

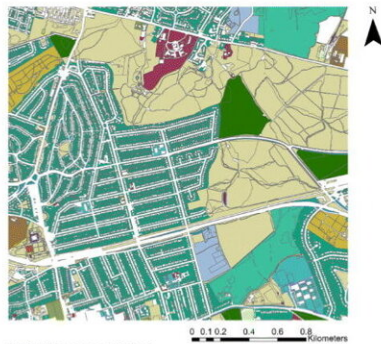
# Exposure to greenspace may lower risk of certain cancers

June 21 2024

## UK Biobank Participants and exposure



n = 279,326



- OSMM Greenspace category**
- Private Garden
  - Public Park Or Garden
  - Amenity - Transport
  - Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
  - Amenity - Residential Or Business
  - Bowling Green
  - Camping Or Caravan Park
  - Cemetery
  - Golf Course
  - Institutional Grounds
  - Land Use Changing
  - Natural
  - Other Sports Facility
  - Play Space
  - Religious Grounds
  - School Grounds
  - Tennis Court

- Total greenspace cover = all 18 greenspace category
- Private residential gardens
- Other greenspace types = 17 greenspace category excluding private garden

## Obesity-related cancer

**Overall obesity-related cancer**  
Incident cases = 9,550

- Reduced risk for total greenspace cover **HR = 0.95 (0.92 – 0.98)**
- Reduced risk for private residential gardens. **HR = 0.92 (0.88 – 0.96)**
- No effect for other greenspace types

**Breast cancer**  
Incident cases = 3,793

- No effect for total greenspace cover
- Reduced risk for private residential gardens. **HR = 0.91 (0.84 – 0.98)**
- No effect for other greenspace types

**Uterine cancer**  
Incident cases = 637

- Reduced risk for total greenspace cover. **HR = 0.86 (0.76 – 0.96)**
- Reduced risk for private residential gardens. **HR = 0.80 (0.67 – 0.96)**
- Reduced risk for other greenspace types. **HR = 0.85 (0.73 – 0.99)**

Credit: *Science of The Total Environment* (2024). DOI: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.173833

A University of Queensland-led study has found a link between exposure to gardens and a lower risk of being diagnosed with obesity-related cancer.

Ph.D. candidate Chinonso Odebeatu from UQ's School of Public Health said the team analyzed data from almost 280,000 people aged 37–73 years in England, Scotland and Wales, recruited between 2006 and 2010.

The [research paper](#) was published in *Science of The Total Environment*.

"We used the large-scale biomedical database Biobank UK and determined the [greenspace](#) around participant's homes via the Ordnance Survey MasterMap Greenspace dataset," Odebeatu said.

"We were interested in how greenspace might influence specific health outcomes, so the data was linked to the UK's National Cancer Registry.

"We found almost 10,000 of the 279,000 participants developed obesity-related cancer over a follow-up period of eight years.

"When we looked at the amount and types of greenspace around the participants, we found exposure to a private residential garden was linked to a lower risk of developing cancers, especially breast and [uterine cancer](#)."

The researchers said the findings suggest greenspace around a home gives people the opportunity to engage in more [physical exercise](#), make more Vitamin D and/or can mitigate the effects of air pollution.

Odebeatu said certain groups of people showed more pronounced health benefits from having access to a household garden.

"For instance, women, people who had never smoked and people who didn't drink alcohol," he said.

"It was also more beneficial for people who were more physically active, people without cardiovascular issues and those without vitamin D

deficiencies."

Associate Professor Nicholas Osborne from UQ's School of Public Health said the findings support policies and initiatives aimed at increasing people's access to greenspace.

"We know living in areas with more greenspace can have positive effects on both physical and [mental health](#) and well-being," Osborne said. "This study provides a better understanding of this relationship.

"Of course not everyone has access to their own garden at home, so promoting community gardening may be helpful in those cases.

"Encouraging [outdoor activities](#) and ensuring adequate vitamin D levels could further amplify these benefits."

**More information:** Chinonso Christian Odebeatu et al, Greenspace and risk of obesity-related cancer in the UK Biobank cohort: An analysis of private residential gardens and other greenspace types, *Science of The Total Environment* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.173833](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.173833)

Provided by University of Queensland

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