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REVIEW ARTICLE

Restorative environmental experiences: uncovering the invisible and visible attributes in Finnish forests and Japanese gardens - a literature review

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Restorative environments are vital for enhancing well-being in urbanising societies. Despite the growing interest in restorative experiences, current scientific literature often categorises them as either natural or designed environments. This overlooks valuable insights that could emerge from comparing these environments, especially across diverse cultural settings. This review addresses this gap by emphasising the qualitative attributes of restorative experiences and connecting two distinct environments in different cultural contexts: Finnish forests and Japanese gardens. The review examines visible and invisible restorative attributes in both settings and explores similarities and differences between them. The findings underscore that while visible attributes such as sensory experiences and walking, are characteristic of both settings, invisible aspects, such as spirituality, are more intricately linked to cultural contexts. The review highlights that visible and invisible are deeply interconnected, stressing the need for a holistic view of restorative experiences.

Keywords: restorative environment; Japanese garden; Finnish forest; restorative experience

1. Introduction

In the coming years, the importance of restorative environments will continue to grow. Restoration refers to the process of recovering physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Ulrich *et al*. 1991). This can be achieved by the interaction with natural or designed environments that reduce stress and mental fatigue, promoting overall health and balance (Hartig 2021; Roe and McCay 2021). Our cur-