



A Multidimensional Framework for Assessing Patient Room Configurations

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: A framework for multidimensional assessment of patient room configurations is presented. Twenty-three issues are considered and categorized under six domains of assessment: (1) patient safety, (2) staff efficiency, (3) circulation, (4) infection control, (5) patient considerations, and (6) family amenities. Use of the framework to rank issues by importance and assess six alternative patient room configurations by a diverse group of experts in a symposium is described.

Background: One of the key questions posed during inpatient room design is the location of the bathroom. What issues are affected by the variations in room configuration that arise from bathroom location? A completed articulation of the issues that potentially are affected by room configuration is not available in the literature.

Framework: The list of issues was developed by the authors in preparation for a symposium. The symposium was organized in May 2007 and attended by 14 experts from four institutions. Six alternative room configurations were used. Variations in the configurations included: (1) three same-handed and three mirror-image rooms; (2) three outboard, two inboard, and one nested bathroom; and (3) three rooms with footwall bathrooms and three with headwall bathrooms. In a four-step process, the attendees ranked the issues, discussed them in detail, rated each room configuration against each issue on a seven-point suitability scale, and conducted an overall assessment of the six configurations.

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Conclusions: Based on the ratings and rankings provided by the symposium participants, outboard bathroom locations were found to be most suitable, followed by nested and inboard configurations. Furthermore, configurations with patient bathrooms located on the footwall were rated as more suitable than headwall locations. The authors recommend, however, that the framework be used to determine a suitable room configuration in a specific context, rather than to identify configurations that will perform well universally.

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