



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

To examine how the spatial aspects of both single and shared rooms affect family-centered care in children's hospital wards.

The impact of single and shared rooms on family-centered care in children's hospitals

Curtis, P., Northcott, A, 2016 | *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. Volume 26, Issue N/A, Pages 1584-1596

Key Concepts/Context

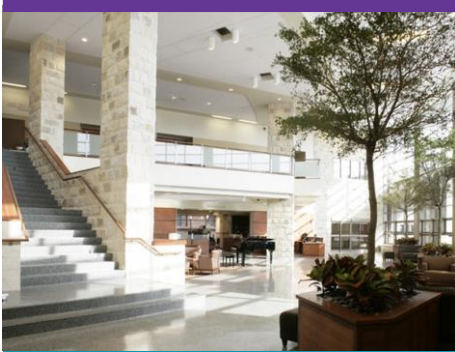
Family-centered care (FCC) is a concept used to treat children in healthcare facilities around the world. FCC is generally defined as a set of beneficial partnerships among families, patients, and providers promoting information sharing, respect and dignity, and collaboration and participation among all parties involved. As modern healthcare facilities continue to see a trend towards increased numbers of single-patient rooms, the influence of the built environment on the dynamics of FCC remains largely unstudied.

Methods

Researchers gathered qualitative data through two months of non-intrusive field observations within two surgical and two medical pediatric wards, followed by structured interviews and group discussions with 17 children (aged 5-16 years), 60 caretakers/parents, and 60 nursing and support staff. The interviews focused on participant impressions of the new single-patient room designs that would be implemented into the hospital's overall design. All observational and interview data were thematically analyzed, meaning transcripts were reread, themes were identified, and information relating to spatial aspects was emphasized.

Findings

Themes and common preferences found through analyzing observations and interviews bolster the argument that the physical design of a hospital ward can significantly impact FCC and the individual experiences of children, their families, and the medical professionals providing care. In pediatric wards, participants generally associated shared patient rooms with higher levels of social interaction and feelings of security due to the increased visibility of medical professionals, while single patient rooms were associated with isolation and boredom, both for children



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and parents. The reduction of informal monitoring that occurs when a child is in a single-patient room was of notable concern to the parents.

Limitations

The authors note that the findings in this study were derived from qualitative data from a relatively homogenous dataset of participants. The authors also note that the parental population that participated was largely comprised of parents who had the ability to stay with their children for significant amounts of time – something that other study populations may not have been capable of doing.

Design Implications

While single-patient rooms increase in popularity in a variety of medical environments, designers should consider the uniqueness of each ward with regard to its occupants' needs. Pediatric wards housing young children could benefit from some shared rooms and spaces due to the inherent sociability and visibility offered by the design. Parents may feel safer knowing their child isn't left alone in a room at any time – which is something that can be challenging with single-patient rooms.

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