

Opportunities for Forest Bathing and Forest Therapy as Innovative Practices within Sustainable Health Tourism Development in Croatia



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Forest bathing means spending time in nature, especially in areas with trees, as a sensory immersion for physiological and psychological health. Forest bathing aims to live in the present moment as you immerse your senses in the sights and sounds of a natural environment. Forest therapy is more healing-oriented than forest bathing, as it aims to heal specific health issues in individuals and can be structured by a forest therapy guide, like the role of a forest medicine practitioner. Forest therapy is more purpose-driven than forest bathing, although both aim to improve health and well-being. The main components of forest therapy include walks, experiencing the forest with the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste), forest visits, forest meditation, Qi Gong, aromatherapy, herbal tea therapy, and crafting with natural materials as part of art therapy.

Several studies have confirmed the forest's physiological and psychological effects on health. Physiological effects include improvements in blood pressure, heart rate, and heart rate variability, cortisol levels, pain relief, and respiratory function. Psychologically, depression, anxiety, quality of life, mood, and cognitive function improve.

The potential for developing and implementing forest bathing and forest therapy as innovative practices in the context of sustainable health tourism in Croatia is considerable. With more than half of its territory covered by forests, Croatia has a unique natural environment that can be utilized for the well-being of its inhabitants and visitors. Integrating forest bathing and forest therapy into the country's health tourism offers several opportunities and benefits. Introducing forest bathing and therapy as unique offerings can attract health-conscious tourists seeking alternative, holistic experiences.

Abstract



With the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development by 2030 and other strategic planning documents, Croatia has committed itself to transforming its tourism industry based on sustainability principles as a fundamental development concept. In this context, health tourism development should be based on potential such as natural resources, diverse natural wealth, ecological quality of the environment, and natural healing factors. This opens room for expanding health tourism offerings, especially wellness tourism, by introducing the practice known in Japan as Shinrin-yoku or "forest bathing" or "breathing in the atmosphere of the forest" with the dual aim of providing an eco-antidote to tech boom burnout and inspiring residents to reconnect with and protect the country's forests.

Croatia can market these practices as a specialty of its health tourism, attracting environmentally conscious travelers. Croatia can boost its economy by integrating forest bathing and forest therapy into health tourism. These practices can create new employment opportunities, such as certified guides and therapists, and stimulate local businesses that cater to the needs of tourists. By promoting activities in the forest, Croatia can raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection. Participants in forest baths and therapies will likely develop a deeper appreciation for nature and a sense of responsibility for preserving natural habitats. Investment in research and development related to forest bathing and treatment can lead to innovative approaches, tailored programs, and improved participant experiences. Collaboration between academia, healthcare professionals, and the tourism sector can drive advancements in this field. Involving local communities in developing and implementing forest bathing and therapy initiatives can create a sense of pride and ownership. Community participation can enhance the authenticity of these practices, making them more appealing to tourists.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, Shinrin-yoku, forest therapy, health tourism

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Introduction

Tourism is the dominant economic sector in the Republic of Croatia, and it has significantly influenced financial and social processes in the past. With the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development until 2030 and other strategic plans, Croatia has committed itself to transforming its tourism industry based on sustainability principles as a fundamental development concept. The Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development by 2030 is an act of strategic planning aimed at designing and implementing a tourism development policy that aligns with national and European tourism policy and overall economic and social development. Based on a detailed analysis of the tourism situation in the Republic of Croatia, ten central challenges of today's Croatian tourism were identified: temporal and spatial disparities, the impact of tourism on the environment and nature, the interrelation between tourism and climate change, adaptation to rapid technological change in tourism, the quality of life and well-being of the local population, insufficient human resources in terms of quantity and quality, adequate structure and quality of accommodation capacities, an unfavorable business and investment environment, an insufficiently efficient legal and administrative framework, the impact of crises on tourism, and changes in the behavior and needs of tourists.¹

The development needs and potentials were identified by analyzing the state of Croatian tourism with a special focus on the main challenges and striving for a qualitative change from an unsustainable tourism development concept to sustainable tourism with high added value. In this context, special attention was paid to the development of health tourism, which should be based on potentials such as natural resources, the diversity of natural wealth, the ecological quality of the environment, and natural healing factors. Tourists coming to Croatia have different needs and desires, which will be satisfied in specific ways and shape various trends. Personal experiences, physical and mental health improvement, authentic products, and cultures will be highly prioritized.

The main problems of health tourism are the lack of supply or quality of health infrastructure, the issues of the domestic health system, the lack of investment, and the lack of proactive development coordinated

between all key stakeholders. Considering that this is already a strategic tourism product that can solve seasonality problems, increase added value, and develop tourism in the interior, the leverage of this product or development and ensuring successful implementation are significant.

Croatian tourism must be based on the extensive presence of protected areas in nine national protection categories, which account for 9.3% of the country's total area, and on the protected areas of the European ecological network NATURA 2000, which account for 29.3% of Croatia's total area.

Taking into account the strategic prioritization of health tourism development, the need to preserve and protect nature as a fundamental resource of tourism through sustainable tourism valorization, there is ample room for the expansion of tourism offerings in the field of health tourism, especially wellness tourism, by introducing the practice known in Japan as Shinrin-yoku (SY) with a threefold objective: to provide an ecological antidote to stress, one of the most common causes of chronic illness in Western civilization; to encourage people to reconnect with nature and the protection of the land; and to help meet the development needs of Croatian tourism. The latter can be achieved by ensuring a more balanced regional tourism development, diversification of tourism products, development of sustainable jobs for the local population along the entire tourism value chain, and a reduction of the impact of tourism on space, environmental components, and nature. At the same time, forest therapy focuses more on healing than forest bathing, aiming to cure specific health problems.

Aim

This paper aims to analyze and describe the main results of the scientific research conducted so far on the effects of the Shinrin-yoku method on human health and to examine the possibilities of introducing forest bathing and forest therapy as innovative practices in the sustainable development of health tourism in Croatia.

Methods

A search for scientific literature in English containing research results on the effectiveness of the Shinrin Yoku method was conducted using keywords (Shinrin-yoku, forest medicine, forest therapy, forest bathing) in indexed databases (Scopus, WoS, Medline). The collected works were then analyzed using the methods of induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, and comparison, and the most important research results were presented.

Results and Discussion

Forest environments have always been valued for their tranquility, stunning landscapes, soothing climate, clean, fresh air, and unique, pleasant scent. Empirically, forest environments can be stress-relieving and relaxing, so walking in forested areas can benefit human health. This is because the habitats of modern humans, who have experienced rapid urbanization, have evolved dramatically from a near-natural environment to an artificial environment. Despite the convenience and comfort of contemporary urban development and technological advancement, complex and fragmented urban environments can increase stress and exacerbate chronic health problems.

Forest bathing as an innovative tourism product is based on sustainable development and the protection of the environment, especially nature and the forest. It involves spending time in nature, especially in wooded areas, as a sensory immersion in the forest atmosphere for physiological and psychological health, especially for stress reduction, which has been proven to be a factor in almost all non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, hypertension, depression, cardiovascular disease, stroke, stomach ulcers, obesity, alcoholism, panic disorder and eating disorder.¹

Including forest bathing in the tourist offer contributes directly to developing a special form of tourism. It effectively responds to the demand and trends in tourism. It emphasizes the improvement of the supply of innovative tourism products that form the basis for the fur-

ther development of year-round and spatially balanced tourism. Shinrin-yoku is undoubtedly an integral part of health tourism in its wellness tourism segment based on natural resources, natural healing factors, and professionally trained personnel.^{2,3}

Shinrin-yoku involves health interventions based on a focused, mindful, guided sojourn in a forest environment. These interventions improve the individual's health and well-being and reduce the harmful effects of stress on mental and physical health.

Forest bathing aims to live in the present moment by immersing the senses in the natural environment of the forest. Forest therapy has a more focused healing purpose than forest bathing, as it focuses on treating specific individual health issues and can only be done with a certified forest therapy guide and teacher.

Shinrin-yoku is a short, relaxing visit to a forest area that has a similar effect to natural aromatherapy, which focuses on relaxation and the inhalation of volatile compounds from the trees called phytoncides, such as alpha-pinene and limonene.⁴

Exposure to natural stimuli from plants and water in a forest environment effectively promotes health and relaxation. It lowers heart rate and blood pressure, reduces stress, and strengthens the immune system, promoting faster recovery from illness.^{5,6}

In that case, we are referring to forest therapy, which has a "higher" purpose than forest bathing, although both are intended to improve health and well-being. Increasingly, the term Forest Medicine or Forest Therapy is used, which studies the effects of forest environments on human health and represents a new interdisciplinary field of science, belonging to the categories of alternative medicine, environmental medicine, and preventive medicine. Forest medicine has evolved from the practices of Shinrin-yoku and forest therapy, representing evidence-based medicine aimed at disease prevention. Forest therapy as a discipline also stems from Shinrin Yoku, which focuses on healing through immersion in forest environments to promote mental and physical health and prevent disease while simultaneously enjoying and respecting the forest. Forest therapy is also defined as the proven effect of Shinrin-yoku.⁹³

The main components of forest therapy include walking and experiencing the forest through the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). Along with the elements that are part of the method using the five senses, aspects of mindfulness, walking combined with

exercise, forest observation, forest meditation, Qi Gong, aromatherapy, herbal tea therapy, and crafting artifacts from natural materials are sometimes used, including guided art therapy activities. However, the core of forest-based programs lies in utilizing the five senses (sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste), supplemented by meditation, walking, hiking, watching videos, and cognitive-behavioral therapy to experience the forest fully.^{94 95 96 97}

Auditory stimulation from the forest, such as the rustling of leaves, birdsong, and the murmuring of a stream, can contribute to psychophysical relaxation and stress recovery. Research has confirmed that pleasant acoustic and visual experiences provided in green environments have a strong positive correlation with low depression and anxiety levels. Additionally, acoustic comfort has been shown to have a more significant positive impact than visual comfort.⁹⁸

Research examining the impact of forest sounds has shown that forest sounds significantly reduce depression and tension compared to urban noise. It has also been demonstrated that both visual and auditory stimuli in the forest reduce emotional depression and anxiety.⁹⁹

The olfactory or inhalation component of being in the forest is associated with biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) such as limonene, alpha-pinene, and beta-pinene emitted by trees. These compounds affect human health through anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, or neuroprotective activities and contribute to psychological and cognitive processes. In laboratory conditions, BVOCs have shown anxiolytic and antidepressant properties.^{100 101}

Touching the bark and leaves of plants and trees has been shown to relax and stimulate the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system more than touching other materials. Therefore, tactile stimulation of touching plant elements in the forest can have calming effects.¹⁰²

The potential for implementing Shinrin-yoku in Croatia is immense, given that Croatia is one of the most forested European countries, with forests and forest land occupying about half of its land area. The majority of these forests, around 76%, are owned by the Republic of Croatia, which facilitates the implementation of health interventions in the forest. Specifically, forests and other forest lands constitute nearly one-third (32%) of the total area of the Republic of Croatia (including maritime area). With forests covering 2.7 million hectares in Croatia, there are about 300 million tons of wood, and Croatian forests produce an additional 8

million tons of wood yearly. Considering only the land area, forests and other forest land cover almost half (49%) of Croatia's land area. Croatia can be regarded as an above-average forested country, as the relative forest cover of Europe is 35%, presenting a vast potential for widespread practice of the Shinrin Yoku method in Croatian forests.

The effects of forest therapy on health and well-being have been studied in various contexts, especially regarding its effectiveness in reducing stress and consequent physiological changes in the body that can be measured.

Numerous studies have confirmed the physiological and psychological health effects of forests. Most published studies suggest that a single exposure to a forest atmosphere reduces blood pressure and pulse, strengthens cardiovascular, cardiopulmonary, and metabolic function, and inhibits inflammation in middle-aged and older individuals with prehypertension or hypertension compared to subjects exposed to urban environments.^{103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116}

The Forest therapy program could positively reduce stress, as evidenced by the reduction in cortisol and DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) levels in participants' saliva and serum, as well as a decrease in all stress hormones in serum and urine. Levels of DHEA and DHEA-S (dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate), the main secretory products of the adrenal glands, significantly decline with age, coinciding with the onset of degenerative changes and chronic age-related diseases.^{117 118}

Epidemiological evidence in humans suggests that DHEA-S has cardioprotective, anti-obesity, and anti-diabetic properties, and the practice of Forest therapy significantly increases serum levels of DHEA-S.^{119 120 121}

Forest therapy reduces blood pressure by decreasing sympathetic activity and increasing parasympathetic nervous system activity. Sympathetic nervous system activity can be determined by measuring adrenaline and/or noradrenaline levels in urine, as there are significant correlations between these hormones' levels in urine and blood pressure values.^{122 123 124}

Additionally, many studies have reported that viewing forests and walking in the forest significantly reduce sympathetic activity and increase parasympathetic nervous system activity compared to engaging in the same activities in an urban environment. Furthermore, Forest therapy reduces blood pressure by inhibiting the renin-angiotensin system.^{125 126}

Results from some studies have shown that Forest therapy effectively reduces blood glucose levels in patients with type 2 diabetes and demonstrates a preventive effect on type 2 diabetes.¹²⁷

Numerous previous studies have uncovered the potential of using Forest therapy to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Indeed, a series of studies have evidenced that spending time in a forest environment and practicing Shinrin-yoku could reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, anger, fatigue, and confusion and increase vitality, according to the Profile of Mood States (POMS) test in both male and female participants.¹²⁸

Research has shown that walking in the forest effectively reduces mental stress and fatigue. Studies have indicated that Forest therapy significantly increases serotonin levels in the blood and substantially improves vitality scores while reducing fatigue scores in the Profile of Mood States (POMS) test.¹²⁹

Research on the physiological and psychological effects of a one-day session of Forest therapy on working individuals with and without a tendency toward depression has shown a significant positive impact on mental health, especially in individuals prone to depression.¹³⁰

The analysis of the effects of Forest therapy on sleep indicates improvements after forest walks in a group of middle-aged participants. Their results showed a decrease in fatigue and stress, while self-assessed health increased in the group engaged in activities in a forest environment.^{131 132 133}

Indeed, Forest therapy significantly reduces feelings of sleepiness upon awakening and feelings of refreshment (recovery from fatigue) as assessed by the Oguri-Shirakawa-Azumi Sleep Inventory, MA version (OSA-MA), indicating that Forest therapy can improve sleep quality.¹³⁴

Forest therapy significantly increased sleep duration, with forest walking for two hours improving nighttime sleep conditions for individuals with sleep complaints, likely due to exercise and emotional improvement.¹³⁵

Thanks to numerous scientific studies showing that forest bathing and therapy provide various physiological and psychological health benefits, their implementation can contribute to stress reduction, improved mental health, promotion of cardiovascular health, and overall well-being. There is a solid foundation for the broader use of forests in preventive health programs and the in-

clusion of forest bathing and therapy in health tourism offerings. Moreover, Croatia's rich forested areas offer many opportunities for creating dedicated spaces for forest bathing and treatment, with the natural environment serving as a therapeutic backdrop, enhancing the effectiveness of these practices. Furthermore, Croatia's diverse flora and fauna and various landscapes offer a wide range of forest bathing and therapy locations. Introducing forest bathing and therapy as unique offerings can attract health-conscious tourists seeking alternative, holistic experiences. Croatia can promote these practices as a special feature of health tourism, attracting environmentally aware travelers.

Integrating forest bathing and therapy into the health tourism sector can stimulate Croatia's economic growth. These practices can create new employment opportunities, such as certified guides and therapists, and encourage local agencies and companies to expand their services.

Involving local communities in developing and implementing forest bathing and therapy initiatives can create a sense of pride and ownership. In contrast, community participation can enhance the authenticity of these practices, making them attractive to tourists.

Currently, the municipality of Radoboj, thanks to its creative and visionary leadership, has recognized the opportunities for implementing forest therapy into the existing destination offerings, which include "Hiža zagorskih štrukli" (House of Zagorje Strudels), "Hiža vinove loze" (House of Vine), and the Radoba Museum. Radoboj is a self-sustaining place that keeps pace with contemporary trends in energy efficiency, sustainable tourism, and environmental protection. It has developed a well-organized educational hiking trail called "Putevima orhideja" (Paths of Orchids), which is unique for representing around 30 different species of wild orchids found in this area. Thanks to the thorough exploration of Strahinjščica, the entire area of this mountain is included in the largest coordinated network for nature protection in the world, NATURA 2000, which consists of the many potential Forest bathing trails that could serve as a solid foundation for developing forest therapy offerings and for profiling the location as a center for training future forest bathing guides and therapists. First, those trails must be certified by an international certification body under the authority of some of the best global certification organizations, such as ANFT, USA. Ensuring that Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) trails are certified by internationally recognized institutions is essential for safeguarding the health and safety of

participants. Certification by credible organizations guarantees that trails meet rigorous standards in environmental quality, accessibility, and therapeutic suitability. In contrast, self-proclaimed local NGOs that lack formal expertise, established protocols, or authorization from national authorities pose serious risks. Without scientific validation, evidence-based guidelines, and professional oversight, uncertified trails may fail to provide the intended health benefits and could even endanger users. For Shinrin-yoku to be a genuinely effective and safe health-promoting practice, certification must come from institutions with proven competence, international credibility, and alignment with public health and environmental standards.

By promoting forest activities, Croatia can raise awareness of the importance of environmental conservation. Forest bathing and therapy participants will likely develop a more profound respect for nature, fostering a sense of responsibility for preserving natural habitats.

The development and implementation of Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) programs must be led by organizations that include qualified healthcare professionals, primarily physicians, psychologists, and nurses, who possess additional international training both in Shinrin-yoku and in health sciences. Shinrin-yoku is, above all, a preventive health practice with measurable physiological and psychological effects on participants. It requires clinical understanding, evidence-based planning, and a commitment to safety and ethics. When programs are conducted by individuals without medical training or relevant certification, users may be exposed to serious health risks due to misapplication, misinterpretation of symptoms, or lack of proper screening and adaptation. To ensure that Shinrin-yoku serves its true purpose—promoting holistic health and well-being—its delivery must be entrusted to competent, medically-informed teams aligned with national health standards and global best practices.

Conclusion

Shinrin-yoku, as a preventive approach, has proven to be a promising method that, when applied within the health tourism framework, can significantly improve individuals' physical and mental health. Research findings suggest regular contact with nature, especially in a forest environment, can profoundly impact individual well-being. Integrating such practices into an innovative and attractive tourism product is not only a contribution to the development of sustainable tourism in the Republic of Croatia. However, it can have far-reaching positive consequences for public health, encouraging further research and promoting this natural therapeutic method. To ensure the safe, effective, and ethically sound development of Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing), this practice must remain within the framework of academic healthcare institutions or NGOs led by highly educated medical professionals. Shinrin-yoku directly influences physical and mental health, functioning as a preventive and complementary health intervention. Therefore, its design and delivery must be guided by individuals with formal clinical expertise—physicians, psychologists, and nurses—who are additionally trained in international Shinrin-yoku methodologies and protocols.

Programs developed and delivered outside this medically grounded structure, particularly by individuals lacking health education, pose significant risks to participants, including mismanagement of vulnerable populations and inadequate response to adverse reactions. Maintaining Shinrin-yoku within evidence-based, academically informed systems guarantees adherence to public health standards, clinical safety, and ethical integrity.

Furthermore, sustained investment in research and development within academic and medical frameworks can lead to innovative, customized approaches and enhanced therapeutic outcomes. Collaboration between universities, healthcare professionals, and tourism fosters interdisciplinary growth, quality assurance, and international credibility. Without this foundation, Shinrin-yoku risks being diluted into a commercial wellness trend, stripped of its scientific roots and health-promoting potential.

Shinrin-yoku holds immense potential as a pillar of sustainable health tourism, offering evidence-based

preventive benefits that align with modern healthcare goals and global wellness trends. Its power lies not in novelty but in its deep roots in nature-based healing, clinical relevance, and ability to promote long-term physical and psychological well-being. Precisely because of this high potential, Shinrin-yoku must be carefully protected - like all health-promoting discipline - from pseudoscientific misuse, opportunistic commercialization, and superficial tourist commodification.

Allowing unqualified individuals or profit-driven entities to market Shinrin-yoku as just another attraction for tourists seeking novelty undermines its scientific and therapeutic foundations and endangers public trust and user safety. To preserve its credibility, Shinrin-yoku must remain within regulated, medically informed structures that ensure quality, integrity, and responsibility. Only through such stewardship can Shinrin-yoku evolve as a respected and effective component of Croatia's health tourism strategy - and serve the true needs of both domestic users and international visitors.

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MOGUĆNOSTI KORIŠTENJA ŠUMSKE KUPKE I ŠUMSKE TERAPIJE KAO INOVATIVNIH PRAKSI U RAZVOJU ODRŽIVOG ZDRAVSTVENOG TURIZMA U HRVATSKOJ

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Sažetak

Strategijom održivog razvoja turizma do 2030. godine i drugim strateškim dokumentima planiranja, Hrvatska se obvezala transformirati svoju turističku industriju na temelju načela održivosti kao temeljne razvojne koncepcije. U tom kontekstu, razvoj zdravstvenog turizma trebao bi se temeljiti na potencijalima poput prirodnih resursa, raznolikoga prirodnog bogatstva, ekološke kvalitete okoliša i prirodnih ljekovitih čimbenika. Time se otvara prostor za proširenje ponude zdravstvenog turizma, osobito *wellness*-turizma, uvođenjem prakse poznate u Japanu kao *shinrin-yoku* ili „šumsko kupanje”, odnosno „udisanje atmosfere šume”, s dvostrukim ciljem: pružanja ekološkog protuotrova za izgaranje uzrokovano tehnološkim razvojem

i poticanja stanovništva na ponovno povezivanje sa šumama i njihovu zaštitu.

Šumsko kupanje podrazumijeva boravak u prirodi, osobito u područjima bogatim drvećem, kao osjetilno uranjanje u cilju postizanja fiziološkog i psihološkog zdravlja. Cilj je šumskog kupanja život u sadašnjem trenutku kroz uranjanje svih osjetila u prizore i zvukove prirodnog okoliša. Šumska terapija ima izraženiju usmjerenost na iscjeljenje od šumskog kupanja, jer je usmjerenost na liječenje konkretnih zdravstvenih problema kod pojedinaca i može je strukturirati vodič za šumsku terapiju, koji ima ulogu sličnu praktičaru šumske medicine. Šumska terapija ima jasniju svrhitost u odnosu na šumsko kupanje, iako obje prakse teže poboljšanju zdravlja i opće dobrobiti. Glavne komponente šumske terapije uključuju šetnje, doživljavanje šume s pomoću pet osjetila (vida, sluha, dodira, mirisa i okusa), posjete šumi, meditaciju u šumi, vježbe *Qi Gong*a, aromaterapiju, terapiju biljnim čajevima i kreativni rad s prirodnim materijalima u sklopu umjetničke terapije.

Nekoliko studija potvrdilo je fiziološke i psihološke učinke šume na zdravlje. Fiziološki učinci uključuju poboljšanja krvnog tlaka, srčane frekvencije, varijabilnosti srčanog ritma i razine kortizola, ublažavanje boli i poboljšanje funkcije dišnog sustava. Psihološki, dolazi do smanjenja depresije i anksioznosti, poboljšanja kvalitete života, raspoloženja i kognitivnih funkcija.

Potencijal za razvoj i implementaciju šumskog kupanja i šumske terapije kao inovativnih praksi u kontekstu održivoga zdravstvenog turizma u Hrvatskoj je znatan. S obzirom na to da je više od polovice njezina teritorija prekriveno šumama, Hrvatska ima jedinstven prirodni okoliš koji se može iskoristiti za dobrobit stanovnika i posjetitelja. Integracija šumskog kupanja i šumske te-

rapije u zdravstveni turizam zemlje pruža niz mogućnosti i koristi. Uvođenje šumskog kupanja i terapije kao jedinstvenih sadržaja može privući turiste usmjerene na zdravlje koji traže alternativna, holistička iskustva. Hrvatska može promovirati ove prakse kao posebnost svojeg zdravstvenog turizma, čime se privlače ekološki osviješteni putnici. Uključivanjem šumskog kupanja i šumske terapije u zdravstveni turizam Hrvatska može ojačati svoje gospodarstvo. Te prakse mogu stvoriti nova radna mjesta, poput certificiranih vodiča i terapeuta, te potaknuti lokalna poduzeća koja zadovoljavaju potrebe turista. Promicanjem aktivnosti u šumama, Hrvatska može povećati svijest o važnosti zaštite okoliša. Sudionici šumskih kupki i terapija vjerojatno će razviti dublje poštovanje prema prirodi i osjećaj odgovornosti za očuvanje prirodnih staništa. Ulaganje u istraživanje i razvoj vezan uz šumsko kupanje i terapiju može dovesti do inovativnih pristupa, prilagođenih programa i poboljšanog iskustva sudionika. Suradnja između akademske zajednice, zdravstvenih djelatnika i turističkog sektora može potaknuti napredak u ovom području. Uključivanje lokalnih zajednica u razvoj i provedbu inicijativa šumskog kupanja i terapije može stvoriti osjećaj ponosa i vlasništva. Sudjelovanje zajednice može povećati autentičnost ovih praksi, čineći ih privlačnijima turistima.