

Key Summary Points from Urban Environment and Wellbeing

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1. Human futures are urban futures. Majority of human population are living in cities, and this share will most likely increase into the foreseeable future. Human health needs to be considered as an integral part of human wellbeing, which in turn is part of the planetary wellbeing.
2. Cities will largely determine the future of sustainability and overall human wellbeing. Urban environment is multi-faceted, diverse, dynamic, complex, and evolving. So are its implications for human health and wellbeing, irrespective of differences in geographical, cultural, demographic and economic differences between nations.
3. A systems approach, which reflects the complex and dynamic interaction between various aspects of urban environment and human wellbeing, both within and beyond the cities, is essential to effectively address the issue.
4. Innovation, both scientific and technology, and social and cultural, plays important role in addressing human wellbeing in changing urban context. Effectively addressing this issue requires co-design and coproduction of knowledge between scientists, engineers and urban managers and policy makers, and the accessibility and communication of results should be enhanced.
5. Long term monitoring and accumulation of data and evidence bases, both qualitative and quantitative, are important, and should be fully integrated into systems analysis. Verified data should be readily accessible.
6. Identifying commonality and transferable elements out of individual innovative practices in cities is an urgent task for scientific community, and promoting and facilitating cross-city learning will play critical role to harness and upscale the benefits of such approach.
7. Cities presents challenges, but also present ample opportunities. Given the speed and magnitude of urbanization trend, there is an urgency in action. Once they are built, cities are hard to change and retrofit. There is a window of opportunity to plan and design the new cities and urban development that promotes co-benefit between sustainable cities and positive health and wellbeing outcome. Sustainability of human health and wellbeing should be at the centre of urban planning and design.