



University of the
West of England

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Towards a More Active City: A Multidisciplinary Approach

- **Format:**

Written paper & In- Person Presentation

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

During the past few decades, the urbanization of cities has been repetitively associated with adverse health conditions and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Physical inactivity has been identified as one of the causes of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Evidence of the association between built environment variables and physical activity behavior has emerged within multiple fields of research. However, the approaches used to assess the effect of specific built environment factors on physical activity widely vary, leading to inconclusive results.

Urban planners, transportation planners, and public health researchers now advocate for a more physically active lifestyle among urban residents. Although these multiple disciplines target a unified aim, researchers within each of the three disciplines are directed towards a different focus regarding physical activity promotion. While public health researchers implement environmental interventions to conquer non-communicable diseases through promoting all types of physical activity, transportation planners focus on promoting active travel and public transit use in order to conquer traffic congestion problems. Meanwhile, urban planners focus on creating a more livable and vibrant built environment by encouraging walkability. The three disciplines also adopt different approaches to address the built environment variables associated with physical activity.

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive conceptual framework which integrates the diverse approaches of the three disciplines. This is achieved by conducting a systematic literature review covering the current divergence and convergence in the conceptual and methodological approaches adopted by researchers within the public health, transportation planning and urban planning disciplines. Opportunities for integration of knowledge between the three disciplines are discussed and presented in the form of a conceptual framework, which would serve as basis for future research targeting the built environment and physical activity.

Keywords: physical activity, urban planning, public health, built environment.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Alaa El-Din Sarhan is currently Head of the Department of Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design, AASTMT, and previously taught at Helwan and Al-Ain University. He is Vice President of Architects for Integrated Consultancy and has a wide practice in Architectural projects in Egypt. His research interests span Urban Design and Planning for human need and comfort as well as incorporation of technological innovations.

Rania Abdel Galil holds a PhD in Town and Regional Planning from Sheffield University, UK. She is an associate professor at the Department of Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design, AASTMT. She is the Associate-Editor of the Journal of Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development (Egypt) and an Editorial board member of the International Development Planning Review Journal (UK). Rania has published over 30 research papers and works in international research projects. Her research interests are the sustainability of our cities and the North/South divide.

Sawsan Mokhtar holds a BSc in Architectural Engineering & Environmental Design, awarded by AASTMT. She is also an RIBA Part 1 holder. Sawsan is a graduate teaching assistant at AASTMT, with an undergoing MSc thesis preparation. Her research interest covers Urban Design and Planning for health, as well as Architectural Design for Autistic Children.