


Assessment of Medical Ward Bathrooms and Toilets in RIPAS Hospital, Brunei Darussalam

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Dear editor: Bathrooms and toilets are potentially hazardous places for the elderly and people living with dementia. Environmental considerations are considered important in order to reduce risk of falls and injuries. A study performed in a large tertiary hospital showed that the majority of inpatient falls were elimination related, particularly if mobilized unassisted at night.¹ In the studied hospital, there was an observed increase in dependent old patients admitted to the medical wards. This fact highlights the importance of identifying the factors influencing falls and eventually reducing them.^{2,3}

An assessment of ward bathrooms and toilets was done for the four main medical wards in RIPAS Hospital, Brunei Darussalam. The Hospital Environment Audit Tool from Victoria was used for this assessment.⁴ It contains 16 questions; of which seven are general questions, five are specifically toilet questions and four questions are specifically for showers.

The majority (75%) of bathroom and toilet doors were not clearly marked. There were no nightlights outside the bathrooms, or glow-in-the-dark paints to indicate light switches. None of the mirrors were able to be covered, which may cause problems for patients with behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

All of the toilets had height-adjustable commodes, which were secure and sturdy. None of the toilet seats had contrasting colors to the toilet bowls or floors. Only 50% had the toilet paper positioned within easy reach from the toilet. While all toilets had emergency call-bells, 75% were not working and 50% were not within easy reach for patients.

All the bathrooms with showers on the wards were spacious. However, there were no suitable receptacles to place soap, shampoo and washers. None had clothing hooks and towel rails that were accessible from the seated position. Half had shower chairs to sit on during showering; however, they were all located too far from the shower

head. Water from taps were all cold, no heaters were used.

In conclusion, several areas of improvement were identified for the toilets and bathrooms on the medical wards in the studied hospital. These should be improved to reduce fall risk and facilitate independent toileting and showering, particularly for the elderly. It is worth mentioning that bathrooms and toilets should be considered in non-medical wards and toilets for public or staff use.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

All authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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