Chapter 3

Urban–Rural Synergy Toward Human Well–Being

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ABSTRACT

The cities are characterized by the rapid development of technologies and the inevitable expansion, which requires looking at ways to address new challenges and overcome the problems that have arisen. Living conditions may vary in many ways, depending on where people live, but the advantages and disadvantages in terms of comfort of human life can be recognized in both urban and rural environments, as analysis of case studies shows. Factors that occur in both areas and affect human life, comfort, and health are presented. The positive effects of rural areas and the advantages that cities have in terms of preserving human health are discussed in this chapter. By comparing the good characteristics of the urban and rural environment, the goal is to indicate some postulates that can be applied in preventive medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Health is of the same importance for people wherever they live and whatever they do, regardless of origin and nationality, as well as the age group they belong to. From time immemorial human beings are living in communities which are nowadays generally defined as specific two types: urban and rural. Regarding the population of these areas, relevant facts have been provided by the UN (2013), indicating that more than half of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, compared with 29% in 1950.

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and 15% in 1900, as well as predicting that in 2050, seven out of every ten people will live in towns or cities - more than 6.25 billion people, while in the period from 2000 to 2050, developing regions could add 3.2 billion new urban residents, which is the figure larger than the entire world’s population in 1950.

When it comes to quality of life, in the life of the city and the village there are many advantages and disadvantages. Regardless of the differences, in rural and urban areas in the human population appear similar health disorders. It would be interesting to determine which factors that occurs in the village and in the city disrupt human life, comfort and health. Given that there are many facilities for people in the city, city dwellers have more opportunities to progress in their lives. Cities provide great facilities for education, medical treatments, job opportunities, etc. However, many disadvantages are present (Figure 1), mainly the air of poor quality polluted from traffic and factories, often poor water quality, the environment is polluted with dust, smoke, garbage and greenhouse gases, the streets are mostly dusty and unclean, intense traffic and therefore noise. It appears that it is difficult to lead a healthy life in cities. The lifestyle in villages has other specifics in comparison to lifestyle in the city. People know each other very well and are more closely connected to each other than people in the city. As village has not lot of vehicles the pollution is less so the air is clean, less noise and rush is present. The environment of the village is pleasant and silent and it has scenic beauty (Figure 2). But, the village also has bad points. Often lifestyle is not as advanced as in the cities. Many people have difficulties to keep up with new developments in their field or profession. Since the functioning of the village is closely linked with the city, traveling problems village people often have to face. But certainly, the rural environment can be considered healthy.

Figure 1. Air pollution, intense traffic, noise and building density are disadvantages of urban areas (Author: A. Krstić-Furundžić)

Figure 2. Scenic beauty of rural areas (Author: A. Krstić-Furundžić)