The environmental impact of health care: Implications for infusion nursing

Abstract:

Health care provision is a dangerous business. Health professionals recognize the potential for miscommunication, medication errors, and other possible threats to patient safety. Less evident are the hazards to the environment inherent in the everyday practice of patient care. This article addresses 3 areas of practice in which infusion nurses can make a positive impact on the environment: preferable intravenous (IV) supply purchasing, proper management of electronic equipment (including purchasing, servicing, and disposal), and appropriate medication use and disposal practices. The article aims to inform IV nurses of the alarming environmental effects that the health care industry has on the environment and to suggest a clear, direct course of action to improve our environmental impact.