

Improving Climate Awareness and the Knowledge Related to Climate Change's Health Impacts on Medical Schools

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Abstract : Over the past hundred years, human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, have released enough carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to dissipate additional heat into the lower atmosphere and affect the global climate. Climate change affects many social and environmental determinants of health: clean air, safe drinking water, and adequate food. Our aim is to draw attention to the effects of climate change on the health and health care system. Improving climate awareness and the knowledge related to climate change's health impacts are essential among medical students and practicing medical doctors. Therefore, in their everyday practice, they also need some assistance and up-to-date knowledge of how climate change can endanger human health and deal with these novel health problems. Our activity, based on the cooperation of more universities, aims to develop new curriculum outlines and learning materials on climate change's health impacts for medical schools. Special attention is intended to pay to the possible preventative measures against these impacts. For all of this, the project plans to create new curriculum outlines and learning materials for medical students, elaborate methodological guidelines and create training materials for medical doctors' postgraduate learning programs. The target groups of the project are medical students, educational staff of medical schools and universities, practicing medical doctors with special attention to the general practitioners and family doctors. We had searched various surveys, domestic and international studies about the effects of climate change and statistical estimation of the possible consequences. The health effects of climate change can be measured only approximately by considering only a fraction of the potential health effects and assuming continued economic growth and health progress. We can estimate that climate change is expected to cause about 250,000 more deaths. We conclude that climate change is one of the most serious problems of the 21st century, affecting all populations. In the short- to medium-term, the health effects of climate change will be determined mainly by human vulnerability. In the longer term, the effects depend increasingly on the extent to which transformational action is taken now to reduce emissions. We can contribute to reducing environmental pollution by raising awareness and by educating the population.

Keywords : climate change, health impacts, medical students, education

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