

Analysis of environmental sustainability frameworks and point of care workers in the hospital setting: A scoping review

Abstract:

Global health systems are major contributors to greenhouse gases and consequently, the climate crisis, threatening planetary health and heightening the burden of disease (Miller & Xie, 2020). Harmful environmental impacts from healthcare service delivery are often related to biological, chemical, and pharmaceutical waste, energy consumption, transport, and product manufacture, use, and disposal (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Health systems are therefore unsustainable and requires significant system change in order to mitigate current environmental harms. Hospitals that make up the vast majority of our health systems are highly resource intensive facilities that require a significant amount of energy use and are major producers of waste (Canadian Medical Association [CMA], 2019). Therefore, hospitals are a key component in health systems contribution to carbon emissions (CMA, 2023). Understanding ways to promote sustainability within healthcare delivery requires a systems-level understanding of patient care activities as they are major drivers of resource utilization (Sherman et al., 2020). Arguably, point of care workers, through the delivery of day-to-day healthcare services, are the most important stakeholders in mitigating environmental harms perpetuated by hospital systems (WHO, 2020). In recent years, the development of environmental sustainability frameworks for healthcare organizations have proliferated in order to build the environmental sustainability of our health systems. However, there has been no literature review to date that has analysed the concepts included in these frameworks. Thus, this scoping review aims to critically examine the known environmental sustainability frameworks that are applicable to the hospital setting in order to inform future policy and practice.

References

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