



Climate and environment: Challenges for hospitals and healthcare services

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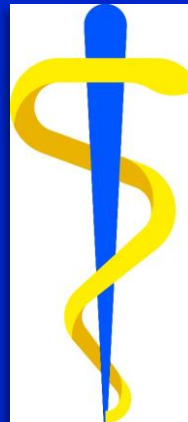
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We represent national medical associations across Europe, covering roughly:

1.7 million European Doctors from 37 countries

We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU institutions and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.



We promote the highest level of medical training and practice but also the provision of evidence-based, ethical and equitable healthcare services.

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CPME and environmental health

- CPME contributes to the debate on climate change to highlight the implications for health as climate change is the biggest global health threat in the 21st century
- New CPME policy on climate change and health, 2023
- CPME is co-publishing the annual Lancet Countdown policy briefs for European policy-makers since 2018
- Working Group on Climate Change and Health since 2022
- One Health approach is important as the health of humans and animals as well as their ecosystems are interconnected



CPME and environmental health

- Already the 2009 CPME policy on global warming and health highlighted that climate change demands a response from every individual and the society
- It emphasised the role of doctors who must be prepared and respond to the health threats caused by climate change
- Ever since, doctors have become more and more interested in the topic

CPME on air quality and health

- Air pollution and climate change are inseparable issues as climate change can affect air quality, and certain air pollutants can affect climate change
- The Ambient Air Quality Directives set EU air quality standards which are now being revised
- The 2019 CPME policy on air quality and health calls on the EU to fully align the EU standards with the WHO guidelines and the latest scientific evidence



Air pollution causes hundreds of thousands of premature deaths in Europe every year. EU air quality standards must be updated by 2030 at the latest.



Dr Christiaan Keijzer | President

CPME MEDICINE EUROPEANS
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New CPME policy on climate change and health

- Highlights climate change's impact on health and discusses particularly:
 - air quality
 - extreme weather events
 - communicable diseases
 - mental health
 - health inequalities
 - food systems

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.

Policy on climate change and health

Healthcare sector's action has become a necessary and immediate priority

European doctors recommend the EU, its member states, and local level policymakers to:

1. Ensure that the targets of the EU climate law will be met by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through more sustainable energy management, transport, and food choices which also result in improved health. This can be done by increasing the use of renewable energy and phasing out the use of fossil fuels, promoting energy saving strategies, and supporting countries affected by the shift. Moreover, it is crucial to invest in more sustainable transport systems, improve urban and residential planning, increase and preserve green spaces, and preserve forests. Finally, it is necessary to make food systems more sustainable and offer people healthy and affordable ways to change their dietary habits, e.g. by shifting towards more sustainably and organically produced high-quality food.
2. Update the EU ambient air quality standards to fully align the new WHO guidelines and the latest scientific evidence on the health effects of air pollution by 2030 at the latest.
3. Strengthen the climate resilience of health systems. This includes putting in place public health plans to help all citizens cope with the consequences of climate change such as extreme weather events. Health systems should also be prepared to care for increased number of migrants due to climate change.
4. Mental health support should be included, and health inequalities taken into consideration in the response strategies to the climate crisis. For example, hospitalisations for psychiatric disorders and emergency psychiatric visits tend to increase during heatwaves.

Doctors' role in sustainable healthcare

- Healthcare services have a key role to play in reducing their own carbon footprint and achieving net-zero emissions
- Globally, the health sector accounts for 4.4% of greenhouse gas emissions, and even more in many European countries
- Without action, the healthcare sector's absolute global emissions would grow enormously from a 2014 baseline and more than triple by 2050
- The healthcare sector has to adapt and become resilient to climate change

Duurzaamheid in de zorg

Klimaat, milieu en gezondheid beïnvloeden elkaar. Klimaatverandering en milieuvuiling leveren gezondheidsproblemen op, zowel nu als in de toekomst. Veel dokters zien nu al patiënten met klachten die ontstaan zijn door klimaatverandering en milieuvuiling.

De zorgsector is ook zelf vervuilend. Zo gebruikt onze sector veel grondstoffen, produceert veel niet-circulair afval en is verantwoordelijk voor 7% van CO₂ uitstoot in Nederland. Daarnaast raakt het oppervlaktewater verontreinigd door medicijnresten.

De KNMG ziet een belangrijke rol voor artsen bij de verduurzaming van de zorg. Niet voor niets heeft duurzaamheid een plek in de KNMG-Gedragscode voor artsen: Als arts ben je je bewust van de relatie tussen gezondheid, klimaat en milieu en zet je je in voor een duurzame zorgsector en gezonde leefwereld.

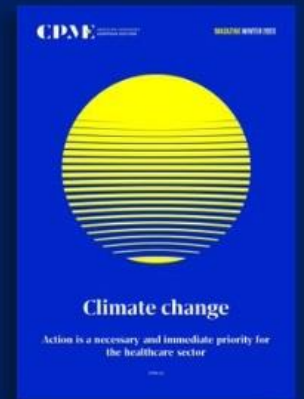
Op deze pagina vind je handvatten voor hoe je dit in de praktijk brengt.



Towards more sustainable healthcare – CPME recommendations

- We can increase efforts to make healthcare delivery more sustainable and climate neutral, and de-carbonise healthcare services
- Firstly, the most sustainable healthcare is the reduced need for healthcare. Therefore, prevention of disease at all points of healthcare is essential.
- Investment in research in sustainability and patient-safe healthcare
- CPME policy highlights three key areas: 1) energy use, 2) procurement, and 3) waste

European doctors' magazine highlights climate change as immediate priority for healthcare sector



Energy use

- Healthcare services should use renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power (and advocate for a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels) to improve their energy efficiency
- The transition requires investments in low carbon technologies and better building design including insulation and correct ventilation management
- In addition to the use of energy, the operators of healthcare facilities should also optimise the use of other resources such as water and paper

Procurement

- Public procurement is one of the keys to more sustainable production, transport, and consumption patterns of pharmaceutical products, food, medical devices, and other hospital equipment
- Greener manufacturing, packaging, and transport processes, and better awareness of prudent use of pharmaceuticals, e.g. more rational pack sizes
- More local procurement options and shorter supply chains, e.g. locally produced seasonal food and in smaller amounts

Waste

- Waste management and recycle practices must be improved, and waste in general reduced
- Special attention to the use of plastics and single-use medical devices as well as disposal of pharmaceuticals
- Practical examples:
 - Reprocessing and remanufacturing single-use medical devices
 - Promoting reusable products such as reusable gowns or tableware
 - Selecting surgical equipment more carefully
 - Optimising food purchases to reduce food waste
 - Redirecting food waste for example through donation, recycling or composting strategies

Focus: Pharmaceutical pollution

- Governments and regulators have a role in establishing evidence-based and enforceable targets for maximum levels of the pharmaceutical ingredients discharged into the environment.
- Pharmaceutical effluent greatly contributes to antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- The European Union should consider the impact of offshore pharmaceutical manufacturing on pollution, and the spread of AMR, including in imports and trade agreements.



Many thanks for your attention!

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