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Natural ventilation, sunlight and cleanliness can reduce infection

According to a recently published study by leading expert Dr. Richard Hobday, infections caught in buildings are a major global cause of sickness and mortality. As we spend more than 90 percent of our time indoors, the importance of a good indoor climate with fresh air, sunlight, and cleanliness is even more pertinent.

Before the development of antibiotics; ventilation, natural light, and cleanliness were the means to keep infection under control. However, the findings of Dr. Richard Hobday's research suggests that the design of buildings today is more focused on human comfort rather than health, which in worst case can cause increased sickness, diseases and mortality.

"Over the last hundred years, expert opinion has changed markedly on the airborne transmission of diseases. It has swung from belief to denial; and then begun to move back. This, in turn, has had a direct influence on the design of buildings. Currently, there are few incentives for designers to arrange lighting or ventilation to protect building occupants from airborne contagion." explains Dr. Richard Hobday.

These findings from Dr. Richard Hobday's research will be presented at the annual IARU Sustainability Science Congress in Copenhagen from the 22nd to the 24th of October, where Dr. Hobday will address sustainability from a health perspective.

Sustainability is, according to Dr. Hobday, also about creating a built environment that stimulates both body and mind. Buildings such as hospitals, schools and child care centres are places that particularly need a good and healthy indoor climate as it reduces the risk of diseases and strengthens the health, learning ability, and self-development.

The Danish child care centre the Sunhouse (Solhuset) in Hørsholm is a tangible proof that this is within reach to meet future requirements for sustainable buildings and at the same time - to provide a healthy and stimulating indoor climate. Based on the "Active House principles" -defining buildings with healthy indoor climate that minimise its energy use and environmental impact - it has become one of the most climate friendly day care centres in Denmark.

At completion in 2011 the Sunhouse managed to set new standards for sustainable child care centres. It is carbon neutral and renewable energy driven and it has tripled the amount of daylight defined by the Danish building codes. On top of all this, children have gained a nest where they can learn, live and play in harmony with nature.

The Sunhouse, is one of the VELUX Group's 21 demonstration buildings and is open for visits by the press on Friday, 24 October, where it will be possible to meet the dedicated team and see children unfolding themselves in spacious and brightened indoor environments.

Through its 21 demonstration buildings, using existing products, processes and technologies, the VELUX Group has proved that the buildings of tomorrow can actually be built today. Buildings that comply with the predicted EU building energy standards for 2020 without compromising on indoor comfort, health and well-being. That is the VELUX Group's contribution to the quest for a more healthy and sustainable future.

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About the VELUX Group

For more than 70 years, the VELUX Group has created better living environments for people around the world. Making the most of daylight and fresh air through the roof. Our product programme includes roof windows and modular skylights as well as a range of decoration and sun screenings, roller shutters, installation solutions and intelligent home controls. These products help to ensure a healthy and sustainable indoor climate. For work and learning. For play and pleasure. We work globally – with sales and manufacturing operations in more than 40 countries and around 10,000 employees worldwide. The VELUX Group is owned by VKR Holding A/S, a limited company wholly owned by foundations and family. For more information, visit www.velux.com.

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