



Research Week 2020

The Inter-relationship Between Shinrin-yoku/ Nature Therapy and Spirituality: A Scoping Review

Reo Jones, R.N., M.S.N., Dr. Margaret Hansen

OHSU

Keywords

shinrin-yoku, nature, nature therapy, spirituality, awe, well-being, spiritual well-being, wonder

Abstract

Background

Recent research has identified Shinrin-Yoku (SY), a Japanese term meaning "relaxing in nature to improve health," as an efficacious integrative practice to improve humans' physiological and psychological health and well-being. Nature Therapy (NT), also coined as Ecotherapy, includes a breadth of treatments to improve individuals' health in outdoor settings and it, too, has been noted to have beneficial health outcomes. However, research regarding the inter-relationship between SY/NT and human spirituality is limited.

Objective

The present study undertakes a scoping review on the inter-relationship between SY/NT and human spirituality to determine the extent spirituality research has been conducted. Conceptual frameworks, provision of key definitions and the integrative health outcomes associated with SY/NT and spirituality were highlighted.

Design

This review followed the 2018 protocol 21-item check-list for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) Checklist [1]. Published papers from 1999 - 2019 were identified using online databases from which 30 publications were initially selected using keywords and following a secondary and tertiary search, 13 publications using spirituality as a primary or secondary outcome were identified.

Results

The majority of the publications (82%) were qualitative in design. Of the 13 publications, one was a Doctoral Thesis, one was a Masters' Thesis, and three were literature reviews. Of the three literature reviews, one was a book chapter. Overall, 100% (N=13) of the publications examined the role of spirituality in relationship with nature.

Conclusions

Albeit the quality of the reviewed studies being high there is a dearth of quantitative and mixed-methods studies and literature/systematic reviews including spirituality in relation to nature and SY/NT.