ART OF MEDICINE

Greener Health Care Is a Necessity
Brian Robert Smith

Abstract
This series of 4 images visually considers ethical questions about the US health sector’s emissions.

Figure 1. Smokestacks
Media
Affinity Designer iterated through the artificial intelligence (AI) art program Midjourney, with custom parameter weighting.

Caption
This drawing explores the dissonance between a hospital’s healing capacity and its emissions’ environmental harms. Air pollution threatens patients’ health in a variety of ways, including by exacerbating respiratory and cardiovascular illness and increasing spread of infectious diseases.¹

Figure 2. Landfill

Media
Affinity Designer iterated through the AI art program Midjourney, with custom parameter weighting.

Caption
Mountains of plastic represent one environmental harm of the US health sector. Vast amounts of waste, especially single-use plastics, suggest the importance of finding sustainable alternatives.
Figure 3. *Drought*

**Media**
Affinity Designer iterated through the AI art program Midjourney, with custom parameter weighting.

**Caption**
Dystopian consequences of the Anthropocene are represented here by first responders, on whom we rely when facing emergencies and who have limited capacity as individuals for the collective response needed to mitigate *climate change*, which is annually causing millions of deaths worldwide. In this bleak landscape, those tasked with saving lives are also stranded.
Figure 4. Reclaimed

Media
Affinity Designer iterated through the AI art program Midjourney, with custom parameter weighting.

Caption
An operating room overrun with lush vegetation represents hope for a more sustainable, “greener” approach to health care. Plants’ reclamation of a once sterile, artificial place prompt a reimagining of spaces designated for health and well-being.

References
Brian Robert Smith is a second-year medical student at the Stanford University School of Medicine in Stanford, California. He has published more than 30 articles in academic journals, such as JAMA Oncology, Anesthesiology, and Academic Medicine. His other academic interests include palliative care, oncology, and anesthesiology.

Citation

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The author(s) had no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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