

Becoming More Sustainable in Operating Rooms



In the U.S., the healthcare industry is responsible for approximately 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions, with operating rooms producing the highest percentage of greenhouse gases. They can use up to six times more energy than the rest of the hospital, making them the single biggest producer of waste across the hospital.

According to a new study published in the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons (JACS)*, operating room personnel who support more sustainable practices could reduce hospitals costs and lessen carbon footprint.

Co-author and pediatric surgeon, Mehul V. Raval, said, “The opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint falls squarely on us, and I see surgeons taking a prominent role in leading efforts, not just locally with their green implementation teams, but in setting national standards and policies that will move this effort forward for an overall sustainable way of approaching healthcare delivery”.

The study identified 28 interventions which involved several approaches of sustainability, all of which can reduce costs and improve environmental impact. The sustainable initiatives included: refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle, as well as a simple education initiative, demonstrating how to appropriately throw away medical waste.

Other actions to help hospitals become greener and trim costs included turning down lights and equipment overnight, as well as lessening the frequency of washing non-contaminated anaesthetic equipment.

There is a gap in the literature regarding interventions that could be employed to reduce sources of emissions such as anaesthetic gases, which account for half of greenhouse gas emissions of operating rooms. There is an imperative need to evaluate such interventions in order for surgeons to investigate the impact and the success of their greener contributions.

Dr. Sullivan hopes said, “In the future, we hope to see all operating rooms having a green OR team with a sustainability focused group of surgeons, nurses, and anesthesiologists, working alongside the supply chain team, environmental services, and hospital management to make decisions using this multi-faceted approach”.

Source: [American College of Surgeons](#)

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