

Revisiting Hospital Ward Design Basics for Sustainable Family Integration

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Abstract : The concept of space and function forms the bedrock for spatial configuration in architectural design. Thus, the effectiveness and functionality of an architectural product depends their cordial relationship. This applies to all buildings especially to a hospital ward setting designed to accommodate various complex and diverse functions. Health care facilities design, especially an inpatient setting, is governed by many regulations and technical requirements. It is also affected by many less defined needs, particularly, response to culture and the need to provide for patient families' presence and participation. The spatial configuration of the hospital ward setting in developing countries has no consideration for the patient's families despite the significant role they play in promoting recovery. Attempts to integrate facilities for patients' families have always been challenging, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where accommodation for inpatients is predominantly in an open ward system. In addition, the situation is compounded by culture, which significantly dictates healthcare practices in Africa. Therefore, achieving such a hospital ward setting that is patient and family-centered requires careful assessment of family care actions and transaction spaces so as to arrive at an evidence based solution. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify how hospital ward spaces can be reconfigured to provide for sustainable family integration. In achieving this aim, a qualitative approach using the principles of behavioral mapping was employed in male and female medical wards of the Federal Teaching Hospital (FTH) Gombe, Nigeria. The data obtained was analysed using classical and comparative content analysis. Patients' families have been found to be a critical component of hospital ward design that cannot be undermined. Accordingly, bedsides, open yards, corridors and foyers have been identified as patient families' transaction spaces that require design attention. Arriving at sustainable family integration can be achieved by revisiting the design requirements of the family transaction spaces based on the findings in order to avoid the rowdiness of the wards and uncoordinated sprawl.

Keywords : caregiving, design basics, family integration, hospital ward, sustainability

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