

Promoted by



With the participation of



Sponsored by



“BEYOND TRADITIONAL TREATMENT... ART AS THERAPY”

Rosselli M., Bellotti L., Milioni D., Perfetto R., Senzi G.
Servizio di Medicina Psicosomatica, Dipartimento di Medicina Interna,
Università degli Studi di Firenze, V.le Morgagni 85, Florence, Italy



Changing hospitals by humanizing their design is a concept that is gaining influence in Europe and the United States, as well as in other parts of the world.

Strong studies have produced convincing evidence that viewing nature reduces patient pain as well as stress. The research findings of Roger Ulrich, PhD indicate that psychologically appropriate art can substantially affect outcomes such as blood pressure, anxiety, intake of pain medication, and length of hospital stay. In particular, representational nature art is shown to have a beneficial effect on patients experiencing stress and anxiety. “The Arts of Healing,” *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, May 19, 1999, Vol. 281, No.19.



Now, also in Italy, a research project, “Beyond traditional treatment... art as therapy”, is in progress, which will evaluate the relationship between the hospital environment and the quality of life of patients.

The purpose of this study, which is the first of its kind in Italy, is to appraise cancer patients' perception of the hospital environment before and after placement of nature photographs in their treatment area. The photos, given by the non-profit Foundation for Photo/Art in Hospitals, are images of landscapes, Tuscan hillsides, marine life, tropical beaches, flowers and animals.

The supposition is that the viewing of nature photography can have a positive impact on patients. Six hundred patients from five cancer centers - Ancona, La Spezia, Messina, Perugia, and Terni – will be tested while receiving their treatment; half will be the control group.

Four methods are being used for the study.

The first phase of the research was the construction and validation of “**The Test of Perception of the Hospital Environment**” (Bellotti L., Rosselli M., 2005), which was created expressly for this research. It consists of a questionnaire of 23 items, with reference to five images of hospital rooms, with and without art displayed on the walls; six nature images; and six abstract images. The second phase of the research – testing the six hundred cancer patients throughout Italy – is currently in progress. In addition to the newly constructed questionnaire, three other psychological tests will be administered:

- SF-36 (Health Survey Questionnaire)
- TCI-R (Temperament and Character Inventory- Revised)
- HADS (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale)

The results of the first phase were the construction and psychometric analysis of “The Test of Perception of the Hospital Environment”. To analyze the test's validity and reliability, the pilot questionnaire was administered to 120 patients at Careggi Hospital — 60 experimental cancer patients and 60 internal medicine controls. The results of the second phase will be available in 2007.

The conclusions of the first exploratory phase, which took over a year to complete, have confirmed the initial supposition that naturalistic images perceived through the test, evoke a positive experience for the patients. This indicates that viewing nature photographs could have a positive impact on cancer patients, as will be assessed in the second phase of the study.

