

Commentary

Single-Patient Rooms for Safe Patient-Centered Hospitals

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The argument in favor of single-patient rooms remains compelling even in the face of potentially higher costs. After examining the results of 16 studies on the impact single-patient rooms have on infection control, researchers found reductions in both airborne-related and contact-related nosocomial infections. Single patient rooms are easier to clean and decontaminate than multi-bed rooms. Healthcare workers may be more likely to adhere to hand-hygiene procedures when moving between rooms rather than between beds, particularly if hand wash stations are well positioned. Other arguments in support of single-patient hospital planning include the enhancement of patient flow, increases in patient satisfaction and privacy due to various aesthetic and safety features. While some facilities may find the additional expenses of building single-patient rooms cost prohibitive, the additional costs could be offset by savings and efficiencies obtained through single-patient room use over a 12-month period.