
REVIEW ARTICLE

Influence of Aesthetics on Health and Wellness – Hospital Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The underlying assumption was that the aesthetics of the hospital surroundings are often neglected. The aim of the articles is to throw light on the influence of aesthetics on the health and well-being of patients and the professional personnel, and to examine how aesthetic considerations are dealt with. Aesthetic health is a part of holistic health and important for wellness.

Keywords: aesthetic, influence, health, well-being, holistic health

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INTRODUCTION

"Good health and well-being require a clean and harmonious environment in which physical, psychological, social and aesthetic factors are all given due importance" – WHO, 1989

Medical health care has over the last century made enormous progress, in terms of both physical and in psychiatric treatment. The importance of a holistic focus becomes more and more evident. According to medical health care, the assumption is that Beauty, represented by aesthetic surroundings, is of vital importance, both to patients and also to the caring staff. Man has a need for beauty, aesthetic creation and aesthetic experiences and we know that it stimulates, increases health, reduces suffering and creates well-being. It seems to be a neglected area at many hospitals. Little priority is given to patient environments. Hospitals should be built to meet the requirements of the patients, relaxing, calming, and giving a sense of security, but one can ask to which degree the patient is consulted?

Webster's Dictionary defines "aesthetics as the study or theory of beauty and the psychological responses to it [1]". The term "aesthetic" is a Germanic form of the Greek term "aisthesis". The Latin term "aesthetica" can be translated as perception, sense, feeling, awareness, knowledge of the fine arts, and the standards used to understand them [2]. Aesthetics refers to all art forms as defined by the Arts Council of Ireland 2006, including visual art, dance, theatre, film, circus, and street theatre [3].

Research has shown that aesthetically pleasing surroundings can have an important effect on patient health and well-being. This has been demonstrated by the reduced use of medications, fewer infections, better sleep, improved blood pressure, and shorter admissions [4]. Aesthetic surroundings can also be stimulating for nurses and other healthcare professionals, resulting in a higher working capacity, greater job satisfaction, and fewer sick leaves [5]. Aesthetics influence a person's feelings, both physical and psychological. Both aesthetic and nonaesthetic surroundings create an impression and affect a person consciously or unconsciously [6,7]. Aesthetically pleasing surroundings will improve a person's affective condition and contribute to a feeling of well-being [4,8,9]. "Art captures expresses and recreates humanity and life, in all its diverse forms. Art is the life's spirit the soul seeks beauty! [10]. The aesthetic dimension covers a large range of concepts. It might include colours, art, and insufficient daylight, blinding light, outlook to dull surroundings, limited choices, and restricted personal space, which can all create additional stress and increase the risk of illness. Research in psychology, the health-care sciences, and medicine has provided insight into how a healing environment can be created and how it affects the body

and soul [11]. The role of aesthetics in healthcare facilities is a field that is not well understood [12]. Aesthetic deprivation can be harmful for health and well-being in clinical settings [13].

GUIDELINE FOR A THEORY ON HOW THE HOSPITAL SHOULD BE ACCORDING THE PATIENTS AND THE STAFF [12,14]

Location of the hospitals should preferably be built on open areas where nature is close and the architecture of the building should not be overwhelming.

Light is emphasized, natural light that makes it possible for the patient to see for instance the dawning of the day, the sun and the colours of the season. Subcategories are sun, daylight, electrical or artificial light, fittings and lamps. Light curtains that can filter the sunlight and bright side curtains that harmonizes with the colours in the room.

View through big windows to draw nature into the room, as they expressed it. They wished to have a view that made it possible to have access to the outer world, to see the sky, the clouds, the trees and maybe a bird, in short - the nature outside.

Nature - Plants and flowers were highly valued. Even artificial ones if it was a risk for infections. Subcategories are plants, flowers, trees, view, air, and ventilation.

Fresh air - All the different smells and odours could be both scaring sickening and heighten their worries.

Desirable Colours should be chosen according to the activity in the room. The patient room should have colours that are clear, light and friendly, not boring grey and not soup colours - as it was expressed. Subcategories of colours are walls, ceilings, floors, textiles, curtains, and furniture.

Textiles - should be inviting, soft and also harmonizing with the other colours in the room.

Furniture should have a good design, be inviting, not cold and rejecting and should not look as if it was bought on a flea-market.

The patient room - Rooms should be at a comfortable temperature, with sufficient ventilation to avoid unpleasant smells and odours, which may derive from other patients in the room.

. Subcategories are patient rooms, living rooms, external rooms, corridors, staff rooms, and bathrooms. The proportions and lines, the architecture and the colours of rooms must be harmonious.

Art - Subcategories are painting, sculpture, pictures, tapestries, decor, mosaics, and water decor. The patients appreciated paintings and pictures of nature, pictures that were not complicated, but rather soothing and comforting.

Harmony - Subcategories are properness considered as tidiness, balance, harmony, hygiene, laughter, humour, play, and entertainment. Harmony and its subcategories are all important in the context of the patient's recovery and well-being.

Food - Subcategories are appearance, colour, and service. The food must be aesthetic and tempting, served and presented in a stimulating way.

Design - Subcategories are furniture and curtains. The way furnishings are shaped and molded, the materials used, and so on, all influence the comfort and appeal of interiors. The arrangement of furnishings should be pleasant to look at, to touch, and to handle.

Sounds - Subcategories are noise, song, music, nature sounds, and irritating or unpleasant sounds.

Plants - Plants have a favorable effect on the indoor climate. It has been shown that patients with a view to vegetation or green areas from their sickbeds have shorter convalescences, fewer complications.





Rule of thumb [15]

There is a connection between people and their spatial setting. Attractive public spaces and good building sitting and design help create a sense of place and improve an individual's wellbeing. Attractive open space is restorative, providing users with a sense of surprise and reducing stress and mental fatigue.

Health care and aesthetic

The health care environment such as design, colours, art and sound are important to consider when planning for patients, healthcare providers and relatives. Patients are those who are most influenced of the healthcare environment. An aesthetic and supportive healthcare environment enhances people's capability to better cope with stress. The perception of the health-care environment is described from a patient-centered perspective. Patients express that the healthcare environment is important for interaction improvements between relatives and healthcare providers [16-18]. The effects of ward design have a positive influence on the well-being of post-operative patients [19,20]. Inappropriately designed healthcare environments on the other hand, may be a source of stress and frustration [21]. Health care design is a vital part in the healing process in order to promote positive health outcomes [22].

CONCLUSION

The everyday aesthetics of health care continues to be a relatively neglected aspect of patient care and more attention could be given to the aesthetic environment for patients. It can be said that it is an ethic duty to esteem the human dignity, to try to ease sufferance, to be aware of the fact that needs and wishes are different when you are sick. Aesthetic surroundings might be stimulating and curative. This knowledge has to be applied!

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