

Collaborative research:
Vital Arts & Central St Martins, Spatial Practices
funded by Creative Works 'Creative Vouchers' Scheme

What kind of art or design intervention will improve patient and staff experience on the Renal Ward, Royal London Hospital?

CSM:

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Premise:

The creative vouchers scheme is designed to enable SMEs to partner with an academic institution to develop short term, collaborative research that directly supports the SME's development. In this case Vital Arts, the arts and health organisation that delivers programmes for the Barts Health NHS Trust, collaborated with staff from the Spatial Practices programme, CSM, to establish a framework for future art and design interventions in the Renal Unit at the Royal London Hospital (RLH).

Currently the Renal Unit at RLH is cramped and crowded. We wanted to explore ways of improving this micro-locality through activities and design interventions that engage and enrich patients' experience of being in hospital, creating a positive environment and a sense of place and community.

Process & Development:

After conducting interviews with senior staff to gain an understanding of kidney disease, dialysis and NHS approved consultation processes we spent time on the ward observing the dynamics of the place, shadowing staff and interviewing patients. Building on insights gained during this period we generated a number of project to be tested. We settled on trialing two interventions:

Renal Recipes

Idea: Create a communal recipe book of patients' recipes and related stories to share with one another.

Rationale: Patients care about their community and like to exchange advice. A number of patients talked

about food. There are no renal cookery books for ethnic minorities (there is only one for very bland traditional British food). This idea could solidify the community on the ward. It would be a framework to exchange knowledge and ideas specific to the community. It would also be a vehicle to showcase the rich cultural backgrounds and knowledge amongst the patients.

Window to the Outside World

Idea: Live stream images of nature/animals into the ward via plasma screens mounted into the ceiling for patients to view as a window to the outside world.

Rationale: Patients are bored and would like to watch something soothing. Most patients' treatment chairs face inwards. There is a general sense of being separated from the world outside.

Results:

We tested 'Renal Recipes' by producing three recipe cards. This pilot project has had a positive response from patients, renal staff, dieticians, and the patient forum. We will now work on developing a funding bid to roll out this project fully. Renal wards on other sites have already expressed interest in the project and would like to be included.

Attempting to test 'Window to the Outside World' has proved challenging, due to the large number of regulations, departments, and contractors that need to be taken into account. We were not able to complete this within the framework of this research project. Vital Arts is continuing to pursue this pilot project drawing on separate resources.

The R&D framework we established on this project also constitutes a valuable project outcome for Vital Arts, who have already started using a similar process in a new project on an Older Adults Ward.



a bay on the Renal Ward, Royal London Hospital



screenshot from a wildlife webcam, for *Window to the Outside World* (www.wildlifekate.co.uk)



outcome of pilot version of Renal Recipes

Excerpt from the questionnaire results, Renal Recipes:

We distributed the majority of the recipe cards via the patients' folders. We also included a questionnaire. We had 52 completed questionnaires returned to us, which constitutes about 15% of the patient population. Staff commented that they considered this to be a high return rate, as there is a general consultation fatigue amongst the patient group, coupled with a high percentage of patients who have difficulties communicating in written English.

These results show that around 70% of the patients responded positively to the recipe cards and thought they would use them. However we will need to work towards including more patients overall, by working in other languages apart from English (Bengali?) and reflecting on how to involve those who are reluctant (food based events?).

Questions 3, 4, 5 & 6: Reactions to the recipe cards

		Number of patients	% of patients
Q3: Do you like the look of these cards?	Yes, they look great!	19	38,8%
	Yes, I quite like them	17	34,7%
	I'm not sure	7	14,3%
	No, I don't like the look of them	6	12,2%
	Total	49	100,0%
Q4: Are the instructions on the cards clear enough?	Yes	35	76,1%
	No	3	6,5%
	Not sure	8	17,4%
	Total	46	100,0%
Q5: Are you (or your family member/friend) likely to try one of these recipes?	Very likely - I look forward to trying them	16	31,4%
	Yes, quite likely	15	29,4%
	I'm not sure	12	23,5%
	No, I won't be trying these recipes	8	15,7%
	Total	51	100,0%

