

The Impact of Outdoor Interventions on the Mental Health of Veterans

Abstract

Introductory Statement

The mental health challenges faced by veterans, particularly those with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health disorders, have garnered increased attention in recent years. As traditional therapeutic approaches may not fully address the unique needs of this population, there is growing interest in alternative interventions that harness the restorative power of nature.

Purpose

This systematic review explores the potential benefits of nature-based therapy (NBT) as a complementary treatment modality, aiming to assess its impact on the mental health and overall well-being of veterans. By investigating the relationship between exposure to natural environments and psychological outcomes, this study seeks to contribute to the development of effective therapeutic strategies that enhance the quality of life for veterans navigating mental health challenges.

Methodological Approach

This dataset was compiled using the Tennessee State University Library database alongside a chain-searching strategy (using Google Scholar and PubMed). We utilized PRIMSA guidelines to identify our inclusion/exclusion criteria and inform our screening process as well as our data extraction.

Anticipated Findings

We anticipate that nature-based therapy will improve overall mental health and well-being of veterans as evidenced by decreased rates of depression, anxiety and PTSD. There is sufficient evidence that it may lead to increased reports of stress reduction, purposefulness as well as an increased sense of belonging in veterans after NBT treatment.

Contribution to Discipline

Overall, this research seeks to bridge a critical gap in literature, establish a foundation for future studies and increase consumer and practitioner awareness about the benefits of nature-based therapies in veteran populations. This review aims to be

impactful for busy OT practitioners seeking a comprehensive and concise resource to validate the efficacy of nature-based therapeutic interventions.