

Urban green spaces

Building health policy for healthy living in the city

C Colomer

Articles such as the one by Takano *et al*¹ are crucial for health policy building. Scientific evidence on environmental factors' health impact needs to be produced in a way useful for practice improvement. This article is a good example of how to do it.

Since the beginning of the health promotion ideas, the importance of the physical and social settings where people live as determinants of their health, has been considered.² Therefore, proposals have been made of performances that favour healthier environments. In particular, with regard to the cities, the Healthy Cities project raises the necessity of the coordinated and collaborative work between the different municipality sectors to establish policies with health gain.³

This contribution from Dr Colomer was inadvertently held over from the December 2002 issue.

Actually, the decisions on the economic and social development of a city, as for example, to what uses are made of the urban ground, are complex. Economic and social interests can be confronted, and the benefits of short-term businesses be seen as more important than public quality of life and health.

The results of this study should be made known to all stakeholders (policy makers, community leaders, public health professionals) so that informed and health oriented decisions can be taken.

In this study the health of senior citizens' is approached. It is a relevant issue because of the demographic trend of aging in the world and the shortage of solutions for the new needs and problems that are found both at individual and community level. From the results of the study arises some recommendations: it seems important to facilitate the care of elderly people in their habitual

surroundings, as well as to make efforts to improve the physical surroundings (such as, green areas) and to maintain the social communication.

It is interesting also, looking at the factors associated to longevity, that they are slightly different for women and men. Whereas women seem to be more interested in social relationships, men are more affected by physical aspects like noise or sunlight. The different needs and ways to live in the city according to gender, is another aspect that should be considered when the city is planned.

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