

NOISEATWORK2007/147

Room acoustic interventions improve sound environment at Thorax Intensive Care Unit

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Although noise in hospitals is among the top complaints of patients, visitors, and staff, very few hospitals have actually been able to characterize hospital noise and to find effective noise control approaches. The Work Environment Authority in Stockholm, has conducted an inspection of the Thorax ICU at the Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm. In connection with the inspection it was declared that the staff complained about the sound environment in one of the wards. In consultation with the property manager and the Work Environment Authority in Stockholm, Ecophon has performed a case study at the Thorax ICU in Solna. The purpose has been to clarify how room acoustics in a patient ward affect the staff's perception of the noise situation in that ward. Another purpose has been to develop a better understanding of how a set of requirements for room acoustics should be formulated in order to obtain a supportive health care environment. The measures performed included reconstruction of the ceiling with change of absorbing ceilings, measurements of room acoustic parameters and a group interview with staff to record how the sound environment was perceived before and after the acoustic intervention. It is possible to conclude that, by adding more sound absorbing material to the room, the noise situation has been positively influenced.

Number of words in abstract: 213

Topic: 1. Noise emission and control at work in the following sectors

Type of presentation: Communication