

Exploring sustainability: co-designing solutions to rethink, reduce and recycle in hospital pharmacy

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Learning outcomes/objectives:

By the end of this 90-minute workshop, participants will be able to: (1) describe the nine strategies of the circular economy and their relevance to reducing environmental impacts in healthcare; (2) identify a minimum of three opportunities for circular practices within hospital pharmacy systems; (3) map the end-of-life pathway of medicines within their own organisation; and (4) critically evaluate key barriers and enablers to implementing circular economy initiatives in hospital settings, using evidence from research and practice examples.

Content:

Healthcare systems generate significant environmental impacts through procurement, use, and disposal of medicines and associated products. While sustainability efforts have traditionally focused on waste reduction, circular economy principles offer opportunities to redesign systems to retain value, minimise waste, and reduce environmental harm. This interactive workshop will introduce circular economy concepts and explore emerging examples already being implemented in pharmacy settings, including medicine waste reduction, product stewardship, reuse and recovery initiatives, and technology-enabled approaches to sustainable pharmacy practice. Participants will then examine the current end-of-life pathway of medicines in their own hospitals and compare findings with published research and international case studies. The workshop will synthesise participant insights alongside evidence on the organisational, behavioural, regulatory, and logistical factors that influence circularity in healthcare.

Format of activities:

The workshop will combine short presentation, facilitated small-group discussions, a collaborative pathway-mapping exercise, and plenary reflection and evidence synthesis. The session will involve active learning, peer exchange, and practical application.

Target audience:

This workshop is designed for hospital pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, sustainability leads, medicines management staff, healthcare managers, researchers, and clinicians interested in sustainable healthcare. No prior knowledge of circular economy principles is required, although participants with responsibility for pharmacy services, sustainability initiatives, or medicines governance will gain particular value.