

IC - (21362) - THE EFFECT OF AGING-FRIENDLY PARK ATTRIBUTES ON LEISURE PATTERNS BEFORE AND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Po-Ju Chang¹

1 - National Taiwan University

Background and objectives

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the world, causing unprecedented lifestyle changes, especially in outdoor leisure patterns. Participating in leisure activities releases stress, adds a sense of meaning to life, helps individuals cope with limitations caused by chronic illness, and contributes to overcoming negative life events among older adults. In addition, urban neighborhood parks are critical because they enable older people to maintain active lifestyles. These parks provide not only physical environments that support outdoor activities but also neighborhood social support that encourages older adults to participate in outdoor activities. This study explored the associations among leisure patterns and aging-friendly neighborhood park attributes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

This study included two data collection rounds involving groups of 602 (before the COVID-19 pandemic) and 498 (during the COVID-19 pandemic) participants aged above 55 years in the same selected neighborhood parks in Taiwan in 2020 and 2021. Twenty parks were selected based on size and location in central Taiwan's largest city, Taichung, and the researchers evaluated their aging-friendly attributes. We used a series of analyses to examine the effects of aging-friendly park attributes on home-based and on-site leisure behaviors before and during the pandemic.

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

The results indicate that leisure patterns among the aging population shifted from primarily involving on-site leisure before the pandemic to primarily involving home-based leisure during the pandemic. However, viewing nature in parks increased during the pandemic. The parks' levels of nature and aesthetic attributes were positively associated with on-site leisure behavior.

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

An improved understanding of the effect of aging-friendly neighborhood park attributes on leisure patterns among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic is important for effective development of urban outdoor leisure spaces to help older adults overcome life's difficulties during and after the pandemic.

Palavras-chave : Covid-19, neighborhood green space, aging