

Role of Green Exercise in Mental Health Promotion Among Adolescents

Dear Editor,

Green exercise is a form of physical activity that takes place outdoors in natural green environments.^[1] There is a need for mental health promotion among adolescents through physical activity because lack of physical activity may be associated with an unhealthy lifestyle. Adolescents who frequently engage in a leisure-time activity, despite the intensity, are less likely to suffer from depression. Adolescents that spent more time in green spaces had improved self-satisfaction and social contacts.^[2] Encouraging green exercise does not only promote physical activity but also psychological wellbeing. Adolescents tend to engage more in physical activity in a green environment and are active for longer and at higher intensities than in indoor activities. Green exercise is a strong tool for mental health promotion and environmental protection. A synergistic relationship exists between mental health benefits of exercise and the rejuvenating effects of interaction with the natural environment. Physical activity in green environments might produce greater mental health benefits for adolescents than indoor activities.

Exercise within urban green spaces might be a potential lifestyle intervention and a cost-effective way of preventing mood disorders among adolescents. However, urban natural green spaces should be maintained and developed to encourage physical activity among urban dwellers. Interaction with green spaces during childhood is associated with better mental health.^[3] However, exposure to green exercise during childhood was associated with connectedness to nature in adulthood and improved cardiovascular health.^[4] In the context of mental health promotion, green exercise should be encouraged among adolescent peer groups in schools because peer association is strong during adolescence. Strolling around a green environment induced a significant reduction in heart rate values when compared to the red and white environmental conditions.^[5] Exercising regularly within green spaces enhances fitness and wellness among adolescents. There are few research studies on exercise, green environment, and mental health among adolescents. There is a need to investigate the effects of green exercise on mental health among adolescents using different types, durations, and intensities of exercise.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Chidiebere E. Okechukwu

Department of Biomedicine and Prevention, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy

Address for correspondence:

*Dr. Chidiebere E. Okechukwu,
Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Via
Montpellier, 1, 00133 Rome, Italy.
E-mail: Chidiebereochechukwu2015@gmail.com*

Received: 12 Jul 19 **Accepted:** 13 Jul 19

Published: 05 Sep 20

References

1. Ian L, Patricia D, Christopher G, Giovanna C. The effects of green exercise on physical and mental wellbeing: A systematic review. *Int J Env Res Public Health* 2019;16:E1352.
2. Payam D, Sanam H, Behzad A, Ramin H, Mostafa Q, Mohammad EM, *et al.* Use of green spaces, self-satisfaction and social contacts in adolescents: A population-based CASPIAN-V study. *Environ Res* 2019;168:171-7.
3. Kristine E, Carsten BP, Lars A, Constantinos T, Preben BM, Jens-Christian S. Residential green space in childhood is associated with lower risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 2019;116:5188-93.
4. Wood CJ, Smyth N. The health impact of nature exposure and green exercise across the life course: A pilot study. *Int J Environ Health Res* 2019;1-10. doi: 10.1080/09603123.2019.1593327.
5. Briki W, Majed L. Adaptive effects of seeing green environment on psychophysiological parameters when walking or running. *Front Psychol* 2019;10:252.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpvm.ir
	DOI: 10.4103/ijpvm.IJPVM_262_19

How to cite this article: Okechukwu CE. Role of green exercise in mental health promotion among adolescents. *Int J Prev Med* 2020;11:143.

© 2020 International Journal of Preventive Medicine | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow