Wayfinding Strategies for Non-Emergency Services in Australian Hospitals

Materials and Methods

The research methods employed in this study involved a comprehensive desktop review of available resources, including hospital websites, published articles, and relevant reports. Additionally, on-site visits were conducted in February and March 2024 to directly observe and assess the implementation of wayfinding strategies in real-world contexts. Observations were documented through field notes and photographs to ensure a detailed analysis of the wayfinding systems used in each hospital. The hospitals examined were The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne (visited on 29th February) [1], The Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane (4th March) [2], The Gold Coast University Hospital (5th March) [3], The Royal Adelaide Hospital (7th March) [4], The Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney (11th March) [5], and The Westmead Hospital in Sydney (12th March) [6]. These hospitals were selected for their geographical diversity, varying sizes, and the diversity of their wayfinding systems, making them ideal for comparative analysis.

During the visits, a range of wayfinding techniques was analysed, including visual signage, digital navigation tools, and spatial design elements. The study focused on identifying both the enablers and challenges within each hospital's wayfinding system, considering factors such as hospital size, layout, and user demographics. The findings from these site visits provide valuable insights into how different strategies have been tailored to enhance patient and visitor navigation across diverse healthcare environments. While this study offers comprehensive insights, it is limited to six hospitals in Australia, which may not represent the full spectrum of wayfinding practices in other regions or hospital types. Further research could expand this analysis to include other healthcare settings and different geographic contexts.

References

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