

Editorial

Joint editorial for climate

It's time!

Earth's climate has changed throughout history. Most of these climate changes are attributed to very small variations in Earth's orbit that change the amount of solar energy our planet receives. The current warming trend is of particular significance because it is unequivocally the result of human activity since the mid-20th century and proceeding at a rate that is unprecedented over millennia. Nevertheless, the science is unequivocal: a global increase of 1.5° C above the pre-industrial average and the continued loss of biodiversity risk catastrophic harm to health that will be impossible to reverse.

Rising global temperature, warming ocean, shrinking ice sheets, retreating glacial, decreased snow cover, rising sea level, declining Arctic Sea ice, extreme events and ocean acidification are all compelling evidences of rapid climate change. These events seen in the atmosphere, ocean and cryosphere impact also the biosphere of which we are a part, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, including children. International research shows that, especially in low- and middle-income countries, children will have to face in lifetime extreme weather events as a consequence of climate change. For a 3°C global warming, a 6-year-old child in 2020 will experience twice as many wildfires and tropical cyclones, 3 times more river floods, 4 times more crop failures, 5 times more droughts and 36 times more heatwaves, compared to reference persons living under pre-industrial climate conditions.

Nowadays, we are living in unprecedented situations. Fragmented, concreted, laid bare, and therefore weakened, our territory is facing increasingly intense rain and heat waves. The floods of this summer claimed forty-one victims and fifteen thousand people in Wallonia, displaced by homes that had become unhealthy.

Despite the world's necessary preoccupation with Covid-19, we cannot wait for the pandemic to pass to rapidly act. These effects of human-caused global warming are happening now, are irreversible on the timescale of people alive today, and will worsen in the decades to come if no global strategy is developed. Today's plans and promises are not enough, more can and must be done now! The window of opportunity to make the difference for our children is quickly closing.

The United Nations General Assembly in September 2021 bring countries together at a critical time for marshalling collective action to tackle the global environmental crisis. Ahead of these pivotal meetings, numerous health journals worldwide have called in their editorial of September 2021, for urgent action to keep average global temperature increases below 1.5° C, halt the destruction of nature, and protect health.

We, as editors of on health journal, joint this call! As health professionals we cannot be blind and reject that this outcome is inevitable. We are in a unique and powerful position to help to spread scientific knowledge and also to create a public support for necessary measures to be taken. We call on our government, but also each citizen, each family, each hospital to act at their level by putting in place policies and act to restore the regulatory functions of nature to face the disasters to come. On the microlevel we can advice our patients about possibilities to minimize or prevent damage caused by climate change e.g. exposure to uv-radiation and heat. Perhaps we have to think about minimizing our ecological footprint by reducing travelling for congresses or by choosing for less polluted modes of transport.

Let's do it no!

" Pour ce qui est de l'avenir, il ne s'agit pas de le prévoir, mais de le rendre possible. (For the future, it is not a question of foreseeing it, but of making it possible) " – Antoine de Saint Exupéry, Citadelle, 1948

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**Uw vragen of commentaar
Vos questions ou commentaires**



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