

Medical journals come together to put health at the heart of the climate change agenda

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Several leading medical journals have come together to urge health professionals everywhere to put health at the heart of climate change negotiations.

An editorial published simultaneously in the *BMJ*, the *Lancet* and the *Finnish Medical Journal* today, warns that the links between climate policy and health policy must not be overlooked. The editorial has also been made available for publication in all peer reviewed medical journals worldwide through the World Association of Medical Editors.

Written by Robin Stott and Ian Roberts on behalf of the Climate and Health Council, it is a call to action for [health professionals](#) across the world to help tackle the health effects of climate change.

Failure to agree radical reductions in emissions spells a global health catastrophe, they say.

Later this month, representatives from countries around the world will meet at the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Mexico. Stott and Roberts argue that "if the delegates at this conference think that obesity and climate change are unrelated, they would be wrong. The planet is getting hotter, its people are getting fatter, and the use of fossil fuel energy is the cause of both."

They argue that moving to a low carbon economy "could be the next great public health advance." For example, a low carbon economy will

mean less pollution and a need for more physical activity. A low carbon diet (especially eating less meat) and taking more exercise will mean less cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and even depression. A reduction in car use and meat consumption would also cut world food prices, they add.

They believe that health professionals everywhere have a responsibility to put health at the heart of climate change negotiations. "Responding to climate change could be the most important challenge that health professionals face," they say. "We invite colleagues everywhere to join us in tackling this major public health scourge of the 21st century."

They are also urging health professionals to commit to action by signing the Climate and Health Council pledge (www.climateandhealth.org/pledge), and by contacting their health minister "to ensure that the links between [climate policy](#) and [health policy](#) are known and fully taken into account in all [climate change](#) negotiations."

Provided by British Medical Journal

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