



Contribution of 'Agritourism' Activities in Visitors' Wellbeing and Improved Mental Health in Society

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

The fast-growing trend of urbanization, especially in metropolitan cities, has led to several concerns from the public health perspective. Some mental health disorders, specially stress and the risk of depression are the common health challenges in megacities (1,2). Along with the impacts of rapid urbanization for city dwellers, such trend gradually has led to several shortages for the residents of rural areas (3). Hence, the rural-urban imbalances in metropolitan areas has brought the authorities to a place where they continuously have been searching for a solution to sustain the rural environment and culture, and at the same time will be beneficial for the urban dwellers in a way to decrease the health challenges in the megacities.

Connection with green space and spending time in a quiet place in nature provides numerous health benefits and can be a solution to improve society's public health (4). It has been practically proved that there is a significant relationship between spending time in green areas and the improved psychological well-being, and decreased stress level (1, 5, 6). Though, in the metropolitan areas, the available green spaces might not fully fulfil the needs of the city dwellers since they need to spend time somewhere far from their busy lifestyle. Planners and authorities are trying

to promote the green-based activities in rural areas, and encourage the city residents to spend their free time in such area. Such strategy is not only beneficial from the perspective of mental health improvement of the city dwellers, but also it will lead to several advantages for the rural areas to recover the imbalance.

However, not a simple visit would lead to wellbeing outcomes, and innovative activities are required to achieve this goal. 'Agritourism' as a mix activity of agriculture and tourism can be an opportunity for urban dwellers to reconnect to nature, and can be a supplementary business in rural areas. It involves several green-oriented activities, and in fact it encourages visitors to engage in farm activities that can potentially provide more opportunities for them to have more nature-based coping strategies for their stressful lifestyle in cities. Table 1 provides some potential benefits of 'agritourism' activities for improving mental health.

Experiencing the 'agritourism' enterprises will potentially lead to promote mental health through the provided activities and connection with nature. Given the unique style of the 'agritourism' activities that are challenging and need efforts, several benefits can be expected in



physical, environmental, spiritual, and social aspects. Unlike a simple visit to the green area, 'agritourism' activities can foster the human involvement in the natural environment, and it provides settings for people to have more social

interactions. Besides, 'agritourism' is a type of activity in which people can recall their childhood memory since many people in the cities have had roots in the rural areas, and it can lead to an enhanced mood (7).

Table 1: Potential contribution of 'agritourism' activities in improving visitors' mental health

<i>Component of wellbeing</i>	<i>Contribution of agritourism activities</i>
Physical	The farm activities such as; planting, harvesting, traditional games, etc.
Mental	Connecting with nature directly, experiencing the quiet place far from a hectic life, remembering childhood memories.
Social	Group activities, interaction with other people, opportunity for enhancing social network and personal relationship
Environmental	Experiencing fresh air and pure water, fresh food directly from the farm, farm animal and wildlife.

Moreover, from rural perspective, such innovative implication can increase the farmers' income through diversification policy and sustain the rural areas in several aspects such as economic and health.

Accordingly, 'agritourism' can potentially be a resource of the positive mood boost and improve the perceived psychological health in society. All the mentioned advantages are likely to contribute in improved mental health. It is recommended to the planners and authorities to consider the potential of all the mentioned aspects of 'agritourism' activities as the mood booster for the visitor, meanwhile as a strategy for diversifying farming activities and sustaining rural areas.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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