

Gender separation in psychiatry

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(Medical Xpress)—Results in a study of Australia's first women-only psychiatry ward at The Alfred have been published in the prestigious *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

The study, led by the Monash Alfred [Psychiatry Research](#) Centre, concluded the presence of a female specific area on an acute psychiatry in-patient unit resulted in significantly more positive experiences for [female patients](#) when compared to the experiences of women on a traditional mixed-gender unit.

Director of Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre Professor Jayashri Kulkarni said results of the study reinforced the need for gender-sensitive practice in psychiatry that contributes to the [wellbeing](#) of consumers at a time of great vulnerability and distress.

"Our study illustrates that women had a safer and overall better experience of acute psychiatry care when they were treated in a ward that had a designated area for women only," Professor Kulkarni said.

Professor Kulkarni said the presence of a women-only area on a ward improved the inpatient experience for women managed in the mixed-area of the same ward.

"This finding is significant in that it appears that there is a 'halo' effect of increased awareness of the need to promote female safety for the whole ward due to building a gender-segregated area," Professor Kulkarni said.

"Women-only areas can therefore be created successfully and relatively inexpensively within mixed-gender acute psychiatry units."

Provided by Monash University

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