

# **Environment and mental health: contact with nature, anxiety and depression**

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## Benefits of natural environments in adults and children

Cognitive processes

Physical health

Recovery from stress

Mental health



Mood

# Contact with nature and mental health

**Extensive scientific evidence in normal population** (Collado & Corraliza, 2014, Kaplan y Kaplan, 1989; Hartig, 2007; Marrero y Carballeira; 2010 Ulrich, 1984, 1991; Bowler, Buyung-Ali, Knight, & Pullin, 2010)

## **Few studies with mental patients**

Berman et al., 2012: 50-minute walk in nature can improve mood and short-term memory

# Objectives

To investigate the relationship between contact with nature and presence of well-being, symptoms of anxiety and depression in psychological patients

# Hypothesis

Higher anxiety, depression, low wellbeing and life satisfaction

Lower anxiety, and depression, higher wellbeing and life satisfaction



Contact with nature

# Method

## Participants:

**59 mental patients. Spanish and Italians, aged 18 – 70 years old**

## Instruments:

Contact with nature Scale

Five Factor Inventory (Abbreviated version of NEO Personality Inventory)

Stait-Trait Anxiety Inventory

Beck Depression Inventory II

Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al, 1985)

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

# Results

Mean and standard deviation for contact with nature, satisfaction with life, depression and anxiety

	Spanish Mean (SD)	Italian Mean (SD)	p
Contact with nature	1.33 (0.63)	0.81 (0.59)	< .001
Wellbeing	3.18 (0.69)	2.93(0.82)	.21
Satisfaction with life	2.88(1.04)	2.71(1.10)	.56
Depression	15.66(11.65)	32,37(16.42)	< .001
Anxiety	28.57(11.74)	35.97(11.38)	.02

# Results

**Table 2.** Correlations between contact with nature, well-being and satisfaction with life, and contact with nature, personality traits, anxiety, depression, age and level of education.

	Contact with nature	Well-being	Satisfaction with life
Contact with nature	-	.49***	.34**
Neuroticism	-.47***	-.59***	-.63***
Extraversion	.57***	.63***	.47***
Openness	.20	.09	-.02
Agreeableness	.14	.25*	.34**
Conscientiousness	.27*	.55	.55
Anxiety	-.52***	-.70***	-.65***
Depression	-.50***	-.67***	-.52***
Age	-.44***	-.33**	-.07
Level of education	.08	-.02	.02

Note:  $N = 59$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

# Conclusions

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- Higher contact with nature → lower anxiety and depression

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- Higher contact with nature → higher wellbeing and life satisfaction

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- implications for therapy
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