

## FACT SHEET

### **Study finds nature exposure leads to better health**

*People who went outside as children more likely have better mental health in adulthood*

- The study “Low Childhood Nature Exposure is Associated with Worse Mental Health in Adulthood” found that adults who spent more time in nature as a child have better mental health than those who did not go outside.
- Ten researchers conducted the study from different places in Europe. The researchers from Barcelona, Spain are all a part of the Barcelona Institute for Global Health. They are as follows:
  - Dr. Mark Nieuwenhuijsen, director of urban planning, environment and health initiative
  - Sandra Marquez, statistical technician
  - Marta Cirach, technician
  - Dr. Payam Dadvand, doctor of environmental epidemiology
  - Margarita Triguero-Mas, doctoral student studying environmental epidemiology
  - Wilma Zijlema, study coordinator
- The study was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.
- The findings help adults, and specifically adults with young children. It encourages them to spend time in natural outdoor environments. The study found that those who went outside as children have better mental health in adulthood.
- Funding came from the European Community’s Seventh Framework Programme, the Instituto de Salud Carlos III grant, and the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.
- The final sample consisted of 3,585 participants between the ages of 18 and 75. Participants were divided evenly between the following four cities:
  - Barcelona, Spain
  - Stoke-on-Trent, England
  - Doetinchem, Netherlands
  - Kaunas, Lithuania
- Researchers say additional studies are necessary to document a child’s exposure to natural outdoor environments, and their mental and physical health as they age.
  - This study is based on previous findings regarding green spaces and the effect on physical and mental health. Findings lead to the possibility of mental health being directly related to being in nature.
- Additionally, the study did not prove that exposure to the outdoors during childhood was related to adulthood vitality.
- The full study can be found at [mdpi.com](https://mdpi.com).