A regular dose of nature may improve mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

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A study published in *Ecological Applications* suggests that nature around one's home may help mitigate some of the negative mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Credit: Dr. Soga

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An online questionnaire survey completed by 3,000 adults in in Tokyo, Japan, quantified the link between five mental-health outcomes (depression, life satisfaction, subjective happiness, self-esteem, and loneliness) and two measures of nature experiences (frequency of greenspace use and green view through windows from home).

More frequent greenspace use and the existence of green window views from the home were associated with increased levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and subjective happiness, as well as decreased levels of depression and loneliness.

"Our results suggest that nearby nature can serve as a buffer in decreasing the adverse impacts of a very stressful event on humans," said lead author Masashi Soga, Ph.D., of The University of Tokyo. "Protecting natural environments in urban areas is important not only for the conservation of biodiversity, but also for the protection of human health."

More information: Masashi Soga et al, A room with a green view: the importance of nearby nature for mental health during the COVID?19 pandemic, *Ecological Applications* (2020). DOI: 10.1002/eap.2248

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