



USDA Forest Service

URBANFOREST CONNECTIONS

webinar series

Urban Forests for Human Health and Wellness

Wednesday, September 10, 2014 | 1:00 – 2:00pm ET

PRESENTER ABSTRACT

Gardens in Health Care: Rehabilitation, Recovery and Restoration

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Research has documented that patients experience stress - an important negative outcome in itself, and one that directly and adversely affects many other outcomes. In addition to afflicting patients, stress is also a burden for families of patients and is a pervasive problem among nurses and other healthcare professionals. Several studies of patient groups and non-patient volunteers have found that viewing nature, plants, or flowers can produce rapid and substantial psychological and physiological recovery from stress and anxiety. Gardens in hospitals not only provide stress-reducing and pleasant nature views, but if properly designed, can alleviate stress and improve other outcomes through other established mechanisms.

Despite the growing research on health care gardens, many knowledge gaps remain and much of the previous research has methodological shortcomings. Most investigations have used simulations such as video or pictures rather than real nature exposures, and the few studies that have used real gardens have lacked well-controlled randomized study methodologies. In addition, no prior research has examined the effects of gardens or nature specifically on women in maternity units and their infants.

Teresia Hazen will describe the evidence base for gardens and nature in patient care services and garden research in process at Legacy Health, the largest nonprofit, locally-owned health system in the Portland, Oregon metro area. Since 1991, Legacy Health interdisciplinary teams have developed eleven therapeutic gardens in six area hospitals. Teresia will provide an overview of ongoing research, and practical and successful examples of garden design and programming to support rehabilitation, recovery and restoration for patients, visitors and employees, 24-7.

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