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## **QUALITATIVE INSIGHT INTO THE WELLBEING IMPACT OF NATURE BASED EXERCISE**

*Біл Дж. Якісне уявлення впливу вправ на природу на добробут.*

*Ключові слова: природні фізичні вправи, самопочуття, якісний.*

*Keywords: nature based exercise, wellbeing, qualitative.*

Exercising in nature refers to any form of exercise or physical activity that is carried out simultaneously within nature. Other commonly used terms are green exercise, blue exercise, nature based leisure and exercise in natural environments. Exercise has been demonstrated to yield significant physical and mental health benefits. Nature has also demonstrated considerable wellbeing and restorative benefits. Combine exercise within nature (exercise in forests, near to or within lakes and the sea) has been demonstrated to have benefits that are significantly greater than either factor in isolation.

Most of the early work in this area has taken a quantitative approach. Initial studies in 2006 examined differences in the outcome of running inside on a treadmill while watching different recordings. Pleasant rural pictures gave the best outcomes. Work within this area has snowballed and now there is considerable work which has generally looked at either a comparison of exercise indoors and outdoors or looked at a difference between exercise within rural settings verses urban settings. Research has provided enough scientific studies for several review studies to be carried out within the area. The reviews have demonstrated that there are stronger wellbeing outcomes for exercise and physical activity when carried out outside compared to inside and for when exercise is carried out in rural settings compared to urban settings.

Several theories have been used to explain the enhanced wellbeing effect. Some theories refer to a biophilia explanation, both attention restoration theory (ART) and psychoevolutionary theory explain suggest that there is a natural benefit from exposure to nature while being involved with physical activity and exercise. ART explains that there are 4 necessary components to allow for attention restoration (a process whereby we recover from psychological fatigue) to be achieved. Being away from the stress, there being extent, being fascinated by the environment and the environment being compatible to the individual allowing the attention restoration through achieving a state of soft fascination. The theory suggests that NBEX can provide these components. Psychoevolutionary theory suggests that there is a stress reduction and a calm that happens when we are

surrounded by pleasant nature based scenes. Other theories have suggested that there are affordances within nature that are either not present or less present outside of nature. Ecological dynamics theory discusses how nature very often offers opportunities for experiences that increase confidence, calm and mindfulness, e.g. hiking to the top of a mountain may be similar from a physical perspective to an hour walking on a treadmill. However, to get there the hiker is forced to navigate the terrain which is different throughout and once at the top may get an instant gratification from looking around at where they have come from.

In 2018 Bamberg and colleagues wrote a perspective essay where they spoke about enriching green exercise research. It was clear that to really develop our understanding of the mechanisms behind why there is a more powerful wellbeing impact we needed to understand how different forms of NBEX are experienced across different groups and across different seasons. Bamberg (2018) suggested that the vast majority of the literature had examined the summer months and that was a lack of understanding of the nuanced differences between different types of exercise, e.g. perhaps sailing on a lake has different wellbeing benefits to walking through a forest. Further to this perhaps there are more complex intersectional differences, in that perhaps culture, age, gender social class all play a role in how NBEX is experienced.

At that time the perspective mentioned only 2 papers that had addressed this omission. Since then there have been a range of papers that have addressed this. To the authors knowledge qualitative insight into the NBEX area has come from middle aged men cycling in the countryside (green cycling), sea swimming, wild water swimming, running in the park with a sample that previous suffered mental with mental health issues, immersive water based activities, trekking, scuba diving on British veterans suffering with post traumatic stress disorder and the impact of and NBEX on autistic men. This is not an exhaustive list. The presentation focused on the following papers that had looked at the wellbeing effect of NBEX from a qualitative perspective as these were deemed most appropriate for the delegates:

All of the included papers are from a UK perspective and to the authors knowledge no such literature has been carried out within the Ukraine and with the strong cultural differences between the UK and the Ukraine combined with the political situation within the Ukraine at present, research like this examining a Ukrainian sample would be useful if this were to be applied widely cross nationally.

Having looked over the aforementioned papers and made an attempt to merge the themes from each individual paper the author has noted the following recurring themes:

- Social connectedness;
- Sense of achievement;
- Perspective on life;
- Healing/Recovery;
- Proactive wellbeing.

Insight here has generally reinforced the messages that were found within the quantitative literature about the wellbeing benefits of NBEX. The literature has added to our understanding of this area through an understanding of the different mechanisms by which this takes place.

Social connectedness is a regular feature that comes out of the literature with several of the papers discussing how some form of social connection as a reason for the wellbeing effect. Interestingly while this would be represented within group based activities that are carried out with a gym setting there was a slightly different description at times, with the green cycling paper discussing the idea of ‘alone but connected’ whereby it was OK to be a part of the group but there was no consequence either actual nor imagined should you decide not to be involved.

Sense of achievement was another theme that appeared to be regularly cited in different forms within the papers being discussed here. Many papers spoke about nature affording possibilities to show a sense of achievement above and beyond that attained in other forms of exercise. Research into hiking talks about hill walking and looking back to see where you have come from. Research into gardening speaks of something similar and is perhaps longer lasting.

Perspective on life is another regularly occurring area. Participants within these studies describe NBEX as being a place for reflection where life can be put into perspective. Research into the impact of NBEX on those with autism discuss how NBEX allows a space and a time to consider what is really important in life.

Healing/recovery refers to NBEX being useful as it provided a space for getting better. There were several mentions of this within the papers that were examined. The running study) examined those that had previously suffered with mental health issues and found this to be useful to them in their recovery. This was mentioned in other areas too where general exercise was undertaken.

Proactive wellbeing was also mentioned. This referred to those that undertook NBEX to stop any issues occurring in the future. This was mentioned in several studies. Within countryside cycling they participants referred to «my place to escape and rejuvenate» which reflected what we are discussing here.

The above themes represent a triple hermeneutic whereby the original participants were asked to make sense of their experiences, followed by the researcher making an interpretation of this and then within this article we try and make sense of those interpretations. These studies were picked as the author felt that they were the most appropriate for the likely readership.

Application of the research is potentially useful within the current situation faced in the Ukraine where the infrastructure for more traditional modes of exercise may well be lacking at this point. The above article and accompanying literature demonstrate how this could be a positive aspect if the aim of the exercise and physical activity is to enhance wellbeing. Those applying this knowledge should have confidence in suggesting that NBEX has stronger wellbeing effects. They should also promote reflection within the experience and give choice about the form that the exercise takes.

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### **РОЛЬ ФІЗИЧНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ І СПОРТУ У ФОРМУВАННІ ФІЗИЧНИХ ТА ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИХ ЯКОСТЕЙ МОЛОДОЇ ЛЮДИНИ**

*Hryban V. G., Fomenko A. E. The role of physical culture and sports in the formation of physical and psychological qualities of a young person*

*Keywords: physical culture, sports, physical qualities, psychological qualities, young people*

Фізична культура – це самостійна і особлива галузь загальної культури, яка спрямована, головним чином, на зміцнення здоров’я людини, продовження її творчої активності та життя, а також на зростання і вдосконалення її всебічного і гармонійного розвитку та використання набутих якостей в суспільній, трудовій та інших видах діяльності. У Законі України «Про