

Environmental and Health Impacts of Urbanization

In the United States (and increasingly other nations), contemporary patterns of urbanization has become a process of "spreading out" - the vast expansion of metropolitan regions. The adverse ecological impacts that stem from low-density urbanization are associated with adverse public health impacts. For example, urban sprawl is associated with increased use of automobiles for trips, and increased vehicle miles traveled have resulted in increased emission of air pollutants which can cause morbidity and mortality in urban populations. The public health and planning professions are challenged to work together to understand the impact of the built environment on health, and build communities that promote physical and mental health.