HOW TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF PLASTICS IN HEALTHCARE
SESSION ON PLASTICS, HARMFUL CHEMICALS, AND HEALTH NEXT WEEK

From nurses to parents: reducing plastic and harmful chemical exposure to children

• 7 December, 16:00 – 17:30 CET
INTERNATIONAL CONTINUING NURSING EDUCATION CREDITS (ICNECS)

• Continuous education credits available for nurses participating in these webinars
  • 1.5 credits/webinar
• Reach out to us if you are a nurse and you need to receive credits for attending this training
We are a network of thousands of hospitals, healthcare leaders, and healthcare professionals, with members across Europe and partners across the globe.

Together we prove that it's possible to deliver the highest quality of care in a way that's sustainable environmentally and financially.
OUR ACTION NETWORKS

GLOBAL GREEN AND HEALTHY HOSPITALS

SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE LEADERS’ NETWORK

HEALTHCARE MARKET TRANSFORMATION NETWORK

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GLOBAL GREEN AND HEALTHY HOSPITALS

THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AT THE HEART OF OUR ORGANISATION

146 members in 25 countries across the WHO Europe region

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PLASTICS: ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH IMPACTS
THE OVERCONSUMPTION OF PLASTIC

PLASTIC CONSUMPTION IS PROJECTED TO TRIPLE IN THE NEXT 40 YEARS

- Plastic is made from fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal)
- Impacts on health and environment at all stages of its lifecycle
- Most plastic is incinerated, landfilled, or ‘lost’ in the environment
- The healthcare sector is following the same linear models of consumption

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THE IMPACT OF PLASTIC ON THE ENVIRONMENT
NO NET ZERO WITHOUT ADDRESSING PLASTIC PRODUCTION

CIEL (2019), Plastic and climate: The hidden costs of a plastic planet

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CHEMICAL EXPOSURE IN HOSPITALS

- Patients are exposed to endocrine disrupting chemicals (e.g. phthalates, bisphenols) through medical plastics.
- Infants (especially premature babies) and children are particularly vulnerable.
- PVC one of the most toxic materials
  - DEHP, a phthalate used to make PVC IV bags and tubes more flexible, can increase mortality and the risk of breast cancer relapse.
THE WASTE HIERARCHY
THE WASTE HIERARCHY

Phase out of harmful chemicals / replacement with toxic-free alternatives

Recycling is not waste reduction!
THE MYTH OF PLASTIC RECYCLING IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Only 14% of plastic waste estimated to be recycled each year in Europe

• Insufficient capacity
• Downcycling
• Low cost of virgin materials
• (Illegal) waste shipments – passing our responsibility to other countries
• **Toxic chemicals** that remain in the new products

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WASTE EXPORTS

‘Waste colonialism’: world grapples with west’s unwanted plastic

Germany and UK are big exporters of plastic, much of which lies rotting in ports in Turkey, Vietnam and other countries.

NETHERLANDS PIVOTAL IN GLOBAL EXPORT OF PLASTIC WASTE TO NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES REPORT FINDS

Despite regulations to protect vulnerable countries, plastic waste flow more than doubled between 2020 and 2021.

Research by Plastic Soup Foundation has shown that The Netherlands despite its size plays a major role in the shadowy trade in plastic waste. For example, in 2021 our country was EU's largest exporter of plastic waste to non-OECD countries.

Trashed: how the UK is still dumping plastic waste on the rest of the world

The UK is a major contributor to the world’s plastic crisis, generating more plastic waste per person than any other country except the USA. Our recycling system is already overwhelmed by plastic waste. Now our waste is overwhelming other countries’ recycling systems too, causing serious harm to their citizens and environment, particularly in India, Indonesia and Malaysia.
Replacing (products containing harmful chemicals): Does the item contain harmful chemicals? Can it be replaced with a toxic-free alternative? [Check European healthcare’s phase out list for chemicals of concern]

Refuse: Is this item truly needed?

Reduce: Is it sometimes used unnecessarily; can its use be reduced?

Reuse, repair, reprocess: Are durable, reusable and non-toxic alternatives available? Can the item be reprocessed?

Recycle: Can this item be recycled locally? Is there full transparency in the process? Does the recycled item provide any value?
RESOURCES FROM HEALTH CARE WITHOUT HARM EUROPE

https://noharm-europe.org/towards-plastic-free-healthcare
SPEAKERS

Prof. Mahmood Bhutta
Professor of Sustainable Healthcare at Brighton and Sussex Medical School, Honorary Consultant and Clinical Green Lead for University Hospitals Sussex

Nicola Wilson
Lead Practice Educator, Great Ormond St. Hospital,

Federica Pirro
Anaesthetic nurse

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Thank you!

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