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Research article

The Irvineâ€™Minnesota Inventory to Measure Built Environments: Development

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Background

Researchers and policymakers increasingly identify active livingâ€™including walking and bicycling for travel and recreationâ€™as a potential strategy to increase rates of physical activity in the United States. Understanding the impact of the built environment on physical activity levels requires reliable methods to measure potentially relevant built environment features. This paper presents an audit toolâ€™the Irvine Minnesota Inventoryâ€™that was designed to measure a wide range of built environment features that are potentially linked to active living, especially walking.

Methods

The inventory was created through a literature review, focus group interviews, a panel of experts, and field testing in 27 settings. The inventory was developed in 2003â€™2004.

Results

The Irvine Minnesota Inventory includes 162 items, organized into four domains: accessibility (62 items), pleasurability (56 items), perceived safety from traffic (31 items), and perceived safety from crime (15 items). (Some items are in multiple domains.) The inventory includes both a paper version and a version in Microsoft Access, to allow data to be input directly into the computer.

Conclusions

Limitations of methods used to develop the inventory are discussed. Strategies are offered for using the Irvine Minnesota Inventory to systematically and reliably measure characteristics of the built environment that are potentially linked to active living.



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