Hospitals can save over £60,000 per year by cutting plastic thermometer consumables

How hospitals are reducing plastic waste to save thousands

Hospitals have increased their infection control procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a rise of single-use plastics. Masks, gloves, and other PPE supplies have led to an increase in the amount of medical waste produced. This reliance on single-use plastic comes at a great cost – to both the hospital and our planet.

Hospitals use plastics in a variety of ways from disposable plastic syringes to surgical devices. Single-use plastics were viewed as an attractive option as they allow for maintenance of a sterile environment and any infected plastic material can be easily disposed of. Yet, the sheer quantity of single use plastics used in hospitals is becoming alarming. Particularly as it places enormous strain on consumables budgets, a continuous recurring cost in hospitals.

With increased pressures and initiatives to "Go Greener", hospitals are looking for both economic and environmental sustainability. Many leaders in healthcare are achieving this through investing in medical technology designed to reduce plastic waste and ultimately cost. One such example is the Ulster Hospital in Northern Ireland who invested in their thermometry technology.

Thermometry is one area where plastics can be significantly reduced. As temperature measurement is a core diagnostic tool, thermometers are used in every hospital, on every ward, every day. There are a variety of medical-grade thermometers available in the marketplace. However, contact thermometers (tympanic, axilla, rectal, etc.) use vast amounts of single use plastics. To reduce the infection risk presented by physical contact, all contact thermometers require single-use disposable plastic probe covers, which can become a costly expense.

The Ulster Hospital found that an average 24-bed ward takes 144 temperatures a day[1]. Each temperature reading required a single-use plastic probe cover. Therefore, in a year one ward used 52,560 probe covers costing £1,715.50.

In an evaluation of four wards carried out over two years by the Ulster Hospital, it was found four wards could save almost £12,000 and eliminate over 420,000 single use plastics in switching from tympanic to TRITEMP™ non-contact thermometers. If we multiply this by 35 wards (the estimated total size of the hospital) the savings are significant.

35 WARD HOSPITAL COULD SAVE:

1,839,600
PROBE COVERS PER YEAR

£60,042
ANNUAL COST

To learn how much your hospital could save contact info@trimedika.com to arrange a call

1. Based on 24 patients having their temperatures taken every 4 hours