HOSPITAL WAYFINDING

Problem
Wayfinding is a behaviour and an important part of a person's everyday life as it relates to how someone orientates and navigates an environment. It is not only an visual cue, memory, spatial orientation and calculated decision making skills to find our way in an unfamiliar environment. The ease at which someone can navigate a space can greatly influence their ability to utilize services within the hospital. A cohesive mixture of wayfinding strategies that improve the wayfinding of the hospital will not only help the users of the hospital but also the hospital itself. A better wayfinding strategy will reduce patient and visitor confusion, as well as provide a positive experience for all visitors.

Practical Implications
Conducting research on wayfinding in hospitals provides insights into how different wayfinding strategies can be implemented to accommodate all users in all areas of a hospital. This research will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data including informal chats, analysis of the existing wayfinding strategies and an audit of the existing signs in the chosen case study. The research will help to identify areas where improvements can be made to create a more efficient hospital environment.

Method
This research aims to understand the different users, environments of a hospital and the different wayfinding strategies that can be implemented to accommodate all users in all areas of a hospital. The research will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data including informal chats, analysis of the existing wayfinding strategies and an audit of the existing signs in the chosen case study.

Findings
The project discovered that one wayfinding strategy does not work for all areas of the hospital. The existing wayfinding strategies failed in some areas but not all, which was due to the strategies used in the hospital. The hospital did not have a sufficient sensory range. A sensory range includes visual, verbal, textural and sound-based wayfinding cues that, when combined, provide talking points for all users. The Wellington Regional Hospital’s existing wayfinding systems focused mostly on visual devices to aid users. Apart from the information desk where volunteers give verbal directions, the signs are not easy to read for users with visual impairments, language barriers or for those who are unable to navigate the hospital efficiently. The project also discovered that one wayfinding strategy does not work for all areas of the hospital. The existing wayfinding strategies failed in some areas but not all, which was due to the strategies used in the hospital. The hospital did not have a sufficient sensory range. A sensory range includes visual, verbal, textural and sound-based wayfinding cues that, when combined, provide talking points for all users. The Wellington Regional Hospital’s existing wayfinding systems focused mostly on visual devices to aid users. Apart from the information desk where volunteers give verbal directions, the signs are not easy to read for users with visual impairments, language barriers or for those who are unable to navigate the hospital efficiently.

Practical implications
A cohesive mixture of wayfinding strategies that improves the wayfinding of the hospital will not only help the users of the hospital but also the hospital itself. A better wayfinding strategy will reduce patient and visitor stress, benefiting the hospital financially by reducing the amount of missed or late appointments as well as conveying a look of professionalism and high standards to visitors and patients.

Exisiting Wayfinding

Sign Type 1
Sign type one was used as a directional sign, used to direct people to nearby departments. This sign type was found most frequently in communal areas.

Sign Type 2
This sign type is used to list the hospital user what department or clinics they are at. This sign type was found on walls and department receptions.

Sign Type 3
Sign type three is a directional sign, which dates people to nearby departments. This sign type is used within departments.

Sign Type 4
Sign type four is used to indicate where waiting areas are within the different departments or clinics.

Sign Type 5
Sign type five is a directional sign. These signs are in confusing areas of the hospital or extra directional aids. They are sign type five’s ability to direct users, exits and to other hospital buildings.

Sign Type 6
The final sign type is sign type six. This sign type is used to inform the users what level they are currently on.

Patient Journeys

Therapeutic Outpatients

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Therapeutic Outpatients

Route 1

Level C/3 of the Grace Neil Building

Enter the hospital through the main hospital entrance on level 2.

Walk through the corridor connecting the main hospital building to the Grace Neil Building.

Enter Grace Neil Building and follow signs to Therapeutic Outpatient's reception.