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Authors: Tapan Kumar Nath, Shawn Sim Zhe Han, Alexander Mark Lechner



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Urban Green Space and well-being in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tapan Kumar Nath*, Shawn Sim Zhe Han, Alexander Mark Lechner

School of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Nottingham Malaysia
Campus, Semenyih, Jalan Broga 43500
Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author; e-mail: Tapan.Nath@nottingham.edu.my

Highlights

- Limited studies on urban green space and well-being relationship in developing countries
- Physical and leisure activities in parks had positive influence on well-being
- Respondents were willing to donate and volunteer to park management
- Promotion and support for using urban green space can be an important public health intervention

Abstract

The association between urban green space and well-being has been extensively studied in many parts of the world such as Australia, Europe and North America. However, in tropical countries, especially in developing countries such as Malaysia there are few examples of such studies. This study, carried out in three selected parks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, explored the perception of park users on their health and well-being outcomes associated with urban green space. It also assessed park users' characteristics, quality of parks, and users' willingness to contribute towards park management. Data were collected by semi-structured interviews of 250 park visitors and 60 neighborhood residents. More than 50% of the respondents were of working age, and visited the parks at least 2-3 days a week, although neighborhood residents visited more frequently. For 98% of the respondents, the parks provided sufficient space for recreation and leisure facilities including jogging and walking as well as opportunities for children to take part in physical activities. More than 80% of the respondents reported that physical and leisure activities in parks had a positive influence on stress reduction, mindfulness, physical fitness, maintaining body weight, burning body fat and overall well-being. Having taken advantage of the health and well-being benefits from parks, the majority of the respondents (>50%) were willing to contribute to the management of parks through donation and/or volunteering. Given our findings, we suggest that the promotion and support for green spaces in Malaysia should be seen as an important public health intervention.

Keywords: Health benefits, mindfulness, parks, physical activity, social gathering

1. Introduction

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