Green spaces as healthy places

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Green space visits spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic when stress levels were heightened, and social connections were threatened. The value-belief-norm (VBN) theory explains the influence of personal values and world view on perceived obligations to the environment and relevant action. We aimed to explore causal relationships between variable pairs for value orientations, ecological world view, and beliefs as predictors of psychological well being amongst visitors to green spaces in Singapore during COVID-19. 268 adult residents of Singapore completed an online survey measuring value orientations (biospheric, altruistic, egoistic), proximity/frequency of visits to green space, nature connectedness, social connectedness, religious belief, spirituality and psychological wellbeing along with sociodemographic variables such as age and gender. As predicted by the VBN theory, biospheric value orientation and spirituality (belief) were positively associated with nature connectedness (ecological world view). The positive association between nature connectedness and psychological wellbeing was completely mediated by spirituality. Frequency of visits to nature was positively associated with nature connectedness but neither proximity to nature nor social connectedness was associated with nature connectedness. Our results indicate that a) people don't need to live close to nature to develop a connection to nature and b) during the uncertain times of pandemic-related partial lockdown, people were visiting green spaces to draw on nature connection as a coping mechanism to fulfil psychological needs and enhance psychological well being, and spirituality mediates this pathway.