

"HEALING THROUGH ART: ANALYZING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SCULPTURES IN HOSPITAL DESIGN"

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Healthcare space, stress level, healing, psychological effect, sculpture, behaviour, hospital design.

ABSTRACT

Healthcare facilities are incorporating sculptures because the healing power of art has been recognized for centuries. This investigation examines the effects of healthcare facility sculptures regarding their effects on patient emotions together with stress reduction and complete experience quality. Through a qualitative research framework, the investigators evaluate the various sculpture types, including abstract examples and nature depictions and human figures, to determine their ability to produce more favourable healthcare spaces for patients along with their families and employees. The researcher will combine Visual observations of selected hospital sculptures with patient interviews and caregiver interviews to evaluate both psychological and physiological reactions. This work presents evidence about how sculptures offer therapeutic potential to improve the care environment within clinical settings while showing how aesthetics supports wellbeing. This research promotes sculptures as basic elements for healthcare designs to aid emotional and psychological healing in addition to medical interventions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the role of art assisting patient wellbeing in healthcare settings has been addressed. Now sculptures have become an established form of intervention in the world's hospital and healthcare environments from amongst the many forms of art. Integration of visual art in the medical spaces, particularly hospitals, increases the relaxation of patients and alleviates the clinic atmosphere, which is generally quite clinical. The same way a patient's state of mind is being affected by environmental factors as much as medical treatment is, it is important. Sculptures can be used as an alternative way to have an environment of healing since they are a form of Aesthetic expression.

To this day, there has been a study on the impact of art on both physical and psychological effects it has on persons, and more recently the impact of sculptures in hospital spaces. The presence of art research helps reduce stress or anxiety and even may enhance a patient's mood. A sculpture of a visual appeal can detract from the often sterile and clinical environment of the hospitals that often have an abstract, nature inspired, or a sometimes even figurative sculpture. First of all, these artworks are not only visual stimulus which causes eye stimulation, allowing its viewers to stop and rest and establish emotion connection but, as well, cause its viewers to think to ponder longer.

What multiple factors qualify hospital and health care environment as beneficiaries of sculptures for its patient's well-being is investigated in a study. This is a research which investigates perceived meanings of sculptures in healthcare buildings and how people's mental

and emotional condition is affected by sculptures in healthcare buildings through qualitative interviews of healthcare staff and patients. Abstract and figurative images will get research attention respectively on how they interact with healthcare facilities' environments, and with people who are within these areas. It studies how sculptures can contribute in healthcare facilities as it provides healthcare services taking into consideration the physical as well as emotional support.

Focusing on this research, a study is made to determine how sculptures play an aesthetic role that fundamentally enlightens the hospital environment by creating space to allow patients to physically and emotionally and mentally recover and gain peace. The research objectives suggest hospitals to introduce thoughtful art-based features in design that facilitate the whole healing process of patients.

2. BACKGROUND STUDY

Over the last years healthcare professionals have noticed growing interest in implementation of art to its healthcare premises to improve patient wellness and lowering stress simultaneously and enhancing healthcare experience (Ulrich, 2001; Daykin et al., 2008). Compared with forms of art structures, with their unique position to effect the emotional and psychological reactions of patients through a direct impact on the physical artistic experience, stand alone as the best suited form of art structures able to change the look and feel of a hospital. However, the sculptures can be differentiated from paintings and digital artworks as sculptures bring physical three dimensionality to the hospital environment, which are focal points that help patients to have better environmental perception with better comfort levels (Nanda et al., 2010).

Art in Healthcare Spaces: A Historical Perspective

Religious buildings are since ancient times provided with sculptures and architectural parts as part of healing temples and worship sites (Malchiodi, 1999). The Greeks and Romans cooperated with beliefs of the medicinal beauty; their healthcare facilities had statues of the Greek god Asclepius and other such deities (Gorini, 2007). As hospitals adopted cartoon during the Renaissance times, artwork was used as a mode to create awareness of peace and divinity (through commissioned artwork) (Dileo & Bradt, 2009). Modern hospital design is based on the patient centered framework since the healthcare professionals have realized the role environment play in therapeutic recovery and psychological health (Ulrich et al., 2008).

Sculptures are useful to healthcare facilities due to their capacity to conduct and facilitate physical spatial interactions as well as unmediated tactile engagement. According to the research of Parsons and Hartig (2011), three dimensional artwork utilised for intense mental processing combined with emotional versions, result in mental comfort. Paintings are different to the sculptures, as sculptures welcome people to walk around them with different program of viewings. As mentioned by the authors in Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) in their Preference framework, viewing ones surroundings organized and were full of mystery and visual elements makes the environment interesting enables the patient to move emotionally.

Sculptures as Focal Points in Hospital Design

Sculpture placements within a healthcare facility are used to further provide directional signage as well as aesthetics of interior design. Usually those that hospitals select sculptures just end up in reception areas, gardens and waiting rooms because they work as directional elements for visitors in their way through complex settings (Dalke et al., 2006). According to Cochrane et al. (2012), play supporting emotional health can be provided by interactive sculptures in

pediatric and psychiatric healthcare areas because such sculptures engage people and reduce their feelings of isolation when engaging.

There are several studies that many sculptures that resemble trees and water elements and animals to form biophilic relationships in people that decrease stress (Kellert & Wilson, 1993). The theory of biophilic design indicates that people have naturally a desire to experience nature (Ulrich et al., 2008), and therefore, art in hospital with organic elements can positively perturb patient experience.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on qualitative approach in order to evaluate the importance of sculptures in hospital environments along with treating better patients through healthcare facilities. The visual analysis is complemented by additional interviews, and observational methods to find out how sculptures affect psychological states and emotional responses of patients, as well as healthcare personnel and building visitors in hospital environments.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative methodology is used by the research in order to carry out detailed analyses on personal reactions to healthcare settings sculptures or reactions of hospital patients on the emotional level. Since the chosen method provides researchers with an opportunity to get to the personal interpretations that people associate with art, in particular, in healthcare related environments.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Semi structured interviews done with 2 primary groups of patients as well as healthcare professionals (nurses, doctors, and administrators). The aim is to record different points of view about the emotional reaction to sculptures. The sculptures will be evaluated and participants will be asked how they think the art makes them feel and if they find the sculptures helpful in reducing stress, anxiety, or discomfort. Thematic analysis will be conducted on the audio recorded interviews.

Observation and Analysis of the selected hospital environments with the use of sculptures. The analysis will discuss the placement, style, and types of the sculptures and, how the sculptures were done within the space. Pictures of the sculptures and the surrounding part of the healthcare institution will also be taken to produce a visual idea of how these works of art affect the immediate atmosphere of the healthcare setting. To gain insight into how the materials and design of the sculptures might affect the viewer's emotional response, the visual analysis will also take into consideration the sculptures visual design.

Fieldwork will be performed to observe interactions of patients, visitors, and healthcare staff with sculptures in these spaces. Behaviours to be observed would include engagement with the sculptures; body language, and verbal comments on the art. Field notes will be taken of observations and patterns can be identified within interactions and engagement.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

With an eye toward how sculptures in healthcare settings affect patient well-being, the framework provided by Kaplan and Kaplan's Preference Framework is a useful tool. It brings

forth four important characteristics for the way people react and perceive their environment: coherence, complexity, legibility and mystery.

3.4 Objectives

- It is proposed to question the opinion on the impact of sculptures on patient emotional well-being and stress levels in hospital and healthcare spaces.
- It was to examine the contribution of sculptures towards making a healthcare space overall ambience better and to create a healing environment.
- To determine the perceptions and experiences of patients and health care professionals regarding the value of sculptures in enhancing the patients' healthcare experience.

4. INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Qualitative data collected through interviews, visual analysis and observation can be interpreted using Kaplan and Kaplan's Preference Framework to highlight the psychological impact of coherence, complexity, legibility and mystery of environmental factors on emotional and mental wellbeing. The study uses this framework to explore how sculptures in hospital and healthcare environments can transform spaces that are more than visually stimulating, but psychologically restorative to patients and visitors.

Coherence (Order and Organization in the Environment):

In the healthcare space the patterns of the sculptures often followed one of design that would contribute to coherence in the environment. For instance, a lot of sculptures were placed in strategic locations in public areas to serve as lens to focus the patient's orientation and a calming influence. Both patients and healthcare professionals found the clear integration of art into the space to relieve the space from feeling clinical and more organized. Creating visible, high traffic sculpted areas provided a feeling of order by showing that the environment of the patient was designed and chosen for, helping patients feel safe and emotionally stable.

Complexity (Visual Interest and Engagement):

There was demand for complex works of sculpture that, because of their complexity, engaged the patient and served as a wonderful chance for distraction. Patients stated that they experienced more peace when they were able to see the sculpture visually and that they often found peace in the diversity and depth of forms that it showed. Whether the representation of abstract shapes or detailed natural ones, these sculptures had the complexity that was able to distract patients' attention while patients were losing their attention on often stressful hospital experience. Actually, patients mentioned that such artworks are beneficial because they can focus on something other than his illness and in this way help decrease anxiety and make the experience more soothing.

Legibility (Clarity and Easy Navigation):

One of the trending themes observed was the way sculptures increased the overall legibility of healthcare space. The sculptures were not only aesthetically superficial, but they also served to further define a space, give direction for movement, and to function as landmarks. In busy hospitals, sculptures served as visual cues, crossing between patients and visitors in their general movement through different parts of the hospital. The presence of sculptures alleviated the spaces thereby creating a familiar and less intimidating feel and also helped health care professionals to regard them as a welcome atmosphere. The feeling of emotional comfort and

ease of orientation provided by the clear placement of sculptures diminished confusion and disorientation that is common in hospital settings.

Mystery (Curiosity and Reflective Engagement):

In many sculptures, there were mystery elements that caused people to wonder and ponder. For example, viewers were invited to interpret the art in their own ways, and as such, to engage in moments of contemplation, with abstract or contemporary sculptures. These sculptures were thought-provoking to patients and visitors alike, incorporating something for them to take their mind off where and when they were to what they were feeling at that moment, a more reflective experience. The sense of mystery created a connection with the artwork on an emotional level, which increased one's emotional wellbeing. Introspective moments in this clinical environment provided psychological relief for a patient for the time it takes for them to pass through the place.

4.1 Discussion:

Research finds that sculptures in healthcare spaces effectively have a meaning role in patients' emotional and psychological experience, a role within the ecological entity of the patients, healthcare professionals and visitors through the application of Kaplan and Kaplan's Preference Framework. Far from being an aesthetic integration that serves no function beyond adding decoration to these environments, sculptures simultaneously integrate into these settings on a therapeutic level as well, congruent with the results of past work on the benefits of art in health care settings.

Sculptures as emotional support and stress reduction:

It was found from the research that sculptures have a role to play in creating relaxation and a reduction in stress. When in patients' presence, the sculptures of visually engaging visual aspects serve to reduce the patients' anxiety. Many of the sculptures were complex, natural themes thereby allowing patients to mentally disengage from the clinical environment and decrease their stress levels. This is consonant with prior literature on art's positive affective benefits including its ability to reduce anxiety and create feelings of comfort.

The Role of Art in Creating a Healing Environment:

Inclusion of sculptures to entire healthcare design allows the environment to promote healing. When patients interact with art (whether you are painting, sculpting, photographing or observing art), it gives them a break from the monotony of treatment or the discomfort that relates to a condition or affliction. Hospital spaces that are more welcoming and less intimidating are made more possible with the incorporation of sculptures. It's the idea that art, used carefully in hospitals, can make sterile spaces feel more humane, have more human feeling, support the physical and the emotional recovery.

The Impact on Patient and Visitor Experience:

Sculptures used in this way made patients and visitors more at ease in the hospital environment. The ability for patients to focus on an aesthetically appealing and soothing something helped provide the distraction from the stress that accompanies the patient's medical condition. For visitors, sculptures gave a warm and welcoming feel which would help to soothe the emotional effects of visiting loved ones in hospital. It implies that sculptures are part of a larger movement

towards holistic healthcare design that emphasizes over just physical health, this also take into account one's mental and emotional health.

Engagement and Reflection:

Sculptures, especially abstract or unique ones, enabled moments of personal reflection to patients and healthcare workers creating a 'mysterious' sense. Individuals had a chance to briefly break away from their daily drudgery by being able to interact with the art they were experiencing. This is in line with theories about psycho psychology that art can give catharsis and emotional release for times of stress and illness. Sculptures were not only visually but psychologically respite, as they were able to generate emotional engagement, and the reflective nature of the sculptures made them powerful tools in the healthcare environment.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, human wellbeing was examined within hospital and healthcare by exploring the effects of sculpture through interviews, observation, and visual analysis, using Kaplan and Kaplan's Preference Framework. Sculptures are found to be important in transforming healthcare environments in a pleasant and emotionally supportive way and this is the subject of this research. The study demonstrates how through the framework's four key elements coherence, complexity, legibility, and mystery sculptures reduce stress and enhance orientation and contribute to patient and visitor experience in moments of engagement and reflection.

Sculpture place in a coherent manner helped to achieve an order and stability within hospital spaces, escaping the impression of intimidating surroundings. It provided patients with visual stimulation in the form of complexity in design for a pleasant distraction from their medical concerns. Sculptures that were legible navigated and offered a comfort within an environment of healthcare. Thirdly, abstract or thought provoking sculptures' mystery allowed emotional engagement for patients as it provided an escape from stress and anxiety on an emotional level.

Apart from being functional aesthetic art, sculptures were indeed therapeutic; they would create an environment conducive to both physical and emotional healing. They also understood their influence on the overall ambience of hospitals, which degrades them from being clinical to some degree humanized. The significance of the study is just that: to integrate artistic elements into design of healthcare and the offer of sculptures as more than merely decoration; something that speaks to the emotional well-being.

This increasing emphasis on holistic, patient-centred healthcare spaces have created room for sculptures, other visual arts, in further evolving healthcare spaces. Art is a future research study to examine how long term art can affect patient recovery or how cultures influence art in healthcare. This study therefore concludes with the fact that this should all be thought through in terms of how the hospitals are designed to accommodate not only medical attention, but also emotional resiliency; this way the healing process will be more supportive and comfortable always.

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