

The physical, social and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation

ORN Research Seminar
30th January 2015

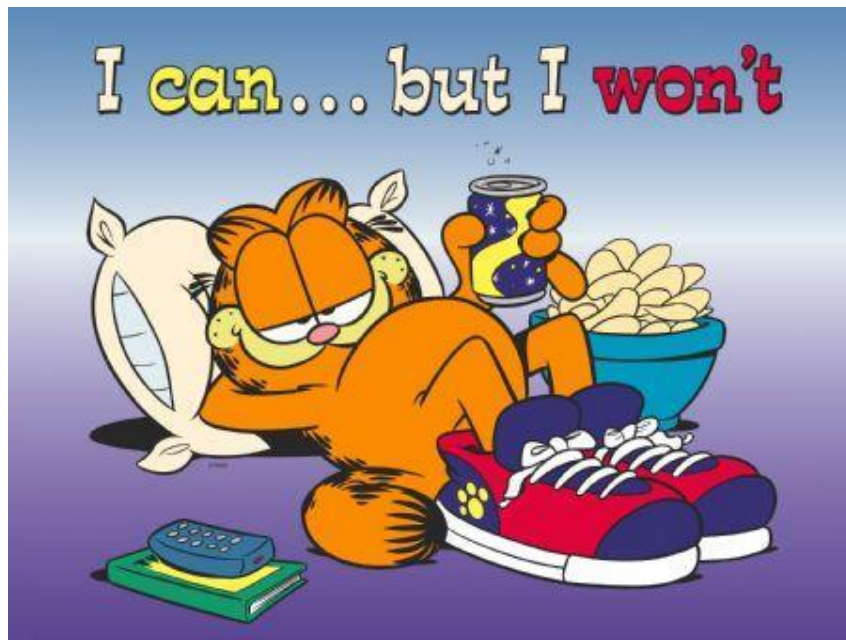
Professor, Diane Crone,
University of Gloucestershire.

Overview

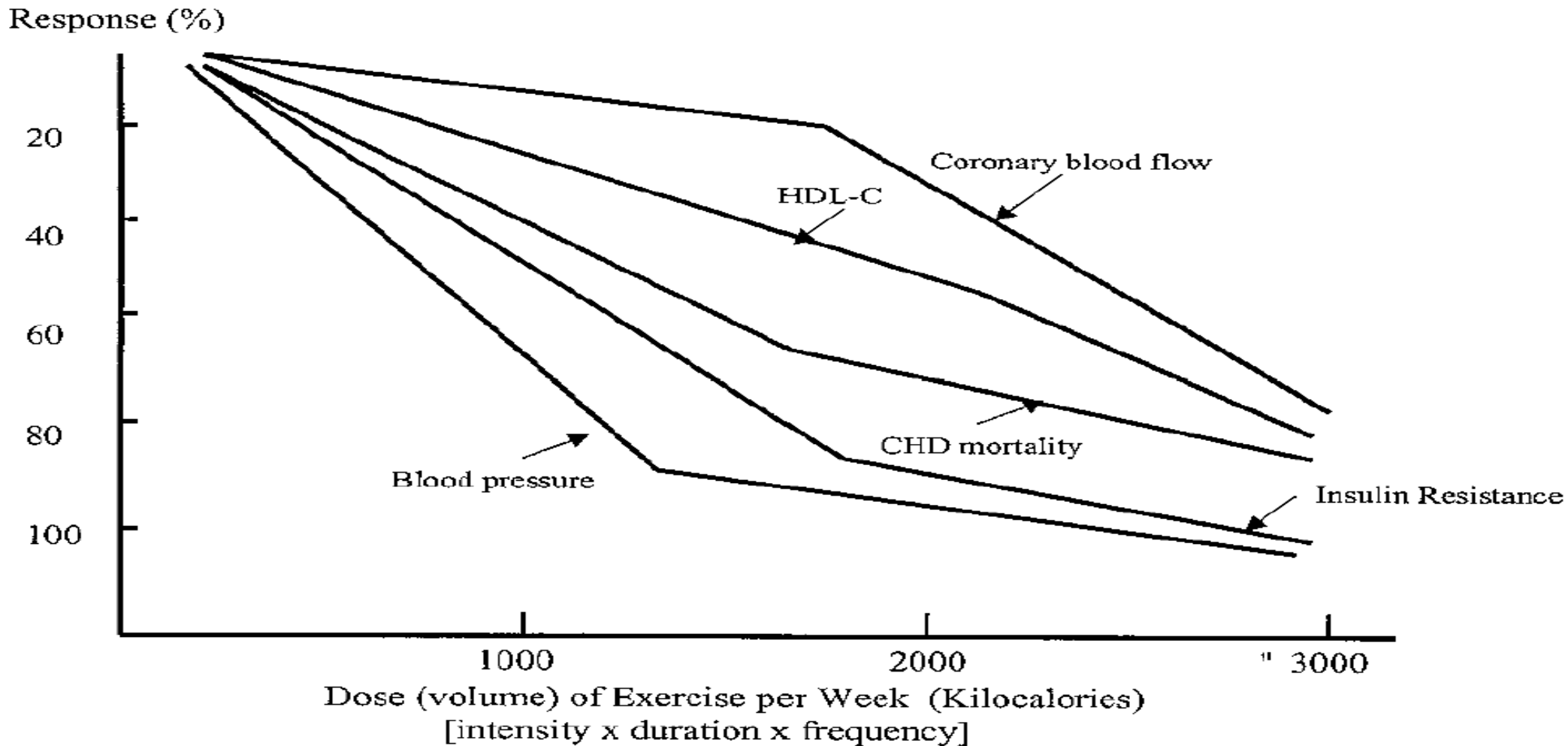
- Aim: To explore the physical, social and mental health benefits of being outdoors and taking part in physical activity.
 - Exercise for health: why do it?
 - Who does it? Who doesn't?
 - Why is being outdoors important? Why do (recreation) outside?
 - Holistic benefits...
 - Value



What's the problem?



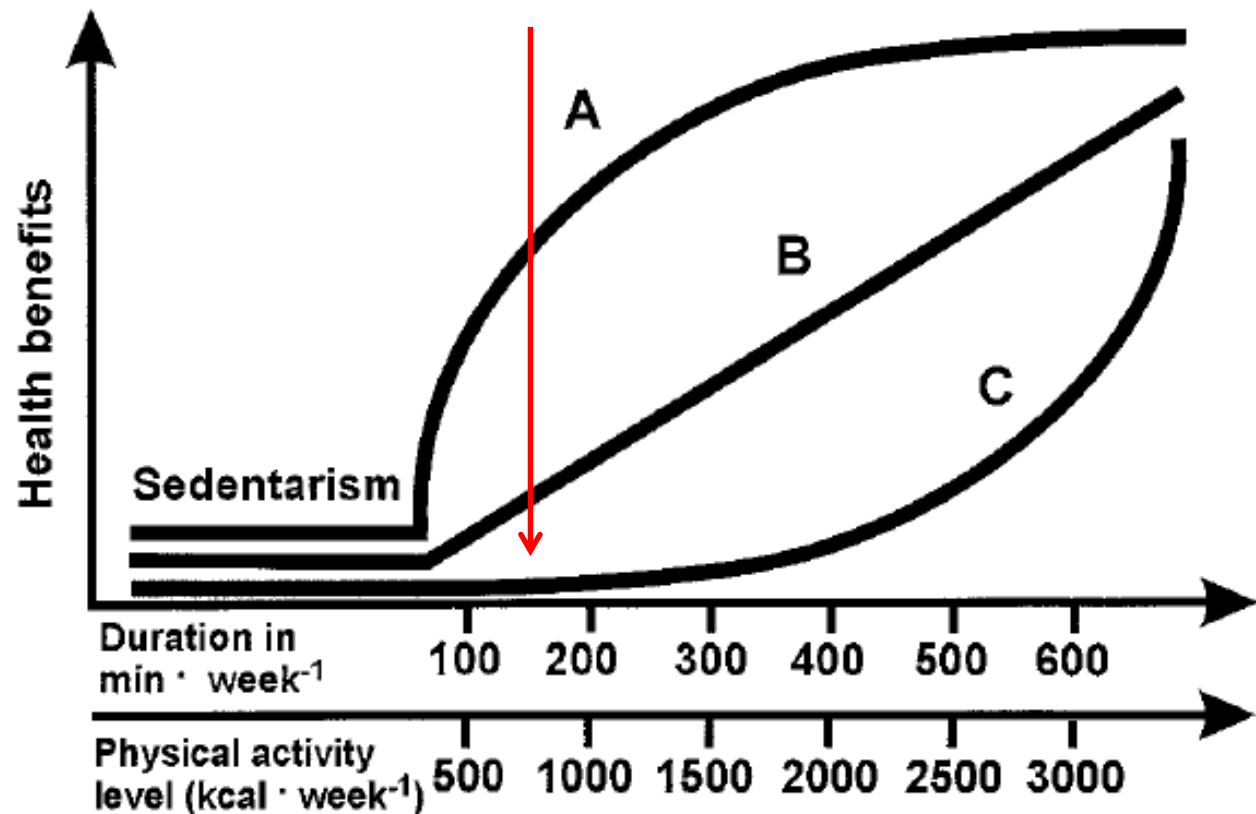
Dose-response relationship



Source: Haskell (2001) *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 33 (6): S454-S458

Risk (response) gradients

Significant health gains from 150 mins per wk

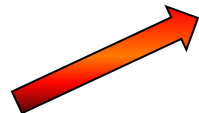


Source: Bouchard (2001) *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 33 (6): S347-S350

FIGURE 2—Schematic illustration depicting the relationships between physical activity level defined in minutes of participation per week or energy expended. See text for explanation.



33% of men and 45% of women do not reach CMO recommendations for physical activity (HSE)



18% of disabled adults regularly take part in sport compared to 39% of non-disabled adults (APS)



19% of men and 26% of women are 'physically inactive' (HSE)



21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5-15 meet the CMO recommendations for activity for children
But...



47% of boys and 49% of girls in the lowest economic group are 'inactive' compared to 26% of boys and 35% of girls in the highest (HSE)



23% of girls aged 5-7 meet the recommended levels of daily physical activity, by ages 13-15 only 8% do (HSE)



Walking trips decreased by 30% between 1995 and 2013 (NTS)



64% of trips are made by car



22% are made by foot (NTS)

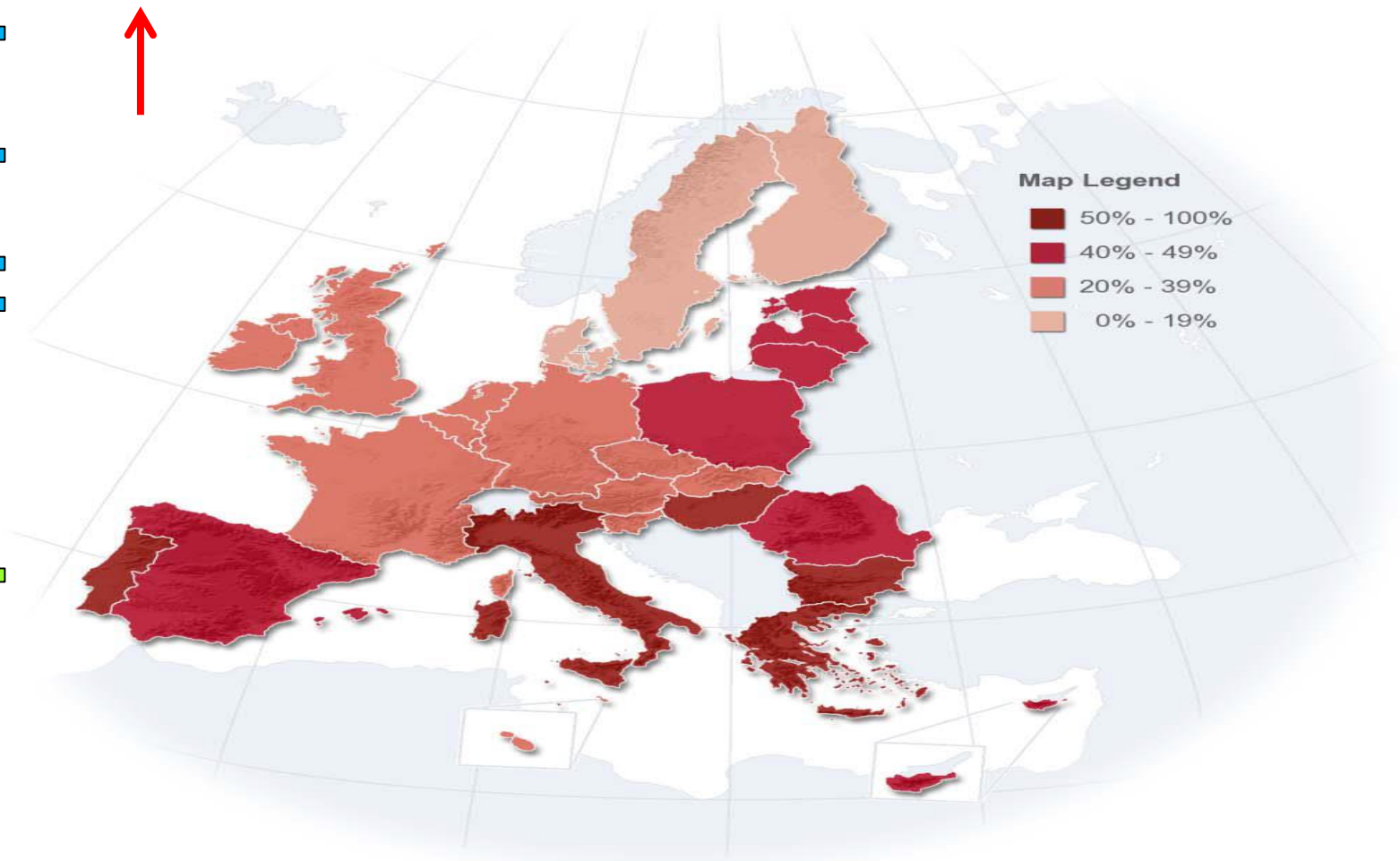


2% are made by bike (NTS)

Data Sources:
Health Survey for England 2012 (HSE)
Active People Survey 8, April 2013-April 2014 (APS)
National Travel Survey July 2014 (NTS)

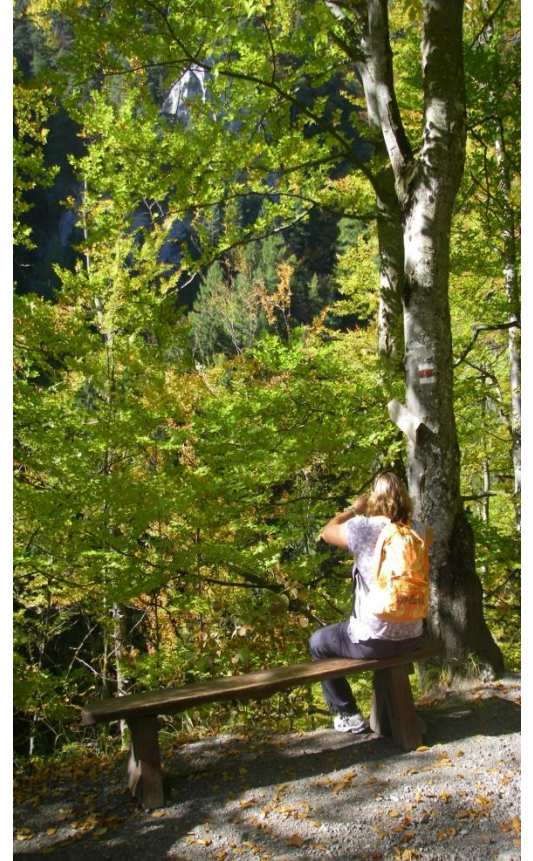
Who doesn't!.....Lots of us NEVER do anything!

Country	Percentage	Annotation
EL	67%	← Question: QF1. How often do you exercise or play sport?
BG	58%	Answers: Never
PT	55%	
IT	55%	←
HU	53%	
PL	49%	
RO	49%	←
CY	46%	
LV	44%	
LT	44%	←
ES	42%	←
EE	41%	
EU27	39%	
MT	38%	
CZ	37%	
SK	35%	
FR	34%	
UK	32%	←
LU	32%	
DE	31%	
AT	29%	
BE	28%	
NL	28%	
IE	26%	
SI	22%	←
DK	18%	
FI	7%	←
SE	6%	



Being (active) outdoors...

- The evidence:
 - Time outdoors in contact with the natural environment - positive effect on mental health (Pretty et al., 2005; Seymour, 2003)
 - Biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) - innate need to associate with natural world, this connection enhances physical and psychological well-being (Heinsch, 2012).




Being (active) outdoors...

- The evidence continued:
 - Urban dwellers who use green space (woods and forests) - lower risk of poor mental health than non-users,
 - For most people social interaction is a significant factor in using local green space,
 - Using green space in childhood is a predictor of use in adulthood (Miller and Morrice, 2014).



Multiple benefits to be realised....

- Engaging in woodlands:
 - health;
 - nature and landscape connections;
 - education and learning;
 - economy;
 - social development;
 - symbolic, cultural, spiritual significance (O'Brian and Morris, 2013)
- Factors affecting 



What people say.... and mean

- Sense of Purpose *“When I am going up that hill I feel as if I am going up there for a purpose.”*
- Achievement *“it’s nice to make an effort, and you feel a sense of achievement.”*
- Peace and contentment- *“It was a way of tranquillity for us all and I had been in hospital for about a year and when you go to walk you are trudging through the earth, and you are becoming one. I can’t tell you how beautiful it is”*

(Crone, 2007)



Why does it make people feel that way?

- Other people
- The atmosphere
- The instructor/leader
- The place/environment
- The *interactions* of these for people through the actual *experience*

‘Out on the bike I feel at one with the whole of life and the whole of creation ...I feel that that is the extreme of what a human being can feel in pleasure and in being alive. I just love life and when you use everything, your body and your mind, to achieve the best then you get the best feeling’

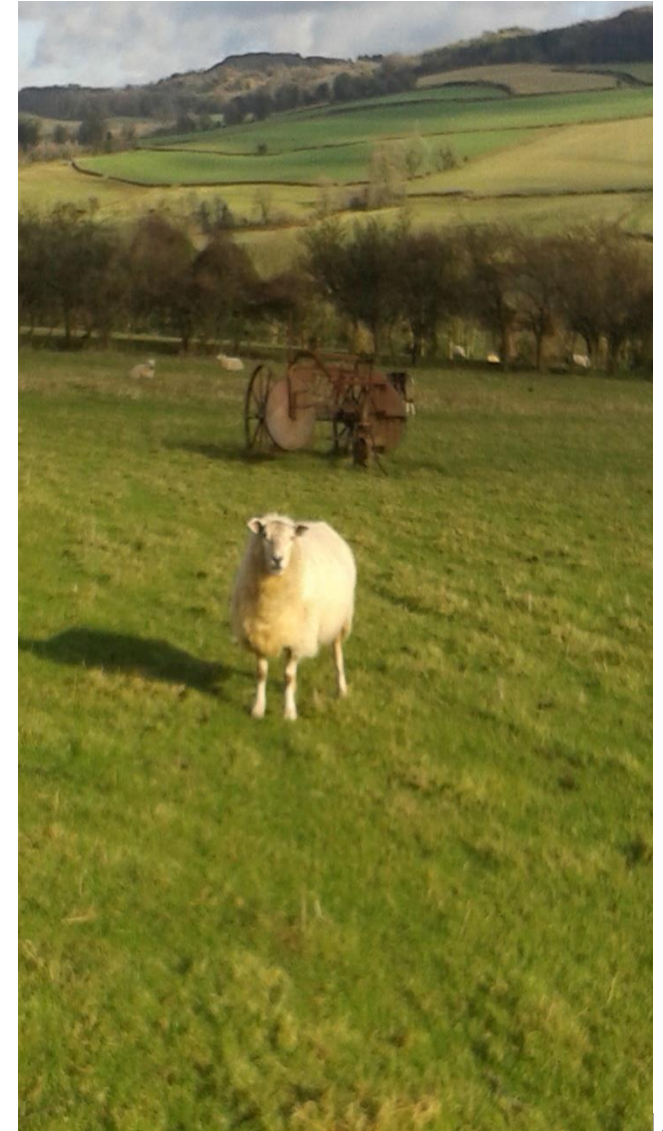
Its fantastic [walking], ...I mean I really enjoy it...you can go and its thundering and lightening and pouring with rain but you have just done your things and you are out, it doesn't matter what, nothing makes you stop’

Physical, social and mental health value of outdoor recreation...

- Holistic benefits of outdoor recreation:
 - Physical health
 - Social interaction
 - Enjoyment
 - Something special to see, smell, feel
 - Something to experience, share remember, talk about..
- Critical factor - Active environments – create the right spaces (Public Health England, 2014)



THANK YOU.....
AND
ANY QUESTIONS?



References and further reading

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