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CONFERENCE PAPER - APRIL 2014
DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.1222.7689

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Optimising the Healing Environment in the Public Reception Areas in Children's Hospitals Using Interior Architecture and Interior Design.



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POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2014

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Case study: Hospitals in Nablus City, Palestine.

Key Words: Healing Environment, Interior design, Interior Architecture, Design for Children, Cognitive & Perception, and Children's Hospital Design

Introduction

The importance of this study stems from the fact that few hospitals are specialized in the treatment of children in my homeland, Palestine. Most of the Palestinian children are treated in adult hospitals that lack the comfortable environment that helps lessen the level of trepidation and worry of children during their hospitalization. For example, there were no public spaces for children to play, and no consideration of the aesthetics of the environment, so that, children could forget their illness.

Literature Review

The review concentrates on three main topics:

- 1 Childrens' cognitive development and age-appropriate interior design for children.
- 2 General hospital design, children's hospital design, and the design of children's wards or wings in general hospitals.
- 3 Designing a healing environment for children: Interior architecture and interior design in the public spaces of hospitals.

From a critical analysis of these topics as well as their interrelationships, specific research questions and the development of a primary research plan were realised.

Methods

This study uses a case study methodology (Yin, 2003). The setting is in Palestine, in a public hospital, the Rafidia Surgery Hospital. Koller (2012) recommends cross cultural-studies to compare childrens' perceptions and emotional responses to hospital aesthetics and design.

Before starting to collect the data, ethics issues will be submitted according to the requirements of Lancaster University Supporting Office.

Findings & Discussion

The academic literature suggests that children's hospitals should be designed to accommodate children of all ages (Lueder and Rice, 2007). However, the children's hospital structure is still not designed to meet the specific physiological needs of children (Dilani, 2008). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence in the research that focuses on the environmental considerations related to children (Birch, 2007).

Aims

This research project investigates the design for healing environments in children's hospitals — with a particular focus on the public reception areas (i.e., atrium, reception, main entrance).

Objectives

- 1 To find out the most important considerations for interior design of the public reception areas of children's hospitals.
- 2 To find out the factors pertaining to 'healing environments' that should be brought to bear in the design of the public reception areas.

Research question

For a new children's hospital in Palestine, how should the public spaces be designed in terms of interior design and interior architecture so that they are— suitable for all age ranges?.

The problem



Outcomes

- 1 The end result of the research is to generate guidelines for the design of healing environments in childrens' hospitals.
- 2 To encourage the Palestinian Government to apply my research findings to a new children's hospital in Palestine.



Rafidia Hospital, no healing environments for children

In order to answer the research question – *For a new children's hospital in Palestine how should the public spaces be designed in terms of interior design and architecture so that they are— suitable for all age ranges?*. Three phases of research will be followed in attempting to answer the research question:

- 1 Phase one: This phase uses participant observation of behaviour and of physical traces in the atrium of an existing public hospital in Palestine as well as interviews with children, parents, doctors and nurses. (Zeisel, 2006).
- 2 Phase two: This phase uses workshops with children at schools in Palestine and gets children to look at, and take photographs and complete drawings about spaces they like.
- 3 Phase three: This phase will comprise workshops in Palestine & in the UK; the participants will be children, designers, architect, artists, and graphic designers.

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