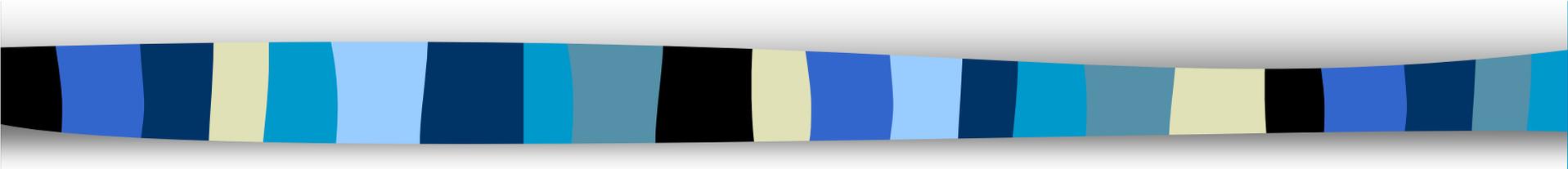
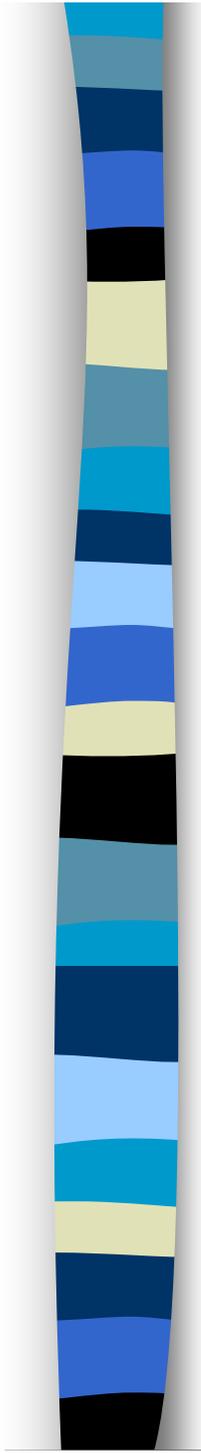


Challenges for intersectorial cooperation - nature and health



The call for evidence versus lay knowledge and the search for new health promotion windows.

Jesper Holm, Associate Professor, Roskilde University



Background – why I am approaching it this way..

Environmental Communication

Corporate Environmental Innovation

Local Agenda 21 Politics and participation

Danish Nature Interpretation Educational programme – public participation, SD and health promotion

Initiated in 2006: M.SC in Health Promotion & Strategies at Roskilde University, a cross disciplinary programme, also Nature & Health projects

Current R&D projects:

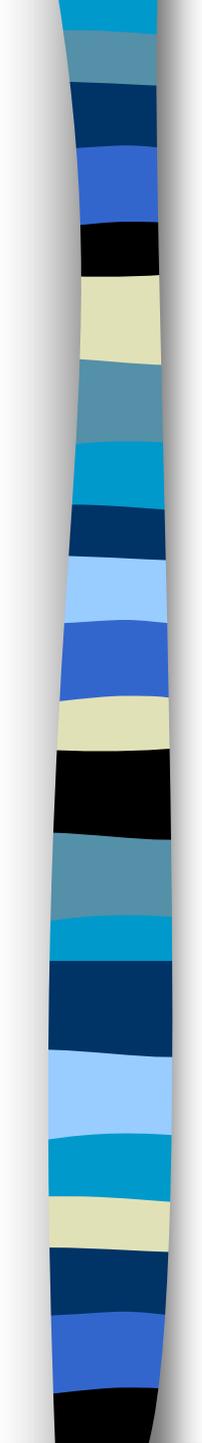
Environmental Tourism on Sealand "A learning Experience"

Sustainable Housing & Construction



Dept of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change



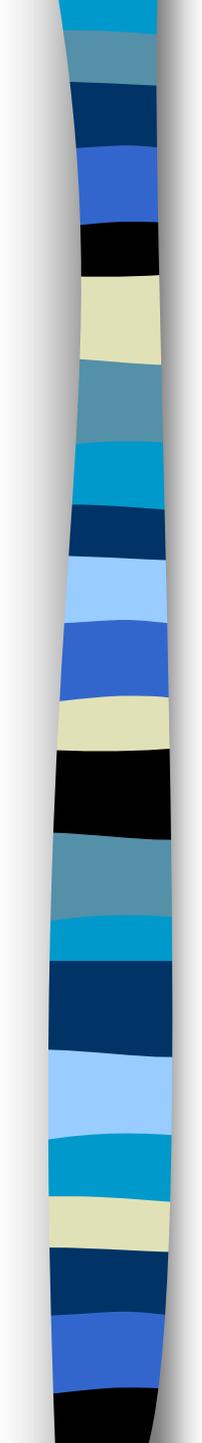


Call upon nature for health

Since early modernity in DK: mobilizing citizens in getting in nature has been understood as a health promoter: “fresh air, bright light and purity”, urban kids were sent to the countryside in holidays, scout movements were living in nature, sports were outdoor. Besides we were all in family with farmers or had nature in our backyards

In Radical Modernity we have lost proximity to nature as means of production, as cultural tradition, as local area, as a place for learning and for health

Re-entering nature in health promotion has in DK from the 1950´s primarily been enhanced by: outdoor wild life observers & NGO´s, vegetarians, holistic therapists, spiritual movements, rangers, ecologists, Waldorf institutions, outdoor kindergardens.

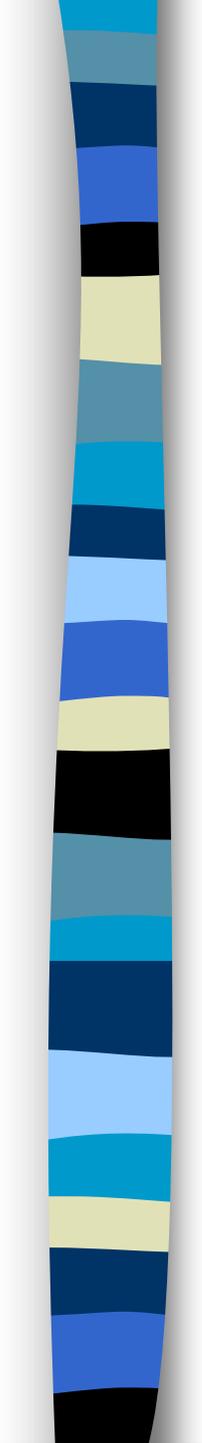


Call upon nature for health

Re-inventing nature for health promotion have in DK emerged since 2002- 4 from Sector research, Health Care Praxis, Nature Interpretation, Patient org. Doctors have adopted a scheme “walking prescriptions” as alternative to medicine for CHD etc.

In order to differ from the alternative therapy market an *official stand* for green walking and nature therapy must re-invent itself under the predominant discourses of evidence – does it pay, is it scientifically evident that it is curative, to which type of diseases, is it nature per se that makes a difference, which kind of nature?

So we lost the evident knowledge of health & nature. Evidence based statistic knowledge, randomised control experiments do not make any difference to motivate us for changing anything, but economic priorities and competing health systems may say: go or stop.

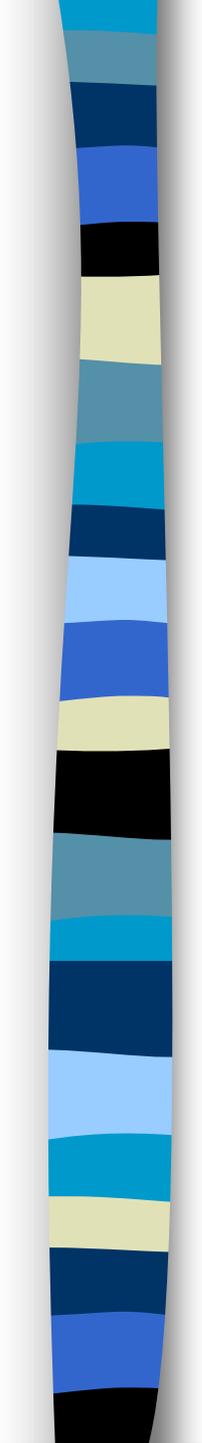


Nature and Health Evidence

Basic: Nature as provision of food, oxygen, water, in urban areas also cleaning air, providing space for rest and physical activity

Howard Frumkin gives a number of references of evidence for nature's role in enhancing health (Am. J. of Publ. Health 2003 no.9)

Swedish, Dutch, and British evidence research (we have learned from this conf.) reveal a number of findings on: outdoor life for kids and development, stress relief, decreased mortality among seniors, specific relief and S.O.C for some patient groups. Alnarp and Skov & Landskab therapy garden in DK and S will give more knowledge.



Calling for Evidence in Health & Nature

- **Evidence is differentiated in many terms:**

- **Hierarchies from case studies, matched control groups, cohort studies, randomized control**

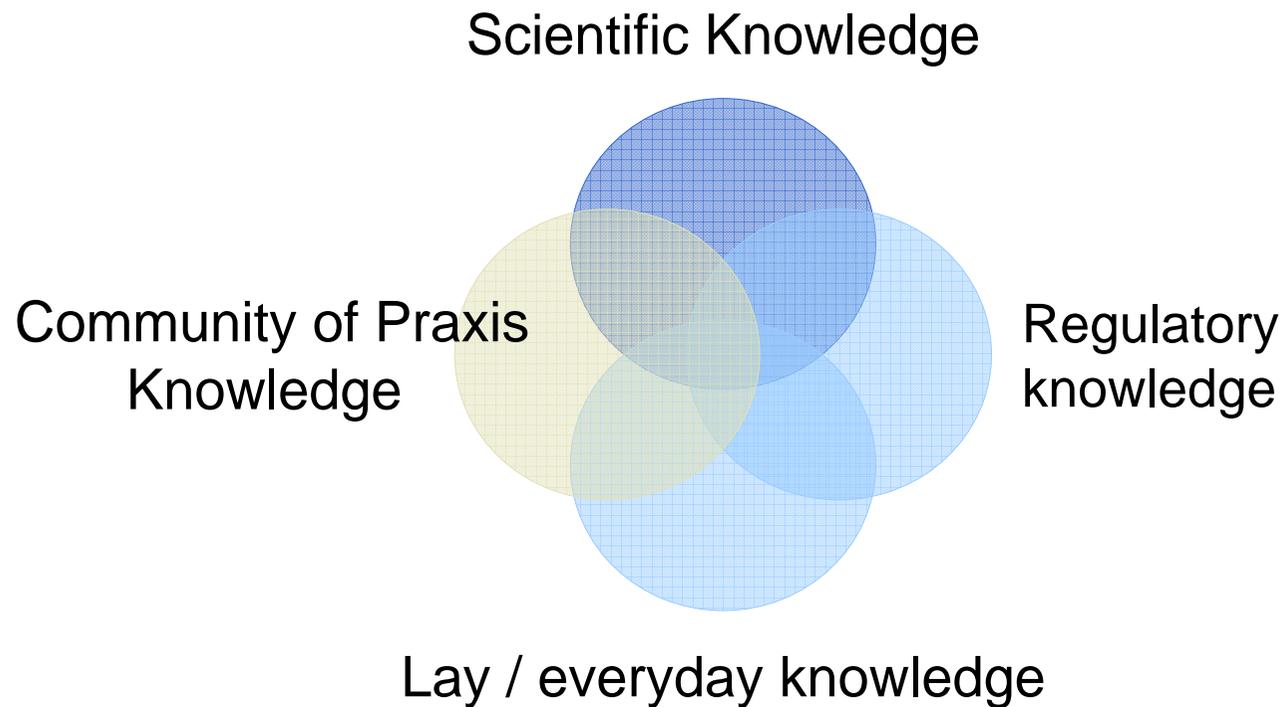
- **Qualitative self efficacy, quantitative statistics, measurements...**

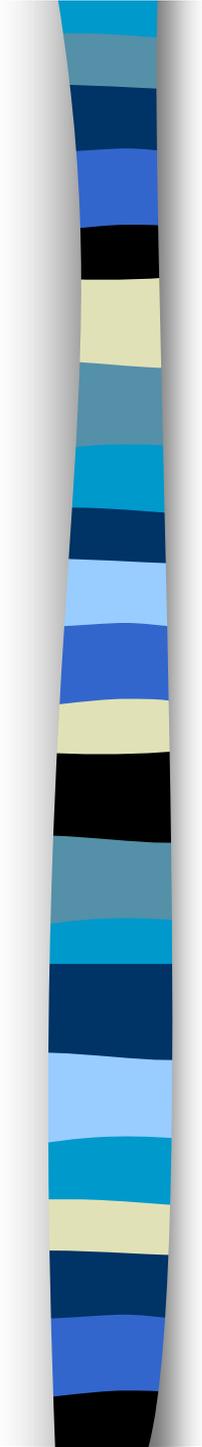
- ***Internal evidence* involving practitioners and target groups in evaluating *a specific practice*. Evidence for learning. But internal evidence can not be transferred/generalized.**

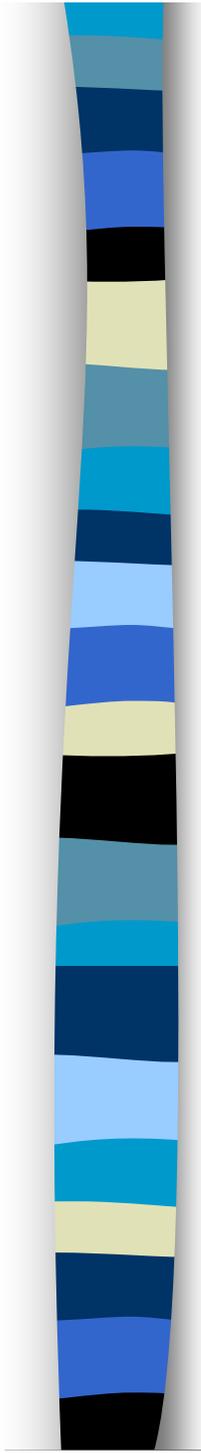
- ***External evidence*, general statements of causalities is more a scientific issue. Ext. evidence may not be useful in making a right choice for the specific problems (A. Cochrane).**

- **Evidence differs as health differs as a moral, aesthetic, existential issue. Motivating and creating participation in health promotion depends upon existential, moral, self care virtues.**

Dominant knowledge systems on evidence



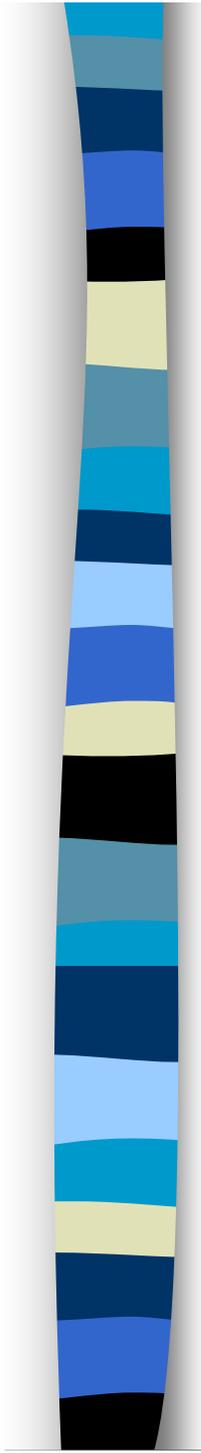
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- Evidence for salutogenetic measures (that what promotes good health) is an issue which bring in general problems with creating evidence for e.g. sense of coherence, wellbeing, the role of nature, appreciation
 - So other types of knowledge is needed: explanatory, motivational.
 - But which kind of knowledge and evidence that is called upon is a matter of context : a rising call upon evidence is now *control with practice by demanding external general evidence – Why?*



Calling for Evidence in Health & Nature

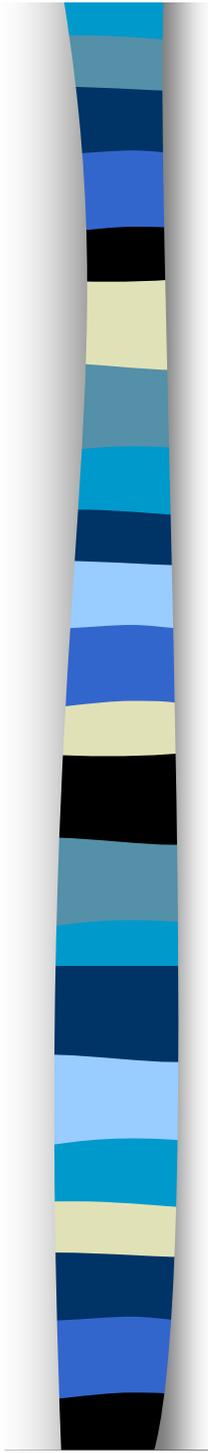
- **January 2007 Health Policy Act in Denmark : mandatory for Municipalities to enhance HP plans and use evidence based methods**
- **A guiding order argued for HP in municipalities: proximity to citizens, settings of places to live, a *holistic approach for sector coordination***
- **But only 200 mio DKK per year for HP, and mandatory to make contracts with hospitals for patient rehabilitation and health prevention among disabled etc. = very few resources**
- **Discursive orientation in public health: smoking, obesity, inactivity, alcohol – not structural prevention nor general salutogenesis**
- **Thus pioneering municipalities, rangers and parks involved in activating nature for health are few.**





) True sector coordination

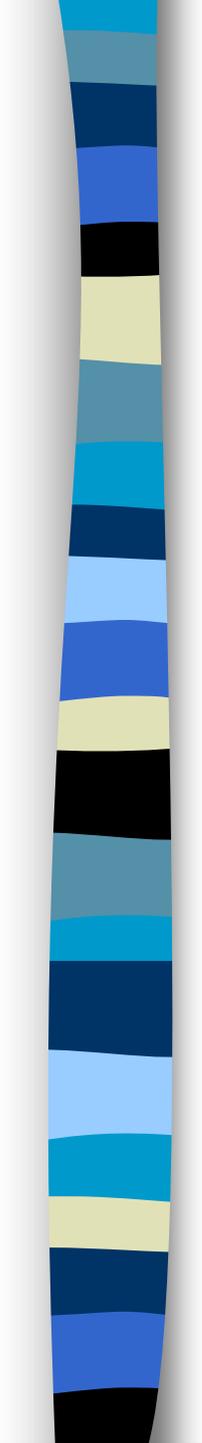
- **Engaging Nature in Health Promotion may in institutional politics be seen as an effort of sector coordination or integration as was called for in EU's "From Cardiff to Helsinki"**
- **Tools of sector coordination between health and nature sectors: merging story lines or imagined communities, linking goals, organisational efforts, health impact assessments,**
- **Co-ordination is most often a question about one sectors rationality dominating the other – rangers forcing patients outdoor for walking or... public health planners demanding hard evidence of healthy outdoor activity?**
- **Who represents nature in this case? Preservationists, wild life org., nature interpretors, local citizens, experts?**



But is general health evidence of the salutogenetic impact from nature access/activity possible? is it meaningful for lay people, will it ever be evident that it pays off?

Sometimes cry for evidence is absurd when it is evident that...(J. Austin)

Treatments call upon evidence not to waste resources. Often: no curative effect. We thus have to move for structural prevention and strengthen self-healing – but we only measure evidence as absence from diseases.



Other routes for nature based health efforts

Schools, kinder gardens, professionals, patient organisations, social movements demanding nature proximity, events and curative activities as a precautionary health practise (as organic food now have removed evidence demand by risk assessment regulation)

Planning for space provision: architecture and planning enhancing well-being, activity, and social contact by giving access to green areas, outdoor sports facilities in neighbourhoods

Promote a culture of *internal* learning evidence

Just do it: Engaging volunteers, nature organisations and private corporations for health promotion activities in nature: incentives tours, work intervention etc. for shaping a cultural horizon

