Author's response to reviews

Title: Hospital outpatient perceptions of the physical environment of waiting areas: the role of patient characteristics on atmospherics in one academic medical center

Authors:

Chun-Yen Tsai (henry456a@yahoo.com.tw)
Mu-Chia Wang (maggiepapaya@hotmail.com)
Wei-Tsen Liao (andylaoi@hotmail.com)
Jui Heng Lu (yaya3333kimo@yahoo.com.tw)
Pi-hung Sun (yenjulin@mail.cmu.edu.tw)
Blossom Yen-Ju Lin (yenju1115@hotmail.com)

Version: 3 Date: 22 August 2007

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor:

This revised manuscript has been revised as requested from two reviewers’ comments and your board. All revisions have been shown point-by-point responses to the reviewer’s comments in the following. And this revised manuscript has been edited by English professional for language corrections already.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Blossom Yen-Ju Lin
Reviewer: Andrew M Garratt

1. The Abstract, aims of the study presented at the end of the Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion should all reflect the inclusion of the summated rating scale. This is an important addition to the paper which supersedes the use of single items. At present it is largely consigned to the Methods section where it has simply been appended to the paper without any consideration of its possible usefulness as a means of further improving the paper. In particular it is by far the most useful dependent variable in the regression analysis, the distributions of the single items being skewed five-point data. The reliability of single items is also likely to be low. Hence this approach makes more sense from both psychometric and statistical perspectives. I suggest removing the regression analyses relating to the single items and having two tables for the overall 15-point scale, one for the results of the univariate analyses (with appropriate statistical tests) and the other for the regression analysis. This will greatly improve the paper.

Answer: Thank you so much for the suggestions. We have re-played the data and created the summated rating scores using the rotated factor analysis, instead of using the single item scores for analysis. Finally, four constructs were identified, named as visual environment, hearing environment, body contact environment, and cleanliness for the outpatient physical environments in the waiting areas. We have added the concepts and wordings of the summated rating scales throughout the paper. Furthermore, we also cited several references which pointed out the advantages of using the summated rating scores, for example, the studies of McIver JP, Carmines EG (1981), Spector P (1992), and Nunnally JC, Bernstein IH (1994), from both psychometric and statistical perspectives (p. 8-9). We thought that these might make this paper more readable and more understandable.

In the Result section, the analyses have been presented as the reviewer comments: one table for the results of the univariate analyses (Table 4, p.24) and the other for the regression analysis (Table 5, p.25), using the summated scores of four constructs of physical environment as individual dependent variables. The texts of the Result section have also been re-written in the revised manuscript (p. 10-11).

2. Some description of the scale scores for the 15-item summated rating scale should be give in the Results section including mean (sd) and some commentary on the distribution shape including evidence for any floor or ceiling effects.

Answer: The descriptions of the summated scales have been added in the texts of Result section (p.10) and in the Table 1 (p.21).
3. The scale should also be given a name that can be used throughout the paper. **Answer:** Four constructs of physical environments have been named as visual environment, hearing environment, body contact environment, and cleanliness. The scales have been used throughout the paper.

4. Item scaling should be presented before the factor analysis within the Methods. **Answer:** Yes, the item scaling (Likert 5-point scale) has been presented (p.7) before the factor analysis (p. 8-9) within the Methods in the revised manuscript.

5. There should be subheadings for Data Collection and Questionnaire Development and Testing within the Results that use the same wording as the Methods. This makes the paper easier to follow. The results of factor analysis and internal consistency should be described under the second subheading above of the Results. **Answer:** We have checked the wordings for the subheadings for Data Collection and Questionnaire Development and Testing within the Results. In addition, we have added the result of factor analysis and internal consistency should be described under the second subheading above of the Results (p. 10 for factor analysis, p. 8 for internal consistency).

6. The last sentence in the Conclusion uses the word “affected”. This should be changed to “were associated with” as we cannot be sure that there is a relationship for all of these variables. Moreover, there is little theoretical work to build upon. **Answer:** Yes, all the word “affected” have been changed to “associated with” (p.2, 6, 14) or “related to” (p.14).

7. Following my previous comments there are still a large number of problems with the English including terminology. There are examples on possibly every page. For example, within the Abstract Methods (sentence 2) “within” should replace the first “of”. On page five (second paragraph, first sentence) the last few words should be changed to “accreditation relating to the design of outpatient…”. The first “in” should be dropped from the next sentence and “with” should be inserted immediately following the close of the brackets. I have made numerous corrections on a hard copy of the paper which I am willing to send to the authors. **Answer:** Thank you so much for the reviewer’s comment for the English editing. The paper has been edited by the English-native colleague (Jeffrey Conrad) and we will ask for the journal editor for the hard copy of the paper from the reviewer to do the final check before the publication. Thank you so much for
your help.