



KEY POINT SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

To determine which aspects of the waiting area patients considered important to their outpatient experience.

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Comfortable furniture and positive distractions (TV, reading material and visual art) can have a positive impact on the waiting experience and should be incorporated in the design.

Visual art can serve as a distinguishing feature in waiting environments.

Nature content (landscapes, birds and animals) may be more suited than abstracts and portraits for outpatient waiting environments.

Impact of Visual Art in Patient Waiting Rooms: Survey of Patients Attending a Transplant Clinic in Dumfries

Cusack, P, Lankston, L., Isles, C.

2010 | *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine Short Reports*
Volume 1, Issue 52, Pages 1-5

Key Concepts/Context

Waiting is a core component of the healthcare experience which can induce stress and anxiety in patients and their caregivers. In a Quality Improvement Survey conducted across nine adult renal units the clinic waiting area at Cumfries received the highest score. This study evaluates which aspects of the waiting area were important to the patients and could have impacted their satisfaction scores.

Methods

A questionnaire was posted to 44 renal transplant patients attending the renal unit in October 2009 in which patients were asked to rate seven aspects of their environment on a scale of 1 to 5 (not at all important to very important): comfy chairs, magazines and puzzle books, paintings on the wall, a 42" plasma screen TV, views from the window, potted plants and computers with internet access. Patients were also asked if they enjoyed looking at paintings and the type of art they would like to see in a clinic. Choices were landscapes/nature scenes, portraits, animals/bird paintings, abstract art or no preference.

Findings

The most highly rated feature was the comfy chairs, followed by magazines and puzzle books, plasma screen TV, paintings on the wall, views from window, computer and potted plants. Patients expressed a preference for landscapes/natural scenes, and animals/birds (more than 80%) compared to abstract paintings (27%) and portraits (24%). Authors conclude that visual art in the waiting rooms is a key differentiating factor from the other renal clinics which explain the higher rating. The authors acknowledge that that higher rating of



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Dumfries clinic compared to other clinics could be due to other design factors as well, but visual art is arguably a key component, since none of the other units designed their waiting areas to specifically display art.

Limitations

Author introduced limitations include that patients were not randomized to be followed in units with or without art, and so their finding that paintings were one of the reasons why patients rated the Dumfries clinic highly can at best be regarded as circumstantial. Their most compelling argument linking visual art as the differentiating factor is based on previous evidence in the literature on the impact of visual art.