



Role of Parks in Promoting the Health of Children and Communities

Michael B. Edwards, Ph.D.

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Children's Health a Concern in the U.S.

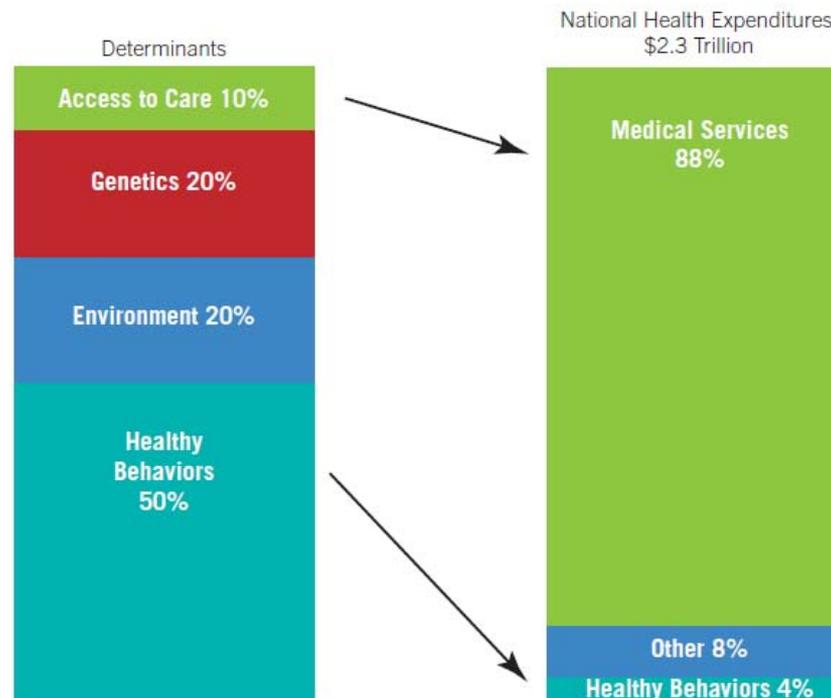
Figure 1. Top 10 U.S. Children's Health Concerns, Percent Rated as a "Big Problem" in 2012

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1. Not enough exercise 39%
 2. Childhood obesity 38%
 3. Smoking and tobacco use 34%
 4. Drug abuse 33%
 5. Bullying 29%
 6. Stress 27%
 7. Alcohol abuse 23%
 8. Teen pregnancy 23%
 9. Internet safety 22%
 10. Child abuse and neglect 20%

Source: C. S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2012.

Are we doing the right things to promote health?

Spending for Health Determinants and Health Expenditures



New England Healthcare Institute (2005)

Parks (and Recreation) provide opportunities for health promotion



The recreation movement of the 19th Century was a public health movement

(Godbey et al., 2005)



Two key objectives: Safe places to play and the “green lungs” of the city



Parks are the most common place that people are physically active

(Cohen et al., 2005)



The effect of a walk in a park is similar to that of the most widely prescribed medications for ADHD

Taylor et al., 2002



Green space is associated with reduced social conflict and aggression

Kuo, 2010



Urban parks create natural spaces for social interaction and cohesion

Rodriguez, 1996; Peters et al., 2010



Community gardens reduce stress, promote cohesion, and provide access to fresh produce

Giles, 2006



In urban areas, contact with nature is often only available in parks

Maller (2009)



NATURE-DEFICIT DISORDER

WHAT IS IT?
The combined psychological, physical and cognitive costs we suffer due to our alienation from nature, especially affecting children in vulnerable developing years.

CAUSES

- Parental fears
- Restricted access to natural areas
- Increasing consumption of electronic media

COSTS

- Attention and mood disorders
- Lower grades
- Obesity
- Limited respect for the environment

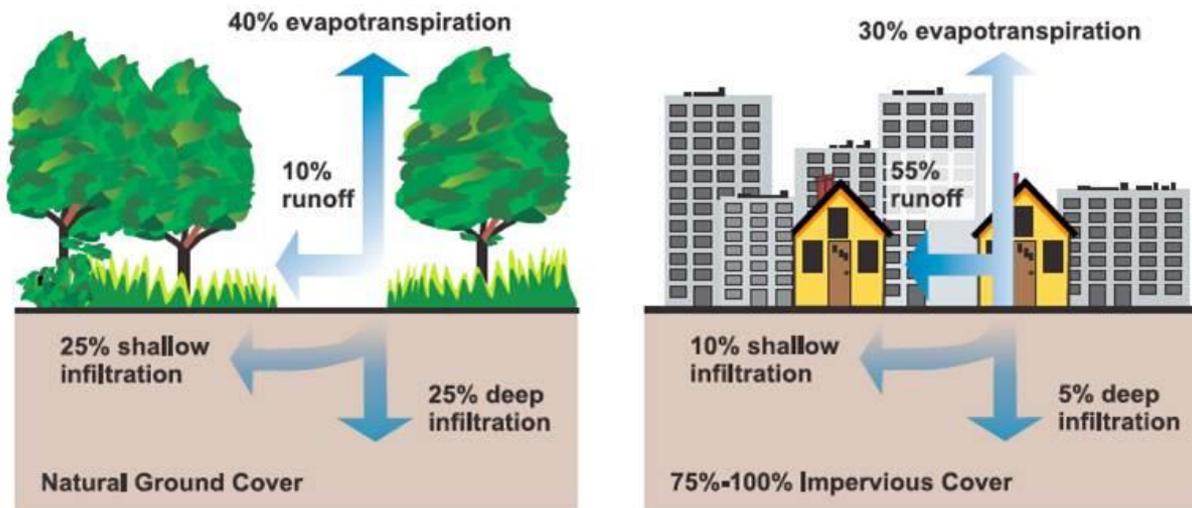
WHAT CAN WE DO?

GO WILD!
IGNITE CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN THE OUTDOORS
ENCOURAGE NATURE EXPLORATION

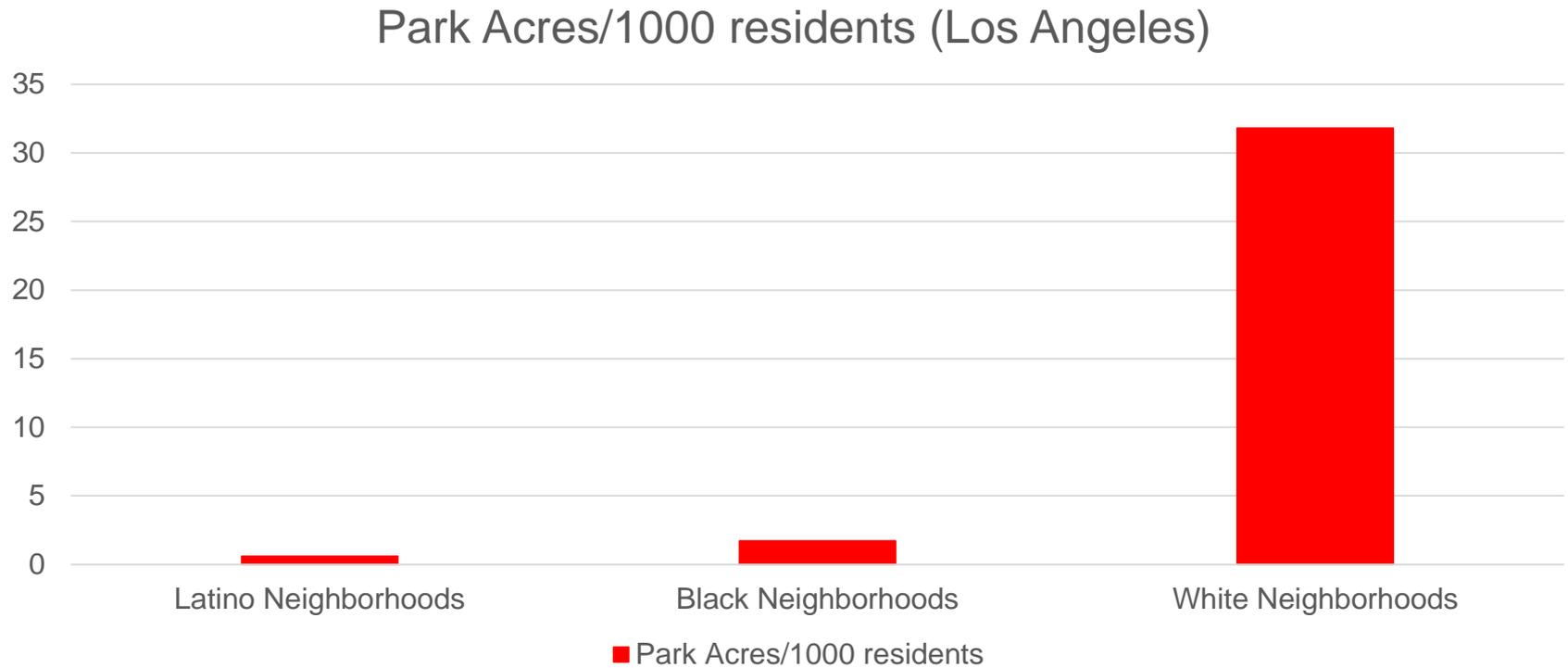
THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
WILDERNESS.ORG

Parks provide locally-generated ecosystem services shown to improve health and quality-of-life

Bolund & Hunhammer, 1999



Disparities in Access



Wolch et al., 2005

Disparities in Quality



Low-income Census Tracts contained significantly more parks, but had fewer parks with playgrounds and more quality concerns per park.
Vaughan et al., 2013

Conceptualizing parks and their effects

- *People's conceptions of parks, the expectations they bring to them, and the ways they use them vary greatly according to age, gender, ethnicity, and other factors.*
 - Howard Frumkin, 2003



Most people in parks are sedentary

Cohen et al., 2005



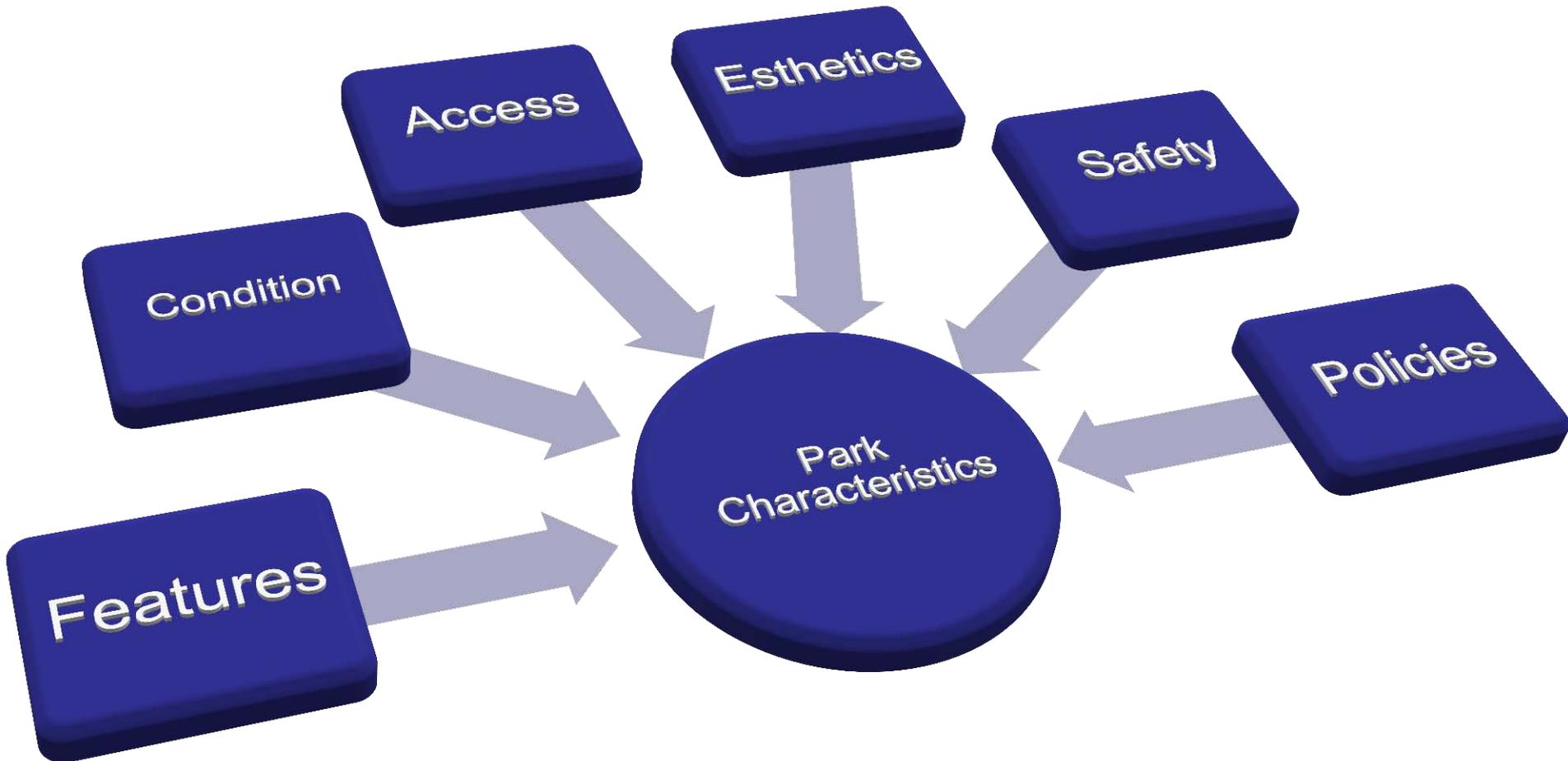
Self-selection and unintended consequences



Availability of parks may be less important in rural communities

Parks et al., 2003; Babey et al., 2008





Community systems approach



- More than 40% of recreation programs in LA are not in parks. They are in recreation centers, local schools, non-profit organizations, and churches (Dahmann et al., 2010)

Community engagement



Community Partnerships



Questions?

