Evidence Linking Design to Health

Often limited, with surprises and contradictions

Real-world opportunities are needed to continue building an evidence base

https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/urbanhealth-initiative
Evidence Linking Design to Health

Examples:

Green roofs
Libraries
Evidence Linking Design to Health

Examples:

Green roofs  Green space
Libraries

Special thanks to Bora Chang and Ashley Gripper for help with this evidence scan
Linking Green Space to Stress

• Walking or exercising in nature demonstrated benefits in memory, mood, salivary cortisol.

• Green space may attenuate harmful health consequences from stressful life events.

• High density of trees or more greenness may lower risk of cardio-metabolic conditions.
Linking Green Space to Stress


Evidence Evaluating Library Design

• Public library building design does not appear to have had much quantitative evaluation in recent years.
• Assessments have been done around wayfinding, assigning people book-finding tasks and timing them.
• Literacy or library skills programs are evaluated, but generally without a rigorous design (just pre-post).
• An interesting perspective is to include users in the design of libraries, and including digital libraries.
Evidence Evaluating Library Design

1. Nitecki DA. Space assessment as a venue for defining the academic library. *Space* 2011;81(1).
Parting Thoughts

Strategic comparisons make for stronger evidence (re-designed space vs status quo)

Consider what conditions could maximize or undermine health benefits of design, including community involvement in the design process.

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.

— Jane Jacobs