

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**DESIGN PREFERENCES FOR
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN
IRANIAN HOSPITAL WARDS**

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ABSTRACT

There is a global need for better healthcare facilities especially in developing countries. In Iran, environmental and design facilities for healthcare spaces have gradually improved over the years. However, there is a need to review the current quality of healthcare facilities design based on inpatients and visitors feedback. There is an absence of satisfaction on the extent of comfort and quality environment provided to hospital wards. Current uncomfortable hospital wards' design does not assist to avoid stress of inpatients during hospitalisation. In addition, the use of low quality and unsustainable materials/finishes or inadequate lighting in both terms of natural and artificial sources, regardless of inpatients and visitors' preferences, may make the wards uncomfortable from a hospitalised inpatient's point of view. To explore strategies to improve the conduciveness of hospital wards, the objectives of this study were set in three stages: the first objective was to evaluate the satisfaction factors among inpatients and visitors towards the hospital wards' physical design in Iran. Secondly, this research also investigated the inpatients and visitors' preferences and perception on the physical design of hospital wards. Finally, this research proposed a schematic design guideline for a comfortable healthcare ward spaces in Iran. The third objective of the study was achieved by combining the preference of inpatients and visitors with the criteria and constraints of the hospital ward design. The specific emphasis was on the existing interior conditions of eight hospital wards in four main geographical zones in Iran. To proceed with the study, selected target groups of 400 distributed questionnaires were surveyed including namely the inpatients and their visitors, at the eight sample hospitals. Analytical tools such as Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were employed to analyse the collected data. This quantitative study identified that inpatients' level of satisfaction and comfort were affected by their visitor's preferences. Therefore, the opinions, needs and preferences of visitors were important as much as inpatients itself which should be considered by related government and relevant professionals in the healthcare system of Iran. According to the findings, this research points towards the low satisfaction level of ward users, hence, the feedbacks of inpatients and visitors are essential towards the betterment of the hospital wards. There were several differences among survey respondents' opinions based on various geographical locations of the sample hospitals although the intention of the study was not to compare the results between the locations. However, the conceptual model recommended in this study forms an essential and beneficial guide to the strengthening of design of hospital wards. Hence, proper design considerations to meet the users' needs and expectations would result in patient-friendly hospital wards, which could promote their healing process. This research indicates that the realization of best practice for quality healthcare facilities will provide brighter future for hospital wards environment in Iran.

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