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TITLE: Review of the Mental Health and Well-being Benefits of Biodiversity

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ABSTRACT:

Little is known about the contribution that biodiversity has on mental health and well-being. To date, only one systematic review has investigated the health and well-being benefits from contact with biodiversity (Lovell et al. J Toxicol Environ Health B Crit Rev 17(1):1?20, 2014). The number of research studies investigating the health and well-being effects of biodiversity has increased since this publication. Here, we provide an update, focusing on the impact of biodiversity on mental health and well-being. Our objectives are to: (i) identify and describe the literature published after 2012; and (ii) synthesise all results from Lovell et al. (J Toxicol Environ Health B Crit Rev 17(1):1?20, 2014) and the more recently published literature to assess whether biodiversity influences mental health and well-being. Sixteen recently published studies met the inclusion criteria. The literature is varied with different study designs, measures of biodiversity, mental health and well-being. The synthesis of results was drawn from 24 studies: nine from Lovell et al. (J Toxicol Environ Health B Crit Rev 17(1):1?20, 2014) and 15 identified by this chapter. There is some evidence to suggest that biodiversity promotes better mental health and well-being. However, more studies reported non-significant results. The evidence is not yet of the extent necessary to characterise the role of biodiversity in relation to mental health or well-being. Future interdisciplinary research directions are discussed.

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