



## KEY POINT SUMMARY

### OBJECTIVES

This study explored nursing staff members' perception of the advantages and disadvantages of single-occupancy versus multioccupancy patient rooms in medical-surgical units. The research questions guiding this study included:

1. What are the differences in operating costs, efficiency of management, care delivery, and disease control in single-occupancy and double-occupancy patient rooms in acute care settings?
2. What are the therapeutic impacts (sociobehavioral issues of patient privacy, social interaction, and daily functioning) of single-occupancy versus double-occupancy hospital rooms?

## Nurses' Perception of Single-Occupancy Versus Multioccupancy Rooms in Acute Care Environments: An Exploratory Comparative Assessment

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### Key Concepts/Context

As people are living longer and the baby boomers age, the demand for hospital beds will increase. As new facilities are built to handle this influx of patients, the challenge for hospital designers and administrators is to design patient rooms that promote therapeutic goals, foster positive patient outcomes, and function as intensive care rooms. Recent research suggests that single-occupancy rooms are more suitable for infection control and patient care than multi-occupancy rooms. However, no research has been done about nursing staff members' perception of single-occupancy and multi-occupancy patient rooms in acute care settings as it relates to patient care.

### Methods

The researchers conducted a preliminary literature review to identify key issues for a survey to solicit nurses' perceptions of the (dis)advantages of single versus multi-occupancy rooms in medical-surgical units in four hospitals.

### Findings

The authors report that the literature review revealed that single-patient rooms reduce operating costs compared with multi-occupancy rooms because of lower transfer costs, higher bed occupancy rates, and reduced labor cost. Further, said the researchers, single rooms positively impact patients' hospital experience through increased privacy, better interaction between family and staff, and reduced noise and anxiety. The pilot study, which examined nurses' perceptions of single-



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occupancy versus multi-occupancy patient rooms in medical–surgical units, revealed that respondents favored single rooms over double-occupancy rooms due to the appropriateness for patient examination, interaction with or accommodation of family members, and lower probability of dietary mix-ups. The survey results also showed that the nurses felt the most helpful environmental characteristics were the layout of the room (47%), the availability of space in the room (49%), the arrangement of furniture (47%), privacy (89%), and space for family members (51%).

### Limitations

The authors note that the review of empirical and nonempirical literature, coupled with user surveys in several hospital settings, strengthens the study design. However, findings from a case study design are inherently ungeneralizable.

### Design Implications

Although single-patient rooms have become the industry standard in the construction of new acute care facilities in the United States, environmental features of particular patient rooms are tied to room layout, size, design, and nursing-unit layout. To understand helpful or problematic features, as well as establish design priorities, designers would benefit from using the items rated as a part of this study to solicit the experiential insight of hospital staff members.