Preferences for Photographic Art Among Hospitalized Patients With Cancer

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Alternative and complementary therapies may increase patient satisfaction, wellbeing, and outcomes and may be beneficial during extended stays. Music therapy, art therapy, massage therapy, meditation, and relaxation have helped many people with cancer (American Cancer Society, 2012). Complementary therapies have been evaluated with the cancer population, but little is known about the specific impact of photography (Geue et al., 2010; Oncology Nursing Society, 2009).

Many hospitals now provide patients with meditation rooms and healing gardens. Thoughtfully selected artwork, including photographs, paintings, prints, and sculptures, also are found on display throughout hospitals. Although many patients and visitors can take advantage of walking outside, patients with cancer, by virtue of their decreased white blood cell counts, often are prohibited the benefits of communing with nature.

Photography, however, may be one way for patients to experience the benefits of nature. In addition, although fewer patients with cancer require hospitalization at the current study facility, those that do typically are hospitalized for extended stays. The researchers of the current study have noted that, during those stays, the patient’s quality of life (QOL) and experience of the hospital environment become vitally important. Nightingale (1860) wrote about the significance of the environment for its impact on physical health, mental health, and recovery. She recognized that to regain health, people need adequate ventilation, odor reduction, and windows for natural light and outdoor views. Nightingale (1860) believed that integrating the natural environment with views of the outdoors was a strategy to improve human comfort.

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