INTRODUCTION

Third places are defined as social places that thrive on social experiences, falling between the two social environments of home and work (Oldenburg, 1999). Throughout history, they have existed through the evidence of ancient archaeological sites, such as the Parthenon and the Circus Maximus. These were places that functioned as vital social platforms to foster and nourish communities. They are places where people can willingly choose to nourish communities. They are places where people can willingly choose to gather, socialize, or merely experience the presence of others without any demands for engagement.

Today, these places have extended from separate contexts and settings. Studies have revealed various benefits of third places for different groups of users.

However, and as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic and its protective behaviors, third places in their different forms and contexts are negatively impacted through changes of experience, capability, and density downgrades, isolation, and even closures. These protective behaviors, while necessary, have impacted the world in terms of economics, politics, culture, education, and health. But also notable are the negative impacts of behaviors that prohibit social interaction on mental health, and, as a result, on overall well-being and public health. Even though the current pandemic is not the first of its kind, it requires essential changes in design to result in more resilient and adaptable built-environments.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This scoping review is an effort to learn from the strategies that were effective during previous pandemic outbreaks, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to identify themes of design strategies in existing literature that has investigated design of the built-environment, developed in relation to epidemic outbreaks, which can be applicable to social spaces. Shedding light on these design strategies can help inform future design decisions of more resilient third places in the post-pandemic era.

Aim of Pilot: to test the search strategy and further refine it (search themes, search terms and matrix).

METHOD

A scoping review was conducted. Scoping reviews are considered a valid approach to evidence synthesis, as they incorporate a range of studies to systematically summarize and synthesize evidence with the purpose of informing practice, programs, and policy and providing direction to future research trends (Colquhoun et al., 2014). Scoping reviews are similar to systematic literature reviews, in that they follow thorough, structured, and systematic search methods to ensure that outcomes are reliable.

The review followed Peters (2015) guide that they have expanded from Arksey and O'Malley’s (2005) paper on preparing scoping reviews.

Question: What is the relationship between past and current epidemic outbreaks and the design of the built environment in public/shared spaces?

Aims: To map the types of evidence and the key concepts of design strategies related to the built environment in relation to epidemic outbreaks.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: The search for literature was limited to peer-reviewed, English only publications. No time limitations were set. Publications that focused on the relationship between aspects of the design of the built environment and the epidemic outbreaks of the new era (1899-2021) were included. The review excluded non-English material, grey literature (e.g., reports, working papers, government documents, white papers and evaluations), and studies that did not address aspects of the built environment in relation to disease outbreaks.

Protocol:
- Databases: CINAHL, Web of Sciences, Google Scholar, Engineering Village, and PsychInfo. For the pilot, the search will be conducted on one database only: Engineering Village.
- Themes: The search aimed to select articles that focused on themes of Epidemiology and Built Environment.

SEARCH STRATEGY MODIFICATIONS

After testing the search strategy in this pilot, search terms were modified and generalized, to cover general forms of the built environment in order to result in an adequate number of results.

The charting form was further developed to allow for a descriptive synthesis of scoping review findings.

SEARCH STRATEGY MODIFICATIONS

- A visualization of bibliometric networks was then conducted using VOSviewer.
- A term co-occurrences map was developed revealing several clusters for the resulted publications as shown below.
- Articles were shown to be focused on five main topics, which included: Epidemiology, Healthcare Design, HVAC, Materials and Finishes, Architecture.

RESULTS

- The search yielded 541 publications using classification codes related to the two pre-determined themes (epidemiology and built environment).
- After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, the full-text screening focused on the selection of papers that specifically referred to the design of interiors with respect to disease outbreaks (n=28).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Preliminary findings reveal several design strategies referenced from past and current epidemic outbreaks, and classified under the following themes:

RESULTS

- Results by country
- Results by date of publication

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