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**Environmental Guidelines for Dialysis: A Practical Guide to reduce the environmental burden of dialysis.**

Editors: Jurgen Kastl & Jitka Pancirova

Publisher: EDTNA/ERCA

The *Environmental Guidelines for Dialysis* is a much-awaited publication by the EDTNA/ERCA. Growing interest in this area has ignited action to start thinking about the carbon price of dialysis therapies on the environment all over the world. This project, in partnership with Fresenius Medical Care (Germany), started in 2009, where 872 representatives of the EDTNA/ERCA were surveyed on their current knowledge on environmental issues and the expectations of the project within the dialysis community. The objectives of the project were to prepare guidelines to create awareness of the environmental impact of dialysis, to measure environmental changes and savings, and to encourage a change of thinking to achieve and deliver more environmentally friendly dialysis.

The publication itself was released at the Annual EDTNA Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia in September 2011. It is 145 pages in length and has the same qualities as all other EDTNA/ERCA productions: it is small, lightweight and written in a way which is easy to understand. The guideline is broken down into seven chapters including an introduction, environmental management, natural resources (water and energy), hygiene and housekeeping considerations, waste management in dialysis units and a glossary and recommended readings. Each chapter has solid background information with references, and recommendations to help improve practice in each area in an attempt to minimise the environmental impact of dialysis services. It must be reminded, though, that the recommendations are related to the European guidelines, practices and climatic conditions, so at a glance it may not seem applicable to us here

in Australia. However, it would be a fairly simple task to adapt the majority of these principles to Australian regulations and recommendations.

Something that did stand out for me was the lack of a 'how to' guide to set up various initiatives. For example, in Chapter 3 on Natural Resources: Water, there is mention that reuse of reverse osmosis reject water should be considered, but there is little in the way of explanation on how to set up the process or reference to units who maybe already practising this water-saving measure.

Chapter 4 on Natural Resources: Energy discusses some methods in which we can conserve power usage, through smarter thinking about use of lighting, computers and insulation. However, there is nothing discussed about the application potential of an alternative power source to supplement the power drain of dialysis-related therapies.

Chapter 6 on Waste Management has a comprehensive table of the items used in dialysis and if they are recyclable or not, which is a nice resource. It would be worth mentioning that while currently there is little done to recycle clinical waste, there is the technology to potentially recycle the plastics used in the dialysis treatment, particularly the PVC and polyethylene.

Overall, this is a great guide and it is free to EDTNA members. It would be a worthwhile purchase for any unit looking to further increase their knowledge on the environmental impacts of dialysis, and ways in which you might be able to lessen the overall environmental burden in your unit.

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