Health benefits of a view of nature through window: a quasi-experimental study of patients in a residential rehabilitation center

A new article by Ruth Kjærsti Raanaas, Grete Grindal Patil & Terry Hartig, Clinical Rehabilitation


Abstract

Objective: To examine the health benefits of a bedroom window view to natural surroundings for patients undergoing a residential rehabilitation programme.

Design: Longitudinal quasi-experiment.

Setting: A residential rehabilitation centre.

Subjects: Two-hundred and seventy-eight coronary and pulmonary patients provided data at all measurement points during the programme.

Intervention: Blind, quasi-random allocation to a private bedroom with a panoramic view to natural surroundings or with a view either partially or entirely blocked by buildings.

Main measures: Self-reported physical and mental health (SF-12), subjective well-being, emotional states, use of the private bedroom and leisure activities.

Results: For women, a blocked view appeared to negatively influence change in physical health (time×view×gender interaction, F(4,504)=2.51, P=0.04), whereas for men, a blocked view appeared to negatively influence change in mental health (time×view×gender interaction, F(4,504)=5.67, P<0.01). Pulmonary patients with a panoramic view showed greater improvement in mental health than coronary patients with such a view (time×view×diagnostic group interaction, F(4,504)=2.76, P=0.03). Those with a panoramic view to nature more often chose to stay in their bedroom when they wanted to be alone than those with a blocked view (odds ratio (OR)=2.32, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.08–5.01).

Conclusion: An unobstructed bedroom view to natural surroundings appears to have better supported improvement in self-reported physical and mental health during a residential rehabilitation programme, although the degree of change varied with gender and diagnostic group.