

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21198) - GROWING SPACES IN A CORUÑA (SPAIN). A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON POSITIVE BENEFITS ON HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL COHESION

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Background and objectives

Collective garden participation has the potential to enhance mental well-being through its positive relationship with life satisfaction, happiness, and restoration (Tharrey & Darmon, 2021). The objective of the research was to find out if there were differences in terms of health, wellbeing and social cohesion between a sample of users of urban growing spaces and a representative sample of the city of A Coruña.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

The data presented in this cross-sectional study, derives from two surveys conducted during the summer and autumn of 2021 on 870 adult participants (61 from the group of users of urban gardens and 809 from the control group of citizens). The variables included were evaluated through standardized questionnaires or instruments designed by experts within the Connecting Nature project (Grant Agreement No. 730222). The data analyses included the calculation of descriptive statistics and comparisons of means through Student's t test.

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

When comparing users of urban gardens with the control group (sample of citizens of A Coruña who were not users of growing spaces), the results show higher scores for urban gardeners in the following variables: perceived general health, perceived restorativeness, some conditions of pro-environmental behaviour, connectedness to nature, social cohesion and empowerment. All of these differences were statistically significant at the $p=.05$ level.

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

If the results are corroborated in future research, these clear differences show policy makers how a sustainable and cost-effective intervention brings clear benefits to local communities. These results must be analysed with caution, since despite having found statistically significant differences, using tests that considered the homogeneity of the comparisons, the groups of individuals were very different in terms of sample size. However, this work is one more step to empirically support the benefits that urban gardening has for the health, wellbeing and social cohesion of citizens.

Palavras-chave : Urban gardens, Health and wellbeing, Social cohesion, Nature-based solutions