Fact Sheet 2
Designing a safe environment for the obese and bariatric client in aged care

When considering effective management solutions for bariatric clients, it is essential to have a well-designed facility or care environment.

The design, layout, space requirements, floor coverings, furniture and fittings of facilities and care environments all potentially impact on the ability to manage bariatric clients, and/or impact on the way in which care is delivered.

The bariatric client will require more space for safe manoeuvrability, safe manual handling, equipment storage and dignified care.

When designing new, or renovating existing, facilities, the following features should be considered:

- Providing specialised bariatric equipment that accommodates a client’s weight, size and shape
- Larger doorways that permit entry and exit of bariatric equipment (wheelchairs, hoists, etc)
- Handrails and grab rails with expanded weight capacities
- Elevators able to hold larger bariatric beds and equipment (if necessary)
- Corridors wide enough to turn and manipulate bariatric equipment

1 The Facility Guidelines Institute 2010
Recommended Room Dimensions (Refer Diagrams 2 & 3)²

The size of a room for a bariatric client must accommodate:

- Bed
- Larger equipment, including commode, walking frame, chair
- Ceiling lifter, with sufficient loading capacity, on “J” or “H” track
- Capacity for multiple health care workers at the same time
- Large visitor furniture
- Room and access to safely perform transfers and use equipment

Diagram 2

Diagram 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Recommended (Villeneuve et al. 2007)</th>
<th>Current guidelines³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room size</td>
<td>23m²</td>
<td>15 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door width</td>
<td>Min 1.5m (Recommend split door 1.2m &amp; 300mm)</td>
<td>Min 1.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room around bed for lifters, bari equipment</td>
<td>Min 1.8m on 3 sides of the bed</td>
<td>Min 1.1m for lifter access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room lifter</td>
<td>Ceiling lifter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom size</td>
<td>7.8m²</td>
<td>5m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom door width</td>
<td>1.2m</td>
<td>Min 900mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab rails</td>
<td>Stronger than AS/NZS1428</td>
<td>AS/NZS 1428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Bari rooms (RACF)</td>
<td>1 in 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Villeneuve, J. et al. 2007
³ AS/NZS 1428.1 & .2
Design of facilities should also consider that clients need access to:

- Dining areas
- Social activities areas
- Outside areas
- Transport for outings
- Storage of equipment
- Ambulance and funeral services
References


The information contained in these Fact Sheets has been compiled by a Working Party, comprising:

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It is intended for broad distribution and dissemination, in order to assist the Aged Care Industry to manage the burgeoning issue of the management of Bariatric clients in Aged Care. We trust you find it a useful reference.

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