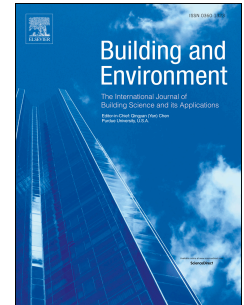


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Ten questions concerning a new adolescent health urbanism

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Ten questions concerning a new adolescent health urbanism

Abstract

This article sets out an urban health model and conceptual framework for researching environments that support adolescent health and wellbeing. Our focus is on 10 to 19 year olds, an age group that has been neglected by researchers in the otherwise emerging and dynamic field of design and health over the past decade. The Ten Questions address adolescent urban lifestyles and their relation to health outcomes in Europe, adolescent perceptions of the built environment and age specific physical, social, digital and emotional affordances as well as, addressing how to increase participation of adolescents in health-oriented urban design processes. A model of *adolescent health urbanism* is introduced that integrates place and person characteristics in a dynamic model that addresses everyday practices across the adolescent age span. Based on a review of the evidence from urban planning and environmental psychology literature, this article emphasises the need for a more adolescent-responsive urban design process, the need for more research into age-specific urban affordances; integration of new technologies to forge mobility in and engagement with in the co-design of cities allowing stakeholders to make better-informed planning decisions.

Keywords

Urban design, urbanism, health, wellbeing, adolescence, young people

Highlights

- A new adolescent health urbanism can help address major adolescent health challenges including mental wellbeing and physical activity.
- A model is presented that integrates aspects of the self with urban place attributes, together with adolescents' everyday practices (e.g. spatial behaviour, personal goals) to build health and wellbeing.
- The model considers the dynamic periods of transition within adolescence (e.g. primary school to high school, secondary to university, education to workforce, family dependence to autonomy).
- Understanding health and wellbeing from the perspective of what matters to adolescents - combined with co-creation in urban design processes - is critical to these new approaches.

Introduction

Adolescent health and wellbeing has been overlooked in global health and social policy, but with a new Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (Patton et al., 2017), together with the UN's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2015), there is a new global momentum to drive investment, capacity building, research, and evaluation on adolescent health. This reflects the unprecedented social, economic, and cultural changes currently facing adolescents. Globalization and urbanization present significant risks for our young people that include the densification of our cities, a new global economic order, the digital world and new global communication systems, and social media. In addition, adolescent health and wellbeing is at risk from rapid global health trends that include unhealthy lifestyles and obesity, the crisis of youth unemployment, reduced family stability, environmental degradation, armed conflict, and mass migration.

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