Foreword

Ron van der Weerd  
Chair EuroFM

EuroFM is a Facility Management Network organisation where practice meets research and education. Although there are different interpretations on the scope of what facility management (FM) is, we all agree on the supportive value that FM is giving to the primary process of any organisation. Public or private, profit or not-for-profit, traditionally with facilities management we are thinking about cleaning, catering, cooling, heating, catering waste management etc. as these are the all important services to support the primary process. However if there is one industry where FM is not only supportive of that primary process but also integrated with those (cure/ care) processes, it is the healthcare industry. There is already a lot of scientific proof on how clever design of patient (single) rooms with optimal placement of sinks, taps and smart ways of using them can decrease the risk on life-endangering infections significantly. Measures on optimising logistics in surgery rooms, optimising transportation of patients in emergency room situations and decreasing fatal loss of time are increasingly based on evidence based research and implementation nowadays. Many studies have shown that well designed environments can, for instance, reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, and lessen pain. Conversely, research has linked poor design – or psychosocially unsupportive surroundings – to negative effects such as higher occurrence of delirium, elevated depression, greater need for pain relief medication, and in certain situations longer hospital stays (Ulrich, 1991, 1992). This design involves a lot of FM issues like the use of colours, safe floors, sounds, daylight entrance, outside views and ceiling design. But it starts with the architecture.

Architecture cannot cure cancer, but good design has the power to heal. That’s the philosophy behind the Maggie’s Centres, a network of drop-in facilities in Great Britain. The centres are named after writer and landscape architect Maggie Keswick Jencks, who died of breast cancer in 1995. Married to the influential American architecture critic and landscape architect Charles Jencks, Maggie spent the last two years of her life conceiving a warm, inviting place where cancer patients could spend time learning how to cope with their disease.

Another very impressive example is the Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago (now named The Ann & Robert H Lurie Children’s Hospital) by Bruce Komiski. One of the comments on that project: “Bruce Komiski is an experienced healthcare executive who has had the opportunity to plan, build, operate and raise the philanthropic support for eight new hospitals, each more innovative than the previous, all from the owner’s perspective. In addition, he is a frequent speaker, author and consultant for hospitals around the world on the inclusive planning process, healing environments, children’s hospitals – design and construction, healthcare design, project management and healthcare philanthropy” (Mari Miller Luci 2012).

This integration of designing, building, financing, maintaining and operating where the involvement of the end user is essential is one of the developments in Real Estate and Facilities Management where the healthcare industry can really have a leading and innovate role.

EuroFM is always trying to stimulate this integration by bringing together research, practice and education. Knowledge sharing, evidence-based research, learning from our mistakes and our successes is also an important pillar under a publication like Hospital Healthcare Europe. As EuroFM we hope that many will follow.