



Visiting Outdoor Green Environments Positively Impacts Self-rated Health among Older People in Long-term Care

Poor perceived health is common among older people living in long-term care. The study of Rappe et al. found that it may be possible to promote the well-being of older people by providing opportunities for outdoor visits with exposure to green environment. The research findings are readily applicable to southern California and most other urban areas of the state particularly since there is little weather hindrance to being outdoors all year.

Rappe, R.; Kivela, S.; Rita, H. 2006. [HortTechnology 16\(1\):55](#)

Summary: The restorative effects of nature in enhancing human well-being are well documented. However, the effects of exposure to a green environment on health in institutional settings have not been adequately studied. Our study describes the relationship between the reported frequency of visits to an outdoor green environment and self-rated health, including hindrances experienced during outdoor visits among older people living in a nursing home. Forty-five women assessed their health and answered a questionnaire containing the Nottingham Health Profile (NHP) during the interview. A strong positive association was established between the reported frequency of visiting outdoors and self-rated health even when taking into account health-related distresses measured using the NHP ($B = 0.235$, $P < 0.01$). The main hindrances related to outdoor visits were lack of assistance and uncomfortable weather conditions. The results suggest that it might be possible to promote the well-being of older individuals living in nursing homes by providing them with opportunities to visit outdoor green environments. By increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of the outdoor environment, the frequency of outdoor visits could increase, resulting in better perceived health. Implementation of environmental interventions that facilitate year-round outdoor visits are recommended.

To view this publication go to: [HortTechnology 16\(1\):55](#)