Nature's ritalin: the effects of green spaces on symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

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Publication Date
2012

Document Type
Masters Thesis

Department
School for Social Work

Keywords
Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder-Treatment, Attention-deficit disorder in adolescence-Treatment, Nature-Psychological aspects, College students-Mental health, ADHD, Nature

Abstract
This qualitative study explored the effects of exposure to natural green spaces on symptoms of Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among diagnosed college students. Six students from three universities in the San Francisco Bay Area were interviewed regarding the impact of experiences in urban green spaces and wilderness on their perceived attentional functioning, stress, and mood. The study sought to: 1) contribute to the growing base of literature and research on Attention Restoration Theory (ART); 2) offer a potential non-pharmacological alternative treatment for ADHD; and 3) further develop within the field of social work an understanding of the natural environment as it relates to behavioral and mental health. The findings demonstrated that activities in outdoor settings helped reduce attention-deficit symptoms. All participants noted that time spent in nature often leads to a reduction of tension and helps redirect attention from tangential and racing thoughts to a greater state of mental relaxation. Suggestions for further research were given, as well as recommendations that the natural environment become a routine part of the assessment and treatment.

Language
English

Comments

Limited Access until August 2017

Recommended Citation

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant problems with attention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity. ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders and frequently continues through adolescence and into adulthood. In the US, approximately 11% of children 4-17 years old and about 4.4% of adults are diagnosed with the disorder. ADHD diagnosis rates vary based on the specific criteria used for diagnosis, so these figures are not exact.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. Inattention means a person wanders off task, lacks persistence, has difficulty sustaining focus, and is disorganized; and these problems are not due to defiance or lack of comprehension. Antidepressants may help all of the symptoms of ADHD and can be prescribed if a patient has bothersome side effects from stimulants. Antidepressants can be helpful.
in combination with stimulants if a patient also has another condition, such as an anxiety disorder, depression, or another mood disorder. Doctors and patients can work together to find the best medication, dose, or medication combination.