

St. Joseph's Hospital,
Kansas City, Mo., was
painted with Dutch
Boy White-Lead



NOTE. The new note in modern hospitals is *Mere Color*. The use of tints and shades on walls and ceilings, in draperies and other furnishings in leading institutions is no longer a question for discussion. It is a fact. And from the use of certain colors has come proof to replace theories and beliefs about their therapeutic value. This article and others to follow are written to help spread knowledge of what has already been done in hospitals in putting colors on walls and ceilings and wood trim.

How many colors for the Modern Hospital?

Three opinions advanced regarding the number needed on interior walls and ceilings . . . Why a fixed number fails to meet the requirements of all hospitals . . . Factors which determine the colors.

SHOULD hospitals standardize on one color throughout? Should the number of colors be limited to two or three?

These questions came up recently in a discussion of colors to be used in decorating the walls and ceilings of a new hospital in the Middle West.

One opinion was that a single color, a blend of ivory and cream, carried through an entire hospital would serve all purposes.

Another recommendation was to standardize on two or three colors as sufficient for all needs.

A third opinion was presented by the representative of a body of men who have made a study of color and had long experience in selecting the proper colors for every type of hospital. This opinion briefly was that *no definite rule can be laid down as to the number of colors which should be used*. For a single room, or a small group of rooms, one color may suffice. For a section of a certain hospital, two or three colors may be best. For an entire building, more may be needed—to meet all conditions. In other words, every hospital, every section of a hospital, demands separate consideration.

The psychological factor

First of all, standardization on colors for all hospitals is difficult because of the patients themselves. All who have given any study to the selection and use of color in the hospital agree that, when properly employed, it can do much to assist a highly sensitive patient to recovery. But tests have proved that different colors cause different reactions and make standardization on one color or a limited number undesirable.

The practical standpoint

Standardization on any one, two or three colors is undesirable also from a practical standpoint. If all hospital rooms were used for the same purpose



Auditorium, Macan County Tuberculosis
Hospital, Decatur, Ill.

—if all of these rooms were about the same size—if they were all similarly equipped, received equal amounts of the same type of natural or artificial illumination—then the use of a fixed number of colors might be feasible.

The very fact that hospital rooms are differently located, receive different amounts of illumination, are of different sizes, and are used for different purposes, makes necessary the use of different colors, and different tints and shades of those colors. It has been proved, for example, that a medium green-gray in a ward with a southern exposure absorbs much of the warm sunlight and helps to minimize glare. This same green-gray, however, if placed in a room shut off by some adjoining building from direct natural light, would provide a gloomy, depressing atmosphere for patients and staff.

Here is just one instance illustrating the importance of the proper selection of colors for hospital interiors. Nothing has been said about other situations in other parts of the hospital—operating

rooms, special rooms, such as X-ray, deep therapy, ear, eye, nose and throat dormitories. All should have special consideration.

After selecting the colors for your hospital, if the treatments are carried out with flat paint, made of Dutch Boy white-lead and Dutch Boy flattening oil, you are sure of getting a durable, as well as a very beautiful and economical interior finish which can be safely washed and cleaned as often as necessary. Another thing—shades and tints desired can be matched exactly with this paint for it is mixed specially for each job.

Aid in selecting colors

To work with those hospitals which have problems in the selection and use of the proper colors for a single room or an entire building, National Lead Company has established a Department of Color Research and Decoration. This department has already served nearly 600 hospitals of all types by working with architects, hospital boards and superintendents. It has recommended the proper colors, prepared paint specifications, furnished paint formulas and actual color samples of the recommended colors.

If you wish further information on how the Department of Color Research and Decoration can help you select and use the proper colors, write to it in care of our nearest branch.

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