

Up-scaling urban agriculture may have benefits for dietary quality

Summary

Urban agriculture (UA) may be a means of improving diet, however what accounts for this relationship is not well understood. We explored this using questionnaire measures in a large online survey. Results identified perceived access to fruits and vegetables, food choice motivations and psychological distress as mediators of the relationship between UA and diet quality.

This is the first time these relationships have been tested. The findings support that up-scaling UA could be a means of improving dietary quality.

Recommendations

- Consider increasing exposure to UA and test the effect of this on diet.
- Research in to links between UA and diet should also account the mediators we identify here.



RESEARCH AIM

To explore cross-sectional relationships between proximity to and engagement with UA and diet quality, and test if this is mediated by perceived access to fruits and vegetables, health and ethical food choice motivations, connection with nature and psychological distress.

WHAT WE DID

- Developed a measure of subjective proximity to and engagement with UA.
- Collected questionnaire responses from 583 UK-based adults via an online survey.
- Tested relationships using a Structural Equation Model.

OUTCOMES

- Greater proximity to and engagement with UA is associated with greater perceived access to fruits and vegetables, more health-related food choice motivations, more ethical-related food choice motivations, feeling more connected with nature, and greater psychological distress.
- Greater perceived access to fruits and vegetables, and greater psychological distress was associated with poorer diet quality.
- More health-related and ethical food choice motivations were associated with better diet quality.

WHAT THIS TELLS US

- The relationship between proximity to and engagement with UA and dietary quality is complex and influenced by multiple factors.

WHAT NEXT?

- Virtual Reality study to test how immersing people in UA and non-UA environments affects food choice in the laboratory.
- Interview study to explore barriers and opportunities for upscaling UA.

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