

Living In Greener Space Will Keep You Healthy, Live Longer



By John Raphael

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A new study suggests that women in the United States who are living in place with lush vegetation tends to be healthier and has lower risk of death. (Photo : Christopher Furlong/Getty Images)

A new study suggests that women in the U.S. who are living in place with lush vegetation tends to be healthier and has lower risk of death. The new research is based on strong associations between increased exposure to greenness and lower mortality rates," said Peter James, research associate in the Harvard Chan School Department of Epidemiology and author of the study, said in a statement in [Harvard Gazette](#).

After analyzing data from 108,630 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study across the U.S. from 2000 to 2008, researchers compared the mortality risk of participants with the level of vegetation surrounding their houses. Within the course of the eight-year study, researchers have observed 8,604 deaths.

The level of vegetation was calculated using satellite imagery from different seasons and from different years. The researchers also accounted several mortality factors such as age, race/ethnicity, smoking, and individual- and area-level socioeconomic status.

Their study, published in the journal [Environmental Health Perspective](#), showed that women living near the highest cumulative greenness have 12 percent overall lesser risks of non-accidental deaths.

Researchers also discovered that women living in areas with most vegetation have 34 percent lower rate of dying from respiratory diseases and 12 percent decreased risk in dying from cancer.

Despite its benefits in helping prevent deaths associated with respiratory illness and cancer, no linked was established between greenness and mortality related to coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke or infections.

Several factors that researchers suggest play a crucial role in the link between greenness and mortality are: improved mental health, increased opportunities for social engagement, lower exposure to air pollution and higher physical activity.

In a report from [New York Times](#), James said that their research doesn't mean people should move to the country.

"We found the associations within urban areas as well as rural areas. Any increased vegetation - more street trees, for example - seems to decrease mortality rates," he added.



Tags: health, environment, Mortality

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