

Get Active and Reduce Commuting stress

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Introduction

Sustainable mobility behavior (i.e. walking, cycling and using public transport) is able to reduce the negative impacts of mobility on climate change and conditions of the environment. Recent studies identified pro-environmental attitudes and behavior as positively correlated with connectedness with nature (CN). Moreover, recent research showed that high commuting stress levels can have a negative impact on the quality of life (Evans & Wener, 2006, Sposato, 2011). Active modes of commuting (e.g. walking, cycling) might reduce commuting stress, in comparison to passive modes of commuting (e.g. public transport, individual motorcar traffic).

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate active and passive modes of commuting and the effect on the experienced commuting stress. We hypothesized that active commuters experience less stress on their way to work and report a higher quality of life compared to their passive counterparts. Furthermore, we examined if CN and/or the place of residence influences the levels of experienced stress in active or passive commuters.

Method

241 respondents from the Vienna region (104 male, 137 female; mean age 35 years) answered an online questionnaire containing scales about their daily way to work, perceived commuting stress and control (Sposato, 2011), quality of life (WHOQOL-BREF, Angermeyer, Kilian & Matschinger, 2000) and CN.

Results and Discussion

Active commuters (pedestrians and cyclists) reported significantly less perceived commuting stress than car-drivers or users of public transport. Moreover, they had higher levels of perceived control. Perceived control has been found to be the most influential predictor of commuting stress. Further, residents of the city of Vienna reported lower commuting stress levels than persons who lived in the vicinity of Vienna. This could be caused by their generally shorter ways, and their longer duration in an active commuting mode. Multiple regression analysis showed that commuting stress in general has negative effects on quality of life, notably on reports of physical health and environmental satisfaction, but no differences in quality of life were found between commuters who used different modes of transport. No differences in connectedness with nature between active and passive commuters could be found. We discuss the predominance of infrastructural circumstances over individual disposition in commuting mode choices.

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References

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