



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

To review the factors that can prevent or promote the usage of green spaces in healthcare environments through a comprehensive literature review.

Accessing green spaces within a healthcare setting: A mixed studies review of barriers and facilitators

Weerasuriya, R., Henderson-Wilson, C., Townsend, M. 2018 | *HERD: Health Environments Research & Design Journal*, Volume 12, Issue 3, Pages 199-140

Key Concepts/Context

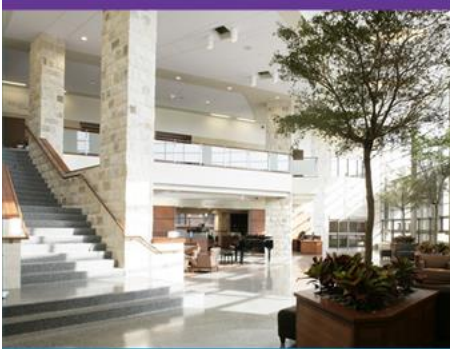
Many previous studies have described the benefits of natural environments (or “green spaces”) on overall human well-being. Healthcare providers have increasingly drawn attention to how green spaces within healthcare environments may positively affect both patients and staff. While the trend of green spaces within healthcare environments seems to be on the rise, there is a lack of comprehensive insight into how these spaces have affected different facilities over time. This form of review could help designers better understand which factors help or hinder the usage of green spaces.

Methods

The authors used medical research databases and internet search engines (particularly the first 50 search results found in Google) to find peer-reviewed English-language research concerning the usage of green spaces within healthcare environments. A total of 204 studies underwent full-text review, and thematic analysis was used to identify common themes within the studies. Qualitative and quantitative data were synthesized to produce a comprehensive summary of key findings from the summaries.

Findings

The primary themes resulting from the literature review included: 1) Awareness, 2) Accessibility, 3) Comfort, 4) Plants, flowers, trees, greenery, and colors, 5) Views into and from the green space, 6) Water features, 7) Exposure to sun, rain, fresh air, and wind, 8) Animal life, 9) Diversity of textures, heights, shapes, 10) Lawns, 11) Use of natural versus artificial material, 12) Rest areas with seating and tables, 13) Private/semiprivate enclosed spaces, 14) Playground equipment, and 15) Safety/security. The authors explored each theme in depth, highlighting how



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designers could focus on lighted pathways around and in green spaces, as well as the implementation of handrails and comfortable seating in shaded areas.

Limitations

This study was a systematic review; all data involved in this study were derived from previously published research and were interpreted through the analytical methods chosen by the authors. The authors note that their data synthesis process was overseen by a single reviewer, and that oversight from another party may have helped improve the overall quality of the analysis.

Design Implications

The literature review performed in this study indicates that the functional features, visual aesthetic, and level of accessibility all play a large role in influencing the usage of garden spaces within healthcare environments. Specific important design features that the authors noted specifically included lighted pathways, easily accessible handrails, and comfortable seating arrangements in shaded areas.

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