Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Infusing Person-Environment Questions in Studies of Mental Health

**Presenters:** Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, PhD, Professor, Interior Design Program  
Julie Irish, PhD, Research Associate, Interior Design Program

**Introduction**
- College of Design; Medical School; College of Science and Engineering
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) one of the world's top ten causes of disability
- OCD behaviors: obsessions about contamination and cleaning; checking, ordering, repeating rituals; hoarding habits

**Objectives**
Analyze video recordings of children with OCD doing everyday tasks to:
- Better understand the role of the environment in OCD behaviors
- Develop knowledge contributing to diagnosis and treatment

**Pilot Study Method**
- 18 subjects with OCD/21 matched healthy controls (mean age 11.1)
- 4 environment-behavior tasks

**Significant Findings**
- OCD subjects used less table space arranging than controls (p=.049)
- More severe OCD spent longer time hand washing
- Exhibited more other behaviors during hand washing, e.g. touching sink, drinking water (p=.005)

**Conclusions**
*Video recordings can:*
- Act as alternative modes of representation
- Communicate multiple forms of knowledge
- Show stories and experiences not typically part of canon
- Add to our understanding of how placemaking is perceived and constructed

**Next Steps**
- Delve into findings, e.g. why did children with OCD use less space?  
- Focus on other aspects of OCD, e.g. hoarding  
- Expand on use of computer software to automatically code videos

**OCD subjects more likely to exhibit other behaviors when hand washing (p=.005)**

**OCD subjects used less space for arrangement than controls (p=.049):**

**Handwashing**

**Arranging items on a table**

**Arranging items on a pattern rug**

**Study laboratory**