Healthy playgrounds: Do it yourself monitoring

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George Thomson, Nick Wilson, Ryan Gage
University of Otago, Wellington, NZ

Aim

To develop simple methods for researching and routine monitoring of three aspects of healthy play spaces:

- Drinking water
- Shade
- Smokefree signs

Background

- Playgrounds can be a crucial space for child health because of:
  - Green space and trees
  - Opportunities to play safely outdoors
- Advocates need systematic data so as to inform local and central governments
- While there a number of audit guides for recreation spaces, there is a lack of *simple* methods that health workers and advocates can use

Methods - General

- Lists of playgrounds from:
  - Council websites
  - Phone or visit councils
  - Google Earth survey

- Survey within 10-100m of playground
- Record name and location of playground

Methods: Drinking water

- Photos of:
  - Context – from 10m away
  - Fountains including taps and dog bowls
  - Of water flow
  - Close-up of nozzle

- Test taps
- Note issues

Results: Drinking water

Methods: Health related signs

- Photos of all signage within 10 metres of the playground equipment

- Measure the largest signs for each subject matter found (smoking, dogs, alcohol and sun-safety) with a tape measure

- Note issues

Results: Health related signage

Results: Te reo signs

Results: Sign size and quality

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Methods: Shade

- Visit or locate using Google Street View (where available) and Google Earth
- Estimate the ***noon summer shade coverage*** (% of area) for:
  - The main-play area
  - Any stand-alone play equipment areas
  - Sitting areas and eating areas within 10 m of the main play area


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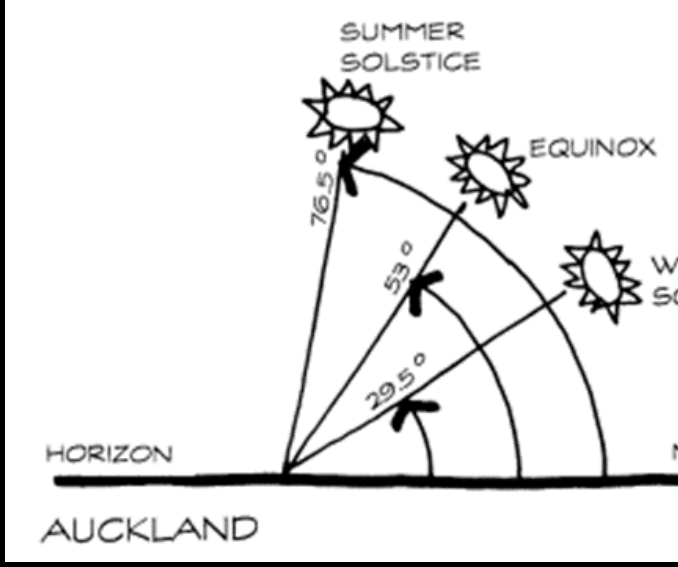
Cockayne Rd

Methods: Shade



- Classify area as having:
  - Insufficient (Under 20% cover)
  - Partly sufficient (20-50%)
  - Sufficient (Over 50%)

- Classify each source of built shade as:
  - Permanent (e.g. fixed structures) *or*
  - Temporary (e.g. large umbrellas)

heavy – over 90% UVR protection

Good protection from direct UVR. Protection from indirect UVR will depend on canopy size and where a person is positioned under the canopy. Suitable for long-stay use if personal sun protection measures are also used.

medium – around 60% UVR protection

Filtered shade provides low levels of protection from direct and indirect UVR. Suitable for short-stay use only. Personal sun protection measures should also be used.

light – less than 30% UVR protection

Poor protection from direct and indirect UVR. Suitable for transit shade only.

Methods: Shade

Use a canopy density guide to classify tree canopies as:

- Heavy (over 90% UVR protection)
- Medium (around 60% of UVR protection) *or*
- Light (less than 30% UVR protection)

For more information see:

https://cancernz.org.nz/assets/Sunsmart/Sunsmart-resources/Guidelines-Under-Cover.pdf

Discussion

- Data can help advocates and officials with local government
- Even when there is a smokefree playground *law,* a need to monitor best practice implementation

Contact: george.thomson@otago.ac.nz