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Human health benefits of walking forests trails – results from a field experiment in a nature park

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Teilleistung im Rahmen des LE-Förderungsantrags „Green Care WALD Diversifikation (Antragsnummer 16.9.1-III4-05/18), Projekt 4.1)

The 3 Trails investigated in the Geras Nature Park (Lower Austria)

Forest dominated by spruce trees



Forest dominated by deciduous trees



Open landscape, dominated by a fish pond and arable fields



Are there differences in perceived and measured health effects?



Methodology

- Participants: N = 27 (Volunteers, 14 females; > 18 yrs.)
- 1.5-hr. walks in 2020 and 2021 including measurements
- Standardized measurements (before the walk, during, after the walk)
 - Cognitive performance test
 - Well-being, PRS, perceived health-effects (stress reduction...)
 - Pulse and blood pressure
 - Noise, weather conditions, visitor counting



Results

Walks increased perceived and measured health benefits

Some differences in health benefits between the walks in different environments:

Health Indicators			
	1rst	2nd	3rd
Increase in cognitive performance			
Perceived stress reduction	2nd	1rst	2nd
Recreational suitability	3rd	1rst	2nd
Pulse	3rd	1rst	2nd
Blood pressure	1rst	2nd	2nd