

Appraisal of Environmental Impact of an Emergency Department Visit

ULS Matosinhos
Portugal



AstraZeneca 



**Sustainable
Healthcare
Coalition**

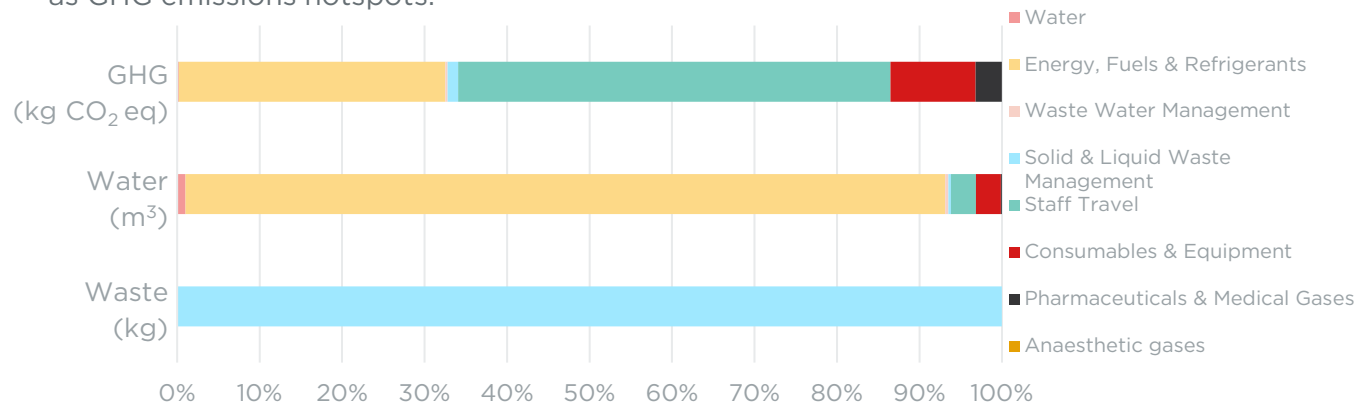
Title	Emergency department visit at ULS Matosinhos – Hospital Pedro Hispano, Portugal
Organisation and role	AstraZeneca UK Limited initiated and funded this work, but it was not involved in collecting and analysing the hospital data. AstraZeneca saw only the final output.
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Completion date	September 2023
Assurance	Internal assurance
Supporting information	Operational data from Unidade Local de Saúde (ULS) Matosinhos – Hospital Pedro Hispano, Portugal
Data gathering and analysis contact	Michael Collins, Partner, ERM (michael.collins@erm.com)
Hospital contact	Pedro Machado (pedro.machado@ulsm.min-saude.pt)
Conformance with Care Pathways: Guidance on Appraising Sustainability ¹	Adheres to the principles of the Guidance
Care pathway description	Emergency department visit at ULS Matosinhos
Environmental issues appraised	Global warming potential (IPCC, CO ₂ eq, 100-year), water use, waste

This resource is supplementary material for the care pathway study of ULS Matosinhos and activities within the hospital, ‘Appraisal of Environmental Impact of ULS Matosinhos.’² Refer to that document for a description of the assessment procedures.

Findings

This study appraised the environmental impact of an emergency department visit at ULS Matosinhos in Portugal. The study found a greenhouse gas (GHG) emission impact of 13.7 kg CO₂ eq, water use of 43.2 m³ and waste of 0.6 kg per patient visit to the emergency department.

Staff travel was the most significant contribution to the GHG emissions impact, accounting for 52% of the impact. The GHG emissions impact of staff travel is driven by the number of staff in the department. It should be noted that the emission factor for staff travel was based on average commuting emissions in the UK, as local data were unavailable. A dedicated staff travel survey would provide data to enable a more accurate appraisal of staff commuting impacts. Energy, fuels and refrigerants, and consumables and equipment were also identified as GHG emissions hotspots.



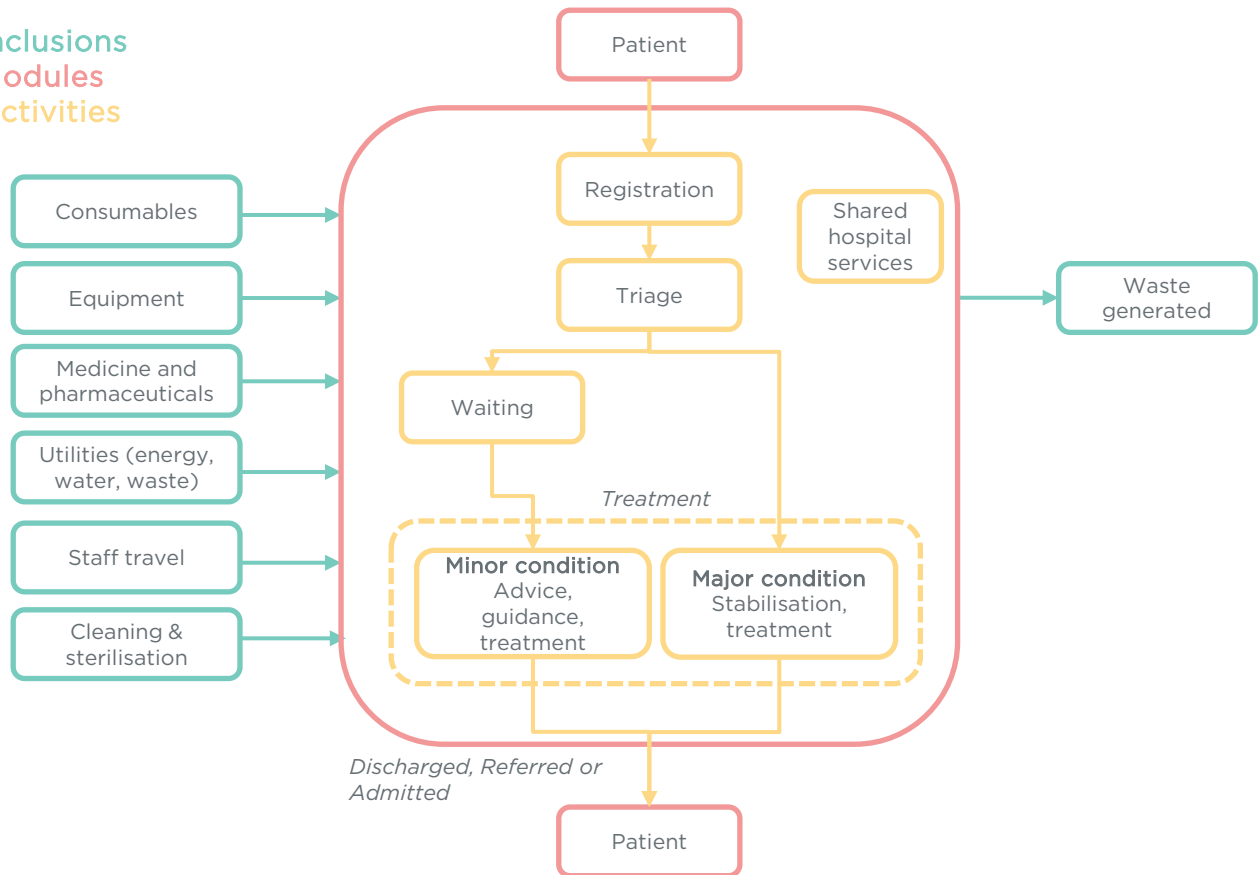
¹ Care Pathways: Guidance on Appraising Sustainability. (SHC, 2023). <https://shcoalition.org/sustainable-care-pathways-guidance/>

² Appraisal of Environmental Impact of ULS Matosinhos, (SHC, 2025), https://shcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/AppraisalOfHospitalActivities_Portugal.pdf

Scope

- This assessment appraises the environmental impact of a visit to the emergency department at ULS Matosinhos.
- The functional unit of the system studied is an average patient emergency department consultation attendance in 2021.
- The scope includes patient registration, triage and patient treatment. The scope does not include referral to another service or discharge.

Inclusions Modules Activities



Data

The following data were collected for all relevant activities for 2021, and are described in the diagram:

- Utilities data (fuels, electricity renewable or not, water use, and waste generated)
- Department consumables, such as gloves, needles, catheters, and probes
- Medical gases, including oxygen and nitrogen
- Anaesthetic gases, including nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide
- Pharmaceutical products, including painkillers, propofol and sedatives
- Equipment, such as electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, limb immobilisers and basins
- Staff travel
- Linen use and cleaning and facilities cleaning

The environmental impact of the emergency department for 2021 was modelled and then divided by the total number of 2021 patient visits. The hospital's utilities data were provided and allocated to the Emergency Department based on floor space.

Results

- Results are the environmental impact of a visit to the emergency department at ULS Matosinhos.

Module	GHG kg CO ₂ eq	Water m ³		Waste kg
		Direct	Indirect	
Water	0.03	0.07	0.37	-
Energy & fuels	3.77	-	38.82	-
Refrigerant	0.66	-	0.98	-
Waste water management	0.03	-	0.17	-
Solid/ liquid waste management	0.18	-	0.13	0.62
Staff travel	7.18	-	1.31	-
Consumables	0.60	-	1.28	-
Equipment	0.81	-	0.03	-
Pharmaceuticals and medical gases	0.44	-	0.06	-
Anaesthetic gases	-	-	-	-
Total	13.7	0.07	43.16	0.62

Acknowledgements

This document has been developed collaboratively with ULS Matosinhos and the Sustainable Healthcare Coalition. The coalition comprises a range of organisations within the healthcare sector, including pharmaceutical and medical device companies, trade bodies, procurement, government organisations and other stakeholders. The Sustainable Healthcare Coalition operates with the aim of facilitating the journey towards good health and wellbeing on a finite planet, through open-minded collaboration across public and private healthcare.