



Assessing the Importance of Hospital Gowns During Hospitalization

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the importance of hospital gowns during hospitalization thus to provide references for designing hospital gowns that better meet the needs of patients. To achieve this overall objective, this study investigates the function and aesthetic needs of patients from the aspects of physical experience and psychological experience, involving the attributes of style, fabric, pattern, structure and so on.

Keywords: Hospital gowns, Apparel design, Hospitalization, Patients

Introduction

Hospital gowns refer to the apparel worn by patients during physical examination or treatment in the hospital, which plays a protective role for patients, facilitating contact with patients' bodies, cleaning and management [1]. Previous studies have shown that hospital gowns can effectively prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses in the medical process, keeping patients and medical staff from infection [2]. In addition, hospital gowns with the attributes of soft and breathable fabric, and easy to put on and off can not only make the patients more comfortable during treatment, but also promote the treatment operation of medical staff, which will greatly improve the patient's satisfaction with hospital gowns [3]. Therefore, based on the idea of people-oriented design, some scholars have put forward corresponding solutions for designing attributes of the hospital gowns, including pattern, fabric, style and function. For instance, Kwon et al. analyzed the color and patterns of Korean hospital gowns, and proposed two hospital gowns pattern design schemes that can meet the patient's aesthetic needs and improve emotional safety and stability [4]; Frankel et al. redesigned the apparel prototype based on the actual situation of patients, and developed a patient access linen system (PALS) that can ensure the privacy of patients as much as possible

and is easy for inspection, which has won the satisfaction of most patients [5]. Existing studies have shown that patients pay more attention to the attributes of hospital gowns like comfort, simplicity and privacy during hospitalization. In order to further specify the improvement direction of hospital gowns design, this study conducted a questionnaire to carry out a survey of patients' needs for hospital gowns design during hospitalization, so as to provide reference for the design of hospital gowns that can better meet the needs of patients.

Data Collection

In order to find out the attributes of hospital gowns patients are concerned about; this study applied a combination method of literature analysis and interviews. First, the results of relevant literature [6-11] were analyzed to preliminarily refine the concerning attributes. Then, the interview was compiled based on these attributes, and the semi-structured interview method was used to investigate the patients. The selection principles of interviewees are as follows:

- a. Interviewees have more than 1 month's hospitalization experience to ensure that they are familiar to hospital gowns.

b. Interviewees have sober cognition and judgment ability and participate in the survey voluntarily to offer authentic and effective information.

c. The number of male and female interviewees is close to half to reduce the interference of gender factors.

Accordingly, 14 males and 17 females were recruited as the interviewees. During the interview, the patients were provided with 20 common hospital gowns as references, and 1-2 of them were selected as the basis to the questions to obtain effective interview results.

The Importance of Hospital Gown Attributes

Concerning attributes of the hospital gowns were initially

determined from three aspects: function, effect and appearance through the analysis of relevant literature. Furthermore, these three aspects were divided into 18 specific attributes, including safety protection, convenience, warmth retention, anti-fouling, moisture absorption, anti-allergy, bacteriostasis, wrinkle resistance, anti-static, washing and wear resistance, identification, size, workmanship, structure, silhouette, color and pattern. Then, the patient's interview information was combined to further confirm whether the patient is concerned about these attributes of hospital gowns. Finally, by summarizing and analyzing the relationship between the attributes of hospital gowns, the attributes patients most concern about and the importance of each attribute were determined (Table 1).

Table 1: The importance of the attributes.

| Attributes | Description | Percentage (number) |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| Function | Attribute of easy to wear and move, convenient for daily cleaning, durability, anti-bacterial, anti-fouling and anti-static. | 83.87%(26) |
| Effect | Attribute of fit size and fine workmanship with no excess thread. | 87.09%(27) |
| Structure | Attribute of the suitable pocket height and size and humanized opening of plackets and cuffs, which can effectively cover other parts of the body during the examination. | 90.32%(28) |
| Texture | Attribute of soft and comfortable fabric. | 80.64%(25) |
| Silhouette | Attribute of wrinkle resistance and suitable style. | 83.87%(26) |
| Pattern | Attribute of simple, fresh and high-quality patterns, which provide a comfortable visual experience. | 96.77%(30) |
| Color | Attribute of harmonious color matching. | 61.29%(19) |

As is shown in Table 1, patients are most concerned about three attributes of the hospital gowns, namely comfort and fitting effects, coverage and privacy protection, and visual aesthetics. Firstly, most patients express that the comfort and fitting effect of hospital gowns greatly affect the feeling and convenience. Some patients expect hospital gowns with comfortable and breathable fabrics, simple structures and various types to meet the needs of various patients facing different medical situations. Secondly, the coverage and privacy protection by hospital gowns are closely related to the patient's experience of dignity and security, as well as their confidence in medical care. Most patients hope that the hospital gowns are easy to use while ensuring coverage of their body as much as possible. It can effectively protect personal privacy during the treatment. For example, patients having breast examination expect to not expose all of their upper body. Patients experiencing anal examination expect to avoid taking off all of their pants. Patients just completing surgery expect not to lie naked on the operating table. Almost all patients expect that the hospital gowns can be adjusted, and at the same time meet the accessibility of inspection and treatment. Besides, most patients even believe that the aesthetic feeling of hospital gowns directly determine patients' preference and emotions. Some patients expect more types of hospital gowns for selection, with specific points in the design to facilitate patient identification and specific styles can be

personalized according to the needs of different patients.

Conclusion

In the medical process, patients often suffer from anxiety and fear caused by the pain of the disease, and are influenced by long-term passive treatment, resulting in negative feelings. Physical rehabilitation is the primary goal of any hospitalization, but the psychological and emotional health of patients should not be marginalized, since these factors are equally important for the treatment outcomes of patients. As a long-term contact equipment for patients during the treatment process, hospital gowns can directly affect their emotions and medical experience and can also effectively buffer patients' negative feelings about the medical environment. This study investigated the attention and needs of patients on the style, fabric, pattern, structure, and other aspects of hospital gowns. It clarified the importance of hospital gowns during hospitalization and provided reference for designing hospital gowns that can better meet the needs of patients. For example, in the future innovative development of hospital gowns, designers should design the structure of hospital gowns specifically based on the actual use of patients, considering both the convenience of use and the effective coverage of the body. In terms of the appearance design of hospital uniforms, designers need to focus on the preferences of the most patients, conduct design solutions that are

popular with the most patients, and innovate niche hospital gowns designs based on the favor of the most patients, providing patients with options to make and meeting their needs as much as possible.

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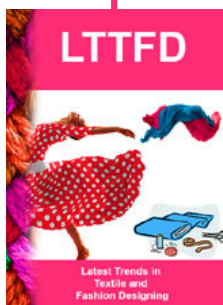


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