

Abstract

We are currently witnessing a growing trend of people moving to larger cities. People are less in touch with nature than before and recent research shows that this is a problem. In this thesis, we summarise the findings of studies that have been carried out and proved the positive effect of the natural environment on human psychology and physiology. Our work focuses on the effect of mood and cognitive enhancement due to exposure to a stimulus. The research was conducted remotely through questionnaires. We exposed respondents (N=600) to photographs of four types of forest environments and examined the difference in scores using standardized methods of STROOP and POMS-SF tests. When formulating the design of our study, we drew inspiration from already conducted research. The original feature of our approach rested in distinguishing forest environments into deciduous and coniferous types, or primary and secondary types. We asked respondents how they liked the outdoor environment to which they had previously been exposed. This allowed us to determine whether the effect of the stimulus on mood and cognition was related to liking when evaluating the results.

The findings of the thesis suggest that all types of forest environments have an effect on mood when compared to the city as a control stimulus. There was no effect of stimulus on cognitive ability, which could be due to the lack of exhaustion of the respondents. We observed large differences between liking for each type of environment, with city and coniferous secondary forest in particular differing significantly from the other stimuli. We found a weak correlation between effects on mood and liking. Beyond the usual POMS evaluation, we compared the effectiveness of the stimuli on each mood component. For example, all types of forests appeared to affect the tension, but none of them did affect anger.

We believe that our results will contribute to a deeper understanding of the context of mutual interaction between humans and nature. We recommend that further research focuses on laboratory physiological measurements and field studies.