EXAMINATION OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN CRITERIA OF HOSPITAL GARDENS WITH THE EXAMPLE OF SELCUK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL FACULTY HOSPITAL

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Abstract

Nowadays, while the importance people attach to their health is increasing, there has emerged a need for designing the hospital gardens as an attentive landscape space since hospitals have turned into a living space not only for patients and their relatives, but also for medical personnel. This research depends on the examination of surveys results and those results’ evaluation in terms of designing the criteria for landscape architecture. The survey was conducted so that the Konya Selçuk University Medical Faculty hospital garden could be designed/revised to fulfill the need of the patients, and the patients’ relatives and medical personnel, who are using the garden intensely and also to improve the visual quality by randomly choosing 104 people to make inquiries of. This research was also conducted in order to reveal the current situation and thus, determine the needs.

Keywords: Healing Garden, Hospital Garden Design, Landscape Design, Konya/Turkey

Introduction

It is known that people throughout history have used the natural environment for various purposes, including good health. According to Lunduguist (2000), gardens, in world legends, are described as safe places/shelter where people choose to rest, be guarded, and heal themselves while they are in pain and grief (Bulut and Göktuğ, 2006).

Pediatric hospital gardens may attract several groups of visitors. The restorative effect of nature spaces have been studied for parents and well, hospitalized children and staff (Pasha et al. 2013).

Those who were occupied with medicine in its early stages understood the curative effect of places, which are peaceful, comfortable, and not only provide spiritual satisfaction, but also embrace the healing method directed towards both belief and spiritual status (Sakıcı et al. 2013).

The first recorded data of the incidence of ‘horticultural therapy’ was around 1600 after Christ. This happened when poor people who weren’t able to pay their hospital bills so they were made to work in the gardens to pay it off. Due to their working in garden it was...
noticed that the patients who were working in the garden as well as those who had a view of the gardens recovered quicker than other patients who had no contact with the gardens (Aslam et al. 2016)

Community gardens, “single pieces of land gardened collectively,” have demonstrated multifaceted public health benefits. Recent meta-analyses and empirical studies have shown that community gardens are capable of increasing fruit and vegetable intake, providing a venue for increased physical activity, lowering Body Mass Index and blood pressure in adults and children and treating chronic diseases. Community gardens have also improved neighborhood social capital by fostering intergenerational and cross-cultural interactions, enabling the sharing of food production knowledge, improving neighborhood aesthetics, decreasing crime, and increasing property values. Given these diverse benefits, gardens would appear to be infrastructural assets for hospitals and Academic Health Centers, which are evolving within a changing healthcare system (George et al. 2015).

Hospitals outer space features and designs have not only a positive effect on patients, but also have a key role in the process of healing patients in spiritual, physical and social ways (Karakaya and Kipper 2011).

According to Ulrich (1999), the positive effect of hospital gardens -which are designed professionally- on patients, companions, and personally can be asserted in the following way;

A) The patients who look at the scenery and walk around well-organized gardens feel less pain than the groups who take strong painkillers such as analgesic. In addition, when patients who stay in rooms with a view of nature are compared to the patients who stay in rooms looking at four walls, it was seen that the former group was discharged from hospitals sooner, and the possible complications (headaches, and nausea) that may emerge after surgery were reduced.

B) Recovery gardens provide a significant economic contribution considering the decrease in the drug usage among patients, the increased efficiency of personnel, and the pleasure of patient and companion.

C) The recovery gardens turn the institutions, which involve intense competition, into a positive outdoor market situation by increasing both the communication between personnel and patient and also the business quality of people who are always exposed to intense pressure, such as directors, personnel, and nurses.
D) Furthermore, a lot of research that has been carried out on this subject has proved that gardens and nature support the increase in the satisfaction of both patients and their families. Those studies that are based on observations also show that hospital gardens increase the satisfaction of medical officers, and this may become an advantage in recruiting qualified personnel (Bulut and Göktaşoğlu 2006).

Materials and Methods

The research material consisted of the Selçuk University Medical Faculty Hospital, which is located in Konya province, Selçuklu town. A survey was conducted relating to the patients and the Selçuk University Medical Faculty Hospital gardens through visiting that hospital. The hospital’s pros and cons in terms of landscaping and also the level of consumer satisfaction concerning this garden were examined and revealed through the use of surveys. The conclusions and solutions were made accordingly. Furthermore, the parks were visited, and photographs were taken of the places that were thought necessary for the study. Also, during the survey, faculty members from department of landscape architecture were consulted.

Method;

The operation mode generally consisted of 4 stages. Those stages are as follows:

Literature research and data collection: In this stage, the data within the scope of the hospital gardens and the criteria of the landscape design of those gardens was collected.

Detection of research area’s current situation (Findings): The Selçuk University Hospital garden was visited and the necessary photographs were taken. The survey questions were organized accordingly.

Survey study: The patients who were staying at the Selçuk University Medical Faculty Hospital, the patient relatives and medical personnel, completed a surveyed about the garden landscape on different days of both weekdays and weekends. The survey study continued for 2 weeks. Since the research area was a hospital and people in there were not always available, the survey was conducted with 104 contacts only.

General evaluation – bringing forward a solution: Appropriate conclusions and solutions according to the criteria of the landscape architecture design and survey study for the hospital garden are put forward.
Findings

Selçuk University Medical Faculty Hospital:

Six operating rooms have been put into service since February 2009, and the hospital expanded to accommodate patients on two more floors. The official launch date of the hospital was December 17, 2010. The hospital has 130,000 square meters indoor space and 160,000 square meters open space, and it has a 934 persons’ in impatient bed availability.

The hospital is located at the Selçuk University campus, in the Konya province, Selçuklu town.

Survey Study

One hundred and four (104) persons, who consisted of 23 medical personnel, 44 patients, 34 relatives of patients, participated in the survey study. All the participants were asked the same questions about the hospital garden. Those questions consisted of how much time they spent in the hospital garden, for how long they had been at the hospital, the sufficiency of the hospital garden, the sufficiency of the sitting areas in the garden, whether the hospital garden was noisy or silent, the most and least admirable places in the hospital gardens, and any possible areas that participants would like to add or remove.

According to the survey results,

78% of the participants did not think that the size of the hospital garden was sufficient, and 22% of them were the hospital personnel (all personnel). That shows us that the personnel who spend almost all of their day in indoor spaces are not experiencing the well-designed landscape areas in their free time.

43% of the participants found the sitting areas in the hospital garden while the 57% didn’t/ as shown in Figure 1, the indoor pergola areas are the places where patient relatives spend most of their time.

71% of the participants thought the region of the hospital garden was noisy while 29% thought it was quiet.

57% of the participants felt in touch with nature while spending time in the garden. However, 43% of the participants did not by it emphasizing their discomfort about the hard soil floor areas being more abundant than the grass areas.

The factors that were most liked by participants about the hospital garden were the entrance area to the chief physician, the width of the garden, and the closed pergola sitting areas on the edges, as one can see in Figure 2.
The factors that were least liked by participants were neglect, the majority of coniferous plants, simplicity, lack of an entrance and exit for disabled people and the appearance of artificiality rather than natural.

If they had the chance to design the hospital garden, they would add a pharmacy, indoor sitting areas, a playground, a decorative pool and entrance for disabled people. One of the most wanted things in the hospital garden was a still water surface/ decorative pool.

If they had the chance to design the hospital garden, they would remove sculptures, the litter bin, and the open sitting areas. A sitting area under shade is badly needed in that area.

Conclusion

According to the survey results, it can be seen that the Selçuk University Medical Faculty hospital garden falls short in some criteria regarding landscape design. Even though the size of the hospital garden seems enough in comparison with the other hospitals in Konya, it was determined that the neglect of wide and green areas, and lack of botanic material and sitting areas, decay of urban furniture, and botanic life being monochrome color and mostly coniferous, were the recognized negative features.

The hospital garden needs new usage (closed sitting areas, a playground, and entrance for disabled people) and flowers that change colors over the four seasons, and impressive trees with multicolored leaves that are appropriate for the landscape design and esthetics in terms of visual quality.

While gardens had been used in the service of health care for centuries, modern medicine, beginning in the early 20th century, disregarded their therapeutic value. In recent years, however, there has been a resurgence of interest in the contribution to healing provided by outdoor garden environments in healthcare facilities (Yücel 2013).

The benefits of gardens in health-care facilities may be limited by various factors. The first of these is lack of information on a garden’s location, accessibility and purpose: hospital staff should be educated as to its purpose and users, and on how to make use of it in patient and family care; and continual feedback to staff from users is essential. To ensure that patients and their visitors are aware of the garden and can access it, colorful brochures with pictures, information, and maps should be distributed, and posters about it put up in frequented areas such as elevators. Other limiting factors may include lack of sensitivity to patients’ specific mobility needs; disturbing sensory stimuli (e.g. noise and allergic pollens);
lack of facilities for competing user needs (such as the wish to smoke or the desire for fresh air); and ambiguous design elements (Yücel 2013).

Moreover, it is important to evaluate whether healthcare-based gardens are cost-effective and can improve patient outcomes. It is possible that greater patient exposure to green spaces may contribute to decreased recovery time, improved quality of life, and increased satisfaction with medical care (George et al. 2015).

If the designed garden, the patients’ and personnel’s needs are not ignored, and the necessary improvements are provided, a more functional and esthetic garden design can emerge.

References


