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SPACES FOR HEALING - DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR WALLS & CEILINGS IN HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS

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1) In what ways can the design of healthcare facilities can play a beneficial role in patient outcomes?

Well-designed facilities can help alleviate patient anxiety, lower their blood pressure and shorten hospital stays. Medical professionals make better decisions in such environments and the overall standard of patient care rises.

2) In terms of medical outcomes, what are the key design considerations in healthcare environments?

Indoor Environmental Quality, Indoor air quality, Fire safety, Durability of materials and bacterial resistance, and Acoustics.

3) Identify the fire safety regulations and standards that apply to the specification of walls and ceilings in healthcare settings.

NCC 2019, Specification C1.1 "Fire-Resisting Construction"

NCC 2019, Specification C1.10 "Fire Hazard Properties"

NCC 2019, Specification C2.5 "Smoke-proof walls in health-care and residential care buildings"

AS 1530.4:2014 "Fire-Resistance Tests for Construction"

AS 5637.1:2015 "Wall & Ceiling Fire Hazard Properties"

4) In what ways can acoustic performance affect patient outcomes?

Exposure of patients to excess noise affects a variety of physiological and psychological processes, including speech processing, sleep quality, and more. For staff, potential consequences include increased levels of stress and fatigue, poor job performance, and a higher rate of job burnout.

5) Why is Indoor Air Quality and the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in materials like walls and ceilings a concern in healthcare environments?

Patients often have weakened immune systems, and are therefore more likely to suffer negative health effects of exposure to VOCs. These include headaches, fatigue, dryness, and eye and skin irritation.

6) What are the environmental considerations associated with walls and ceilings in healthcare facilities?

Several factors should be considered, including product lifespan, embodied emissions, lifecycle energy consumption, resource use and recycling potential.