

Nancy Wells

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

Nancy Wells is an environmental psychologist who studies people's relationship to the built and natural environment through the life course.

Department Website Summary

Research in the Wells research group focuses on the influence of both the built and natural environment on human health and health behavior. Research includes studies examining the effects of housing quality on mental health; the influence of neighborhood design on physical activity; the effects of access to green, natural areas on cognitive functioning and psychological well-being. A major current focus is on the influence of school gardens on children's fruit and vegetable consumption, nutritional knowledge, and physical activity.

Professional

Current Professional Activities

Nancy Wells is a member of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), the International Association for the Study of People and their Surroundings (IAPS). She has presented at the National Council on Science and the Environment, The Chicago Botanical Garden, the American Psychological Association, and is a frequent presenter at national and international conferences related to residential environments and health-related outcomes.

Research

Current Research Activities

Professor Wells is an environmental psychologist who studies people's relationship with the built and natural environment through the life course. In particular, Wells studies the impact of nearby nature on cognitive functioning, the influence of neighborhood design on physical activity, and the effects of housing quality on psychological well-being. Her work has included the study of children, adults, elders and families.

Extension

Education

Education

Dr. Wells received a joint PhD in Psychology and Architecture from the University of Michigan and completed a NIMH post-doctoral fellowship in the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine. Nancy also received a Master's degree in Design and Environmental Analysis from Cornell University and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Connecticut College.

Courses

Courses Taught

DEA 4550 Research Methods in Human-Environment Relations

DEA 6560 Research Methods in Social Sciences

DEA 6610 Environments and Health

DEA 7100 DEA Graduate Seminar

Websites

Related Websites

<http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/dea6610/>

<http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/dea6560/>

<http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/dea4550/>

Administration

Administrative Responsibilities

Dr. Wells is the Director of Graduate studies for the graduate field of Design and Environmental Analysis. In addition, she directs the Gerontology Minor, which is available to Cornell students campus-wide; and she serves as faculty advisor to the Cornell Elderly Partnership within the Cornell Public Service Center.

Publications

Selected Publications

Wells, N.M. & Donofrio, G.A. (2011). Urban planning, the natural environment, and public health. In: J.O. Nriagu (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Environmental Health*, volume 5, pp.565-575. Burlington: Elsevier

Pillemer, K., Wells, N.M., Wagenet, L., Meador, R.H. and Parise, J.T. (2011).

Environmental sustainability in an aging society: A research agenda. *The Journal of Aging and Health*, 23(3), 433-452. doi: 10.1177/0898264310381278

Gantner, L.A., Olson, C.M., Frongillo, E., Wells, N.M. (2011). Prevalence of non-traditional food stores and distance to healthy foods in a rural food environment. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 6, 279-293.

Wells, N.M., Evans, G.W., Beavis, A. & Ong, A.D. (2010). Early childhood poverty, cumulative risk exposure, and weight gain trajectories through young adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health*. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2009.184291

Wells, N.M., Evans, G.W. and Yang, Y. (2010). Environment and health: Planning decisions as public health decisions. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 27(2), 124-143.

Pillemer, K. A. Fuller-Rowell, T. Reid C. & Wells N.M. (2010). Environmental volunteering and health outcomes over a twenty-year period. *The Gerontologist*, 50(5), 594-602.

Wells, N.M. and Laquatra, J. (2010). Why green housing and green neighborhoods are important to the health and well-being of older adults. *Generations*. 33(4), 50-57.

Wells, N.M. and Yang, Y. (2008). Neighborhood Design & Walking: A quasi-experimental longitudinal study of low-income Southern women moving to neotraditional or suburban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 34(4), 313-319.

Wells, N.M. and Harris, J.D. (2007). Housing quality, psychological distress, and the mediating role of social withdrawal: A longitudinal study of low-income women. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27, 69-78.

Brown, B.B. and Wells, N.M. (Eds.) (2007). Environment, physical activity, and diet. Special Issue of *Environment and Behavior*, 39 (1).

Wells, N.M., Ashdown, S.P., Davies, E.H.S., Cowett, F.D. and Yang, Y. (2007). Environment, Design and Obesity: Opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborative research. *Environment and Behavior*, 39 (1), 6 - 33.

Wells, N.M. and Olson, C.M. (2007). The Ecology of Obesity: Perspectives from life course, design and economics. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 1 (3), 99-129.

Wells, N.M. and Lekies, K.S. (2006). Nature and the Life Course: Pathways from childhood nature experiences to adult environmentalism. *Children, Youth, and Environment*, 16 (1), 1-24.

Wells, N.M. (2005). Our housing, ourselves: A longitudinal investigation of low-income women's participatory housing experiences. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 189-206

Wells, N.M. & Evans, G.W. (2003) Nearby Nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. *Environment and Behavior*, 35 (3), 311-330.

Wells, N.M. (2000). At home with nature: effects of "greenness" on children's cognitive functioning. *Environment and Behavior*, 32 (6), 775-795.

