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Resilient Microgrids for Aged Care Facilities: Clean Hydrogen Hybrid Systems for Disaster

Author: Juba Idowu David
Affiliation: Ekiti State University
Email: Jubaidowu1@gmail.com

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Abstract

Aged care facilities require a reliable and resilient energy infrastructure to ensure the safety and well-being of residents, particularly during disasters. This paper explores the potential of resilient microgrids powered by clean hydrogen hybrid systems as a sustainable solution for disaster preparedness in aged care facilities. The study examines the technological, economic, and policy dimensions of deploying hydrogen-based energy systems, emphasizing the integration of fuel cells, renewable energy sources, and battery storage. The research also highlights strategies to enhance system efficiency, reduce carbon footprints, and improve energy reliability for aged care facilities.

Keywords: Aged care, Energy system, Resilient microgrids, Clean hydrogen.

Introduction

The growing frequency and intensity of natural disasters underscore the need for robust energy infrastructure in critical facilities such as aged care homes. Traditional power grids are often susceptible to outages during extreme weather events, leaving vulnerable populations at risk (Henry, Oluwafunmise, & Ogungbeje, 2022). Clean hydrogen hybrid systems, coupled with renewable energy sources, present a viable solution to enhance energy resilience, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and support sustainability goals (Olajide, 2024).

Microgrids and Their Role in Disaster Preparedness

Microgrids are decentralized energy systems capable of operating independently or in conjunction with the main power grid. They play a crucial role in ensuring energy security, particularly for aged care facilities that require uninterrupted power for medical equipment, heating, cooling, and essential services (Juba et al., 2024a). Implementing microgrids with clean hydrogen hybrid systems enhances grid independence and mitigates the impact of power disruptions.

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Clean Hydrogen Hybrid Systems: A Sustainable Energy Solution

Hydrogen-based hybrid energy systems integrate electrolyzers, fuel cells, and renewable energy sources such as solar and wind to produce and store hydrogen (Olajide et al., 2023). The stored hydrogen can be converted into electricity using fuel cells, ensuring a stable power supply during grid failures (Phiri et al., 2024). This approach not only enhances disaster resilience but also contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Olajide & Oluwafunmise, 2024).

Key Components of Hydrogen-Powered Microgrids

1. **Electrolyzers** - Utilize surplus renewable energy to produce hydrogen through electrolysis.
2. **Fuel Cells** - Convert stored hydrogen into electricity with high efficiency and minimal emissions.
3. **Battery Storage Systems** - Store excess energy for short-term use and balance load demand.
4. **Renewable Energy Integration** - Solar panels and wind turbines generate clean energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels (Juba et al., 2022).

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the advantages, the adoption of hydrogen-powered microgrids faces challenges such as high initial costs, infrastructure limitations, and policy barriers (Olajide, 2024). However, advancements in industrial management and technological solutions are driving cost reductions and increasing adoption rates (Oluwafunmise & Olajide, 2024). Government incentives and industry collaboration can further accelerate deployment (Henry et al., 2024).

Policy and Economic Considerations

The successful implementation of hydrogen microgrids requires supportive policies, funding mechanisms, and industry partnerships. Governments and organizations must invest in research and pilot projects to demonstrate feasibility and scalability (Juba et al., 2024b). Additionally, workforce training and public awareness campaigns are essential to bridge the gap between technology deployment and workforce readiness (Olajide, 2024).

Conclusion

Resilient microgrids powered by clean hydrogen hybrid systems offer a sustainable and reliable energy solution for aged care facilities, ensuring disaster preparedness and enhancing energy security. By integrating renewable energy sources, fuel cells, and advanced storage technologies, aged care facilities can achieve energy independence, reduce emissions, and improve the quality of care for residents. Continued research, investment, and policy support are crucial to realizing the full potential of hydrogen-based microgrids in the healthcare sector

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