

# Evaluation of clinical gardens with classical semantic differential

I. Hämmerle, K. Röderer, & R. Cervinka

*Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria*

## Introduction

Healing gardens in hospitals support health and well-being of users (Cooper Marcus & Barnes, 2006). However, in many cases, the health supporting qualities of existing clinical gardens need to be improved.

The psychological method of classical semantic differential (CSD; Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957) proved to be appropriate to assess individuals' impressions of green spaces (Haidl, Röderer & Cervinka, 2010). It focuses on the connotative meaning rather than the physical structure, which is usually assessed by landscape architects and planners.

## Aim

The aim of this study was to assess the current status of different clinical gardens and to detect potential for improvement.

## Method

In a first step, we used the CSD to rate an imagined "ideal" clinical garden with the optimal conditions for therapeutic activities. This profile of the "ideal" garden served as standard of comparison for real therapeutic gardens. Three groups of participants, in sum  $n=143$ , rated three different gardens of health care facilities in Vienna:

- A: rehabilitation clinic
- B: nursing home
- C: university hospital

## Results and discussion

Findings revealed that garden A was closely correlated with the ideal garden ( $r=0.95$ ). This supports the success of the recent redesign of this green space. Obviously, garden redesign was appropriate in order to improve individuals' impressions of this garden. Garden C was the most distant from the ideal garden ( $r=-0.01$ ), major improvement of the garden is necessary to enhance its health promoting qualities. Garden B was rated in between ( $r=0.61$ ). We recommend minor improvement in order to gain a satisfying effect.

The presented results build the basis for an ongoing assessment and evaluation of clinical gardens in Vienna and Lower Austria.

## References

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