

" Repercussion of the health sector on climate change: Carbon footprint in health centers "

Date: Thursday, September 14, 2023

Place: Reina Sofia University Hospital, Region of Murcia, Spain

PRESENTATION

Climate change is not only a major global environmental challenge, but also affects a number of sectors, with the greatest impact on health.

Society as a whole is increasingly concerned about the effects of climate change on the environment and our health. It affects social and environmental determinants of health, such as temperature, air quality, drinking water, and food sources. The impacts of climate change include heat and cold waves, extreme weather events, floods, and droughts. In addition, increased air pollution and aeroallergens, altered distribution of vectors of infectious diseases, and reduced water availability and food security also significantly affect health. Therefore, integrating health into energy and climate policies can enhance the wellbeing of the populace.

This phenomenon is linked to the rise in Greenhouse Gases (GHG) in our atmosphere, particularly CO₂. Therefore, by assessing the levels at which the lifecycle of products and services generates CO₂ emissions, we can identify the maximum concentrations and develop methods to reduce them. This process is known as **carbon footprint calculation**.

Thus, an organization's carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted directly or indirectly as a result of its activities.

The calculation of carbon emissions has predominantly been utilised in the manufacturing sector. Nonetheless, as per literature, the healthcare sector may contribute about 4.4% of the total global net emissions.

Accordingly, considering health's role as both an active and passive factor in climate change, and its responsibility for substantial emissions and public health, it must serve as a model and standard for decarbonisation efforts, to the benefit of society, the environment, and especially the most vulnerable members of society.

As part of the **Strategic Health and Environment Plan**, an emissions assessment and carbon footprint study of health centres has been proposed. Its aim was to determine the sector's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and develop a reduction plan to achieve climate neutrality. This plan would have clear benefits for air quality.

The **High-Level Meeting on the Carbon Footprint in health centers**, scheduled for **September 14th at Reina Sofia University Hospital in Murcia**, is a forum for discussing the impact of the health sector on climate change and the calculation of carbon footprints of healthcare centers as they strive towards decarbonization.

This conference gathers political leaders, healthcare professionals, and sustainability experts to discuss ways to gauge, analyse, and reduce the carbon footprint of our healthcare sector, while transitioning towards more effective and environmentally conscious models.

During this event, we will engage in contemplation and knowledge exchange, uncovering how adoption of sustainable practices can revolutionise healthcare. We will exchange experiences, scientific advancements, and strategies for calculating and decreasing our carbon footprint. This promotes a comprehensive approach to health that further advances global health.

We are grateful for the participation of all attendees and their dedication to this issue.

Our aim is that these discussions inspire innovative solutions, foster dialogue, and further the preservation of our planet for future generations. This meeting will serve as a jumping-off point for lasting and sustainable change.