

Abstract

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Healing Environments, Evidenced- Based Design, and the Need for a Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research

The traditional approach to the design of healthcare facilities has tended to focus on functionality and the effectiveness of the care delivery. It has tended, however to ignore the psychological well-being of users. Since the 1980's a growing amount of research evidence has shown that design characteristics have an impact on the psychological well-being of users in healthcare environments. In turn, improved psychological well-being was shown to influence health outcomes. The findings of this research have recently began to influence the design of healthcare settings through the adoption of an evidence-based approach. This article presents first a review of the research that has investigated the impact of physical design on the well-being of users in healthcare environments along with examples illustrating how the findings of this research has started to influence design. The article argues then for the need for hermeneutic phenomenological research to deepen the understanding that can ultimately better inform the evidence-based design of healing environments. The argument details the characteristics and the potential benefits of such a research approach.