

DSV Seminars 2015



PhD Program in Neural and Cognitive Sciences

Thursday, 16 July 2015 - 14:30

Seminar room, I floor, Q Building – Via Giorgieri 5

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Host: Walter Gerbino

MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

There is growing evidence to suggest exposure to natural environments is associated with mental health benefits. This lecture will review evidence that supports this position, including research findings demonstrating the perception of natural scenes can be linked to greater cognitive recovery on attention-demanding tasks. However, much of this evidence base derives from an arguably simplistic 'natural' and 'built' dichotomy. The importance of people's attitudes and beliefs towards health and the environment, and how these may interact with behavioural and physiological responses, is still poorly understood. I will argue there is a pressing need for more empirical research with the aim of establishing (a) which elements of an environment may render it more or less 'restorative', (b) the relationship between perceived restorative properties and measures of cognitive function, and (c) the optimal form of interaction with environments that is most likely to lead to mental health and well-being benefits.

