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Summary

The role of nursing in green endoscopy: Training, auditing and waste segregation

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Nurses

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The speaker outlined the central role of endoscopy nurses in promoting sustainable practices through education, waste segregation, and auditing to reduce the environmental footprint of GI endoscopy.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker reported that each endoscopic procedure generates approximately two kilograms of waste, with 63% ending in landfill, 28% incinerated, and only 9% recycled, and stated the carbon footprint may reach 28.4kg CO2 equivalents per procedure.
- According to the speaker, only 15% of healthcare waste is truly infectious, leaving 85% as non-hazardous, yet a survey of almost 800 upper GI endoscopy staff showed that more than one third disposed of waste incorrectly and 98% desired better education.
- The speaker described the five R's framework (reduce, reuse, recycle, research, rethink) as a practical educational tool, with resources including information cards and ten infographics available through the ESG and GINA Green Endoscopy Working Group.
- A Portuguese study cited by the speaker demonstrated that staff education combined with repositioning waste bins resulted in substantial reductions in total and regulated medical waste and CO2 emissions.
- The speaker recommended simple nurse-led audits using one or two meaningful indicators such as waste amount per procedure, segregation accuracy, or percentage of unused items discarded, emphasizing that audits identify system improvements rather than individual errors.
- The speaker positioned endoscopy nurses as ideal green champions who understand workflow, work closely with teams, and can implement small consistent evidence-based steps to create a culture of sustainability while maintaining patient safety standards.

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