

Sustainability | Poster

PP - (21170) - EXAMINING THE WELL-BEING AND NATURE CONNECTEDNESS BENEFITS OF WALKING IN DIFFERENT NOISE-EXPOSED ENVIRONMENTS: STUDY PROTOCOL OF A LONGITUDINAL INTERVENTION STUDY.

Julia Schaupp^{1,3}; Silvia Tobias¹; Javier Dopico²; Natalia Kolecka¹; Maria Garcia Martin¹; Jean-Marc Wunderli²; Beat Schäffer²; Karin Hediger³; Nicole Bauer¹

1 - Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL); 2 - Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa); 3 - University of Basel, Faculty of Psychology, Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy

Research or practical problem and objectives

An increasing number of scientific studies indicate that contact with nature can improve wellbeing. Thus, nature-based interventions are promising approaches. However, an increasing percentage of people live in urban regions with limited opportunities for spending time in natural environments. In addition, such urban settings typically feature increased levels of noise, representing a major environmental stressor and global challenge. Although various earlier studies have compared the effects of exposure to natural versus urban environments, evidence on the effects of noise in this context is very limited. The study compares the effects of walking in natural versus urban environments, taking the road traffic noise exposure in the respective settings into account. Further, the study investigates approaches to increase the positive effect of nature-based interventions and aims to discern whether a mindfulness intervention increases the positive effects of walking in nature.

Methods and process (for empirical research)

We present the study protocol of a longitudinal intervention study, containing field experiments in ecologically valid settings. Participants will be sent on 30-minute guided group-walks in natural or urban environments with different road traffic noise levels and with or without a mindfulness intervention. Participants will be assessed before and directly after the walk. After this, participants will be instructed to walk individually for three times during the next ten days and will be assessed for a third time. Assessments will consist of self-report measures, physiological data, an attention test and objective noise measurements.

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

The results will inform about the restorative effect of different types of environments and of different noise levels in these sites. The project will provide information for the Swiss noise legislation and the implementation of the revised Federal Act on Spatial Planning. Further, the study will provide insights on how altering the way in which individuals engage with nature may increase the beneficial effects of exposure to natural environments.

Palavras-chave : restorative environments, road traffic noise, stress, wellbeing, nature connectedness, mindfulness