



# CHAPTER

# 11

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## CONCLUSION

## 11.1 CONCLUSION

This dissertation set out to improve the conditions of healthcare environments through the use of evidence-based theories as a design tool. The aim was to achieve an optimal healing environment that highlights the importance of healing as equal to curing. An optimal healing environment is then one that does not compromise patients, and their needs and comfort, through the numbing environment of hospitals. It is surroundings that stimulate and inspire. The design of spaces that are sensory rich and light flooded overcomes the perception that rules and regulations must restrict design. This dissertation demonstrates that ideal spaces can be designed according to regulations. It also serves to strengthen the relationship between patient well-being and design through a tangible and meaningful representation of the research on optimal healing environments. This then enables the patient to leave with a lasting positive impression of a space that is associated with healing.

## 11.2 CONTRIBUTIONS

- This dissertation demonstrates the vital role of the interior designer in the healthcare sector.  
Interior designers are trained to consider the user, object and space interface intently. This is critical in a space like a hospital where materials, furnishings, lighting and textures can have a huge impact on the healing of patients.
- The use of evidence-based theory is a strong reinforcement of the great impact design decisions can have on an individual.  
Through the use of EBT this dissertation ensures that the impact of design on the patient is positive. EBT ultimately reinforces the impact of interior designers on the healthcare environment.
- The development of an environmental complexity calculator  
Hospitals are currently known to be numbing to the senses. This study intended to counteract this through the implementation of the interdependent elements identified in Chapter 7. The possibility of sensory overload is the other extreme.  
A calculator was developed from Davidson's calculations (Davidson & Bar-Yam, n.d.) and Shannon's theory (Shannon, 1948) on spatial literacy, with the addition of the fundamental elements highlighted in Chapter 7. The result was a calculator that allows one to not only calculate the complexity of a space but also provides a means for an interior designer to develop a series of spaces with different sensory complexities - which is vital to the health of the patient.

- The use of natural elements to create healthier interior environments.

This dissertation explored ways in which this layer could be designed to create connections between interior and exterior. The design of visual axes, mechanical louvers, skin-like walls and indoor gardens essentially aim to blur this boundary. Ultimately, natural exterior elements are used to create healthier interior environments.

## 11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Testing the environmental complexity calculator in reality.



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