



## KEY POINT SUMMARY

### OBJECTIVES

The study focuses on the effects of changes in physical environment of a mental health care facility on overall staff satisfaction of medical staff. The study tries to identify if improvements in attitude toward the physical environment are reflected in improved overall satisfaction for staff in the outpatient clinics of a community mental health center.

## Physical Environment and Job Satisfaction in a Community Mental Health Center

Folkins, C., O'Reilly, C., Roberts, K., Miller, S.  
1977 | *Community Mental Health Journal*  
Volume 13, Issue 1, Pages 24-30

### Key Concepts/Context

Psychological evidence suggests that behavior is affected by situational and environmental settings. The health care satisfaction with physical environment contributes to overall job satisfaction of medical staff. Physical surroundings in a community mental health center may be a mediating variable for staff morale and effectiveness. Environmental effects could have dramatic implication for mental health professionals who constantly must make decisions about patients on the basis of subjective impressions of appearance and behavior. The study deals with staff attitudes in the outpatient clinics of a community mental health center. The authors assume that staff satisfaction level influences patient care they perform. Medical staffs studied include staff who moved to a new building and staff who remained in the old building of a community mental health center.

### Methods

The study investigates staff attitudes that moved to a new mental health facility and the staff that remained in the old facility of a mental health hospital. The contrast between new physical environment and old environment was dramatic. 35 subjects responded to the survey. The composition of the staff studied in each building was very similar. Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was conducted to examine if staff perceived the differences in physical environment. The main variable in this study was job satisfaction. The Faces Scale was used to measure job satisfaction. Questionnaires and test materials were collected from staff three times over 1 1/2 years. Questionnaires were statistically evaluated.



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## Findings

- Staff who moved to a new building had higher job satisfaction.
- Overall staff satisfaction in either building did not express any significant effects.
- Different physical surroundings have differential effects on psychological states.

## Limitations

- Limitations are not described in the article.
- There can be no generalization since only two hospitals were studied.
- The study is very old- 1977. More current research should be reviewed before applying insights from the article.

## Design Implications

Design implications cannot be listed as the physical environments mentioned in the article were not described. Overall the case for linking staff satisfaction with better work environments, within the mental health context, is made.