ABSTRACT

The Healthy Neighbourhood Audit Instrument: Understanding the Environmental and Socio-Cultural Conditions to Support Healthy, Happy and Resilient Residential Communities

It is now well understood, in both the research literature and urban planning practice, that residential environments have a critical role to play in supporting human health. This paper presents our Healthy Neighbourhood Audit Instrument. This is a detailed methodology developed for, and applied in, an ongoing study exploring the relationship between human health and the built environment in four diverse residential sites in NSW. Chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, depression and cancer are undermining health care budgets, as well as contributing to premature deaths worldwide. The built environment has a significant impact on three of the main behavioural risk factors for these chronic diseases - physical inactivity, social isolation and obesity. The central aim of our Audit is to systematically document, using a detailed observational thematic framework, how diverse residential neighbourhoods mitigate these risk factors, thereby supporting good physical and mental health.