

Health promoting environments for an ageing population: A register and GIS-study of associations between urban greenness and formal social services in Sweden

Kristoffer Mattisson, Emilie Stroh, Anna Axmon

Background and Aim: The ongoing urbanization and densification of cities is intensifying the competition of available space in urban areas. The resulting decrease in urban greenness may have a negative health impact for residents, with possible sociodemographic injustices. Our overarching aim is to investigate if access to urban greenness increases the chances of independent living among older people, measured by use of formal social services and taking sociodemographic factors into account. However, this abstract focuses on access to urban greenness and sociodemographic factors.

Methods: This register-based study investigates all people aged 65+ years in two Swedish municipalities in 2010, 2015 and 2019. Data include sociodemographic variables (type of housing, place of birth, cohabitation, sex, and year of birth on individual level, and socioeconomic status [SES] on area level) and coordinates of residential location. The proportion of total, publicly available and quiet urban green spaces, respectively, in 300m and 100m buffers around the residency were assessed with Geographical Information systems (GIS).

Results: In Malmö, a high proportion of urban green spaces was found for those living in house, living alone, being born before the median year of birth, and living in an area with low SES. A similar pattern was found for public green spaces, except for living in a house where the results were opposite. Although having access to more public green, being born abroad and living in an area with low SES were associated with having access to less quiet green. In Kristianstad living in a house and being born abroad were associated with higher access to urban green spaces, whereas living in a house was associated with lower access to public green spaces.

Conclusions: There may be sociodemographic differences in access to urban green.

Keywords: Urban green, Social services, Longitudinal, GIS, Register