. Pilot study findings are compared with recent studies' findings, that include participant physiological data collection.

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

Although similar methodology has been employed in RE research, these are novel methods in the context of intermediate environments; results can demonstrate the value of such methods to inform subsequent IAE research. Some of the scales/questionnaires applied in this study have been translated to Brazilian Portuguese for the first time; an online survey is proposed to review the validity of translations within a larger population sample.

Palavras-chave : Restorativeness, Intermediate Environments, Prospect and Refuge, Mixed-method Research, Eye-tracking