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Title

Imagining Eco-Wellness: A scoping review of behavior change to promote both personal health and environmental sustainability

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Systematic review, meta-analysis, or scoping review

Presenters

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Abstract

Background: The climate is changing, and the global community needs to do more to mitigate those effects. Many of the behavioral patterns that drive climate change also contribute to the epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Objectives: A scoping review was conducted to locate, categorize, and interpret current scientific studies of interventions aimed at changing individual behaviors to promote both personal health and environmental sustainability. Methods: PRISMA Scoping Review guidelines were utilized while searching PubMed, Agricultural & Environmental Science Collection, and Scopus bibliographic databases. Additionally, email queries were sent to expert colleagues in the field. Inclusion criteria were: 1) an intervention aimed at changing behaviors, 2) an intervention delivered at the individual or group level, 3) an outcome measurement of mental or physical health attribute, and 4) an outcome measurement related to environmental sustainability. Results: Other than reports of a pilot study that this research team previously conducted, no studies were found that strictly fit the inclusion criteria. However, we did find sixteen relevant studies that fit neatly within four broad topical areas: active transportation, dietary intake, indoor air quality, and green space immersion. Discussion: This scoping review sought published studies of behavioral interventions aimed at health and sustainability co-benefits. While this search found almost nothing that met our inclusion criteria, it became apparent that four separate fields of study were converging on a scientific area that we are calling “eco-wellness,” defined as the simultaneous pursuit of both personal health and environmental sustainability. The emerging field of eco-wellness could provide a conceptual framework and methodological toolkit for those seeking to enhance sustainability while supporting health behaviors. This, in turn, could help to motivate the urgent action needed to confront both climate change and epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.