The purpose of this study is to examine the physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku (taking in the atmosphere of the forest). The subjects were 12 male students (22.8±1.4 yr). On the first day of the experiments, one group of 6 subjects was sent to a forest area, and the other group of 6 subjects was sent to a city area. On the second day, each group was sent to the opposite area for a cross check. In the forenoon, the subjects were asked to walk around their given area for 20 minutes. In the afternoon, they were asked to sit on chairs and watch the landscapes of their given area for 20 minutes. Cerebral activity in the prefrontal area and salivary cortisol were measured as physiological indices in the morning at the place of accommodation, before and after walking in the forest or city areas during the forenoon, and before and after watching the landscapes in the afternoon in the forest and city areas, and in the evening at the place of accommodation. The results indicated that cerebral activity in the prefrontal area of the forest area group was significantly lower than that of the group in the city area after walking; the concentration of salivary cortisol in the forest area group was significantly lower than that of the group in the city area before and after watching each landscape. The results of the physiological measurements show that Shinrin-yoku can effectively relax both people’s body and spirit.
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The purpose of this study is to examine the physiological effects of basic Shinrin-yoku activities (specifically, walking in the forest and watching forest landscapes) to clarify the role of Shinrin-yoku’s availability in the forest. Method. Experimental areas. The term “Shinrin-yoku” (taking in the atmosphere of the forest or literally “forest bathing”) was coined by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to describe the positive effects of brief sojourns in natural environments to improve general health [3]. In later years, the term “Shinrin-yoku” developed into “Forest Therapy,” which uses the medically proven effects of walking and observing. A variety of physiological indices show that humans are more relaxed in forested environments [3,4,5,6,7,8]. For example, a forest environment lowers blood pressure and pulse rate in humans [5,6,7]. Forest walking also suppresses sympathetic activity and