

- Naturopathy

Watching nature videos may boost mental health

New Straits Times · 13 Nov 2023 · 9 · By ETX Daily Up

SCIENTISTS are unanimous: nature plays a significant role in our wellbeing.



But not everyone is lucky enough to live near a forest or by the sea, which means that where you live has the potential to influence your mental health. Fortunately, this is not irreparable.

A new study even suggests that virtual immersion in nature could be enough to help people reduce stress and relax, especially teenagers.

A team of researchers from the Department of Psychology at the UK's University of Exeter investigated the influence of nature on the mental health of a group of 76 teenagers and young adults aged 18 to 25.

The aim was to determine whether a virtual immersion in nature, compared with a virtual immersion in an urban environment, could have a positive effect on their wellbeing, on a par — or almost on a par — with a real walk in the woods.

According to their findings, published in the *Nature: Scientific Reports* journal, the scientists observed numerous positive changes in the group subjected to virtual immersion in nature, on several levels.

Not only did the nature video generate a “significant reduction” in stress in the participants, but it also increased levels of relaxation and positive mood.

This stands in contrast to immersion in an urban environment.

“Our findings support both of the general hypotheses that brief exposure to an immersive nature video, relative to an urban comparison condition would reduce stress and improve indices of mental wellbeing in adolescents and increase nature connection,” the researchers explain.

This research could contribute to the development of new strategies to support adolescents with mental health disorders who do not have access to green and blue spaces.