International review for spatial planning and sustainable development, Vol 10 No.3 (2022), 1-3
ISSN: 2187-3666 (online)
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.14246/irspsd.10.3_1

Editorial introduction

Special section on sustainable healthy city

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The COVID19 pandemic has 'paused' urban development across the world on a variety of spatial, temporal, and social scales, to some extent. Some cities in a specific period, such as Wuhan in January-April 2020 and Shanghai in April-June 2022, were completely shut down in the context of strictest lockdown measures. The pandemic has pressed us to rethink the challenging development of healthy city particularly when confronting 'spatially constrained' urban environment.

This special issue aims to collect empirical evidence of healthy city challenges and solutions, generated from five case studies of Asian cities in three large-size countries (Japan, China, and Indonesia). Five papers on this special issue contribute to understanding the impacts of urban environment on health risks, health intervention, and wellbeing on different spatial scales through using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. The key focuses of these papers are on walkability (city scale), physical activity (park scale), community gardening (neighborhood scale), spatial intervention of COVID diffusion (destination site), and perception of health risks (neighborhood).

The first paper by Zhou and Homma (2022) is entitled "estimating walk score and examining its association with safety factors of neighborhood environment in Kumamoto, Japan'. The major evidence produced from this urban study in Japan include the spatially heterogeneous correlations between walkability and safety factors (traffic accident and crime) across a city. It highlights the concern of protecting walkable environment from safety risks because safe and walkable neighborhoods together help achieve the demanding benefit to residents' public health and well-being. Another strength of this paper is extensive use of high-resolution spatial data for measuring accurate walkability at building level. This has addressed a kind of global inequality in urban studies caused by the varying level of urban data infrastructure development between countries and cities. This challenge should be concerned by policy makers of municipal and national governments.

The second paper by Yuan, Zhang et al. (2022) is on "the impact of urban parks accessibility in cold regions on leisuretime physical activity levels of older adults in winter". This case study of Harbin city in Northeastern China explored the linkage between park accessibility and level of leisuretime physical activity in the context of cold urban environment. The analytical results exhibit that the vigorous level of physical activity within urban parks by the elderly group is significantly contributed by a shorter walking time

(e.g., 5 minutes) to these places. The findings provide comparative evidence for promoting the age-friendly 15- minute neighborhood or community life circle between regions under different climatic conditions.

The third paper by Zheng, Akita et al. (2022) is entitled "Study on residents' willingness to community gardens construction in post epidemic Era: Investigation from Wuhan". This case study from Wuhan City in central China investigated the public attitude towards the key element of healthy city – community gardens. The empirical evidence from questionnaire survey data include positive support for participation into and engagement with the development of healthy community.

The fourth paper on "Rural Tourism Destination Spatial Interventions Face the Risk of COVID-19 Infection Case Study: Kampong Boenga Grangsil Tourism Destination, Dampit District, Malang Regency" was written by Wikantiyoso, Wikananda et al. (2022). This case study from Indonesia designed principles for spatial intervention of Covid19 diffusion at tourism destination and implemented them into the experimental site through participatory approach. The exploratory study implicates the importance of spatial intervention in the development of healthy city by considering the health risks into urban environment design.

The fifth paper written by Araki and Akita (2022) is focused on "Analysis of the Process of Deciding on the Place of Residence of Households Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake: A Case Study of District A, Area U in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture". This case study from Japan revealed the impacts of historical disasters on residents' spatial decision -making using interview data. It indicates that the increasing awareness of health risks from historical events changes residents' spatial and social behavior. This finding addresses the possibility of integrating perception of health risks into design and planning of healthy community. Interestingly, application of text analytical method into interview records is particularly promising for visualizing the results from large-scale interview data.

It is clear to see all these five papers have contributed to the knowledge base of healthy city from the dimensions of health risks (disaster, COVID19) and interventions (walkability, physical activity, green infrastructure, and environmental design). These studies are also linked with the themes of active city, age-friendly community, resilient city, and green city. It should be noted that healthy city should be integrated into the holistic frameworks of urban sustainability due to its complicated interactions with other challenges in and pathways to sustainable city. In the future, comparative studies in sustainable healthy city should be conducted to debate on its general theoretical frameworks and adaptive practices of planning, design, and governance. Methodologically, new techniques and methods of data collection and analysis, which are increasingly available, should be explored and applied for generating data driven evidence to support for sustainable heathy city.

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