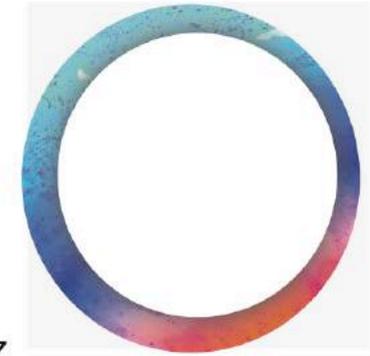


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Climate Change and Health

Anja Leetz, Environmental Health Expert
Geneve, 18th May 2019

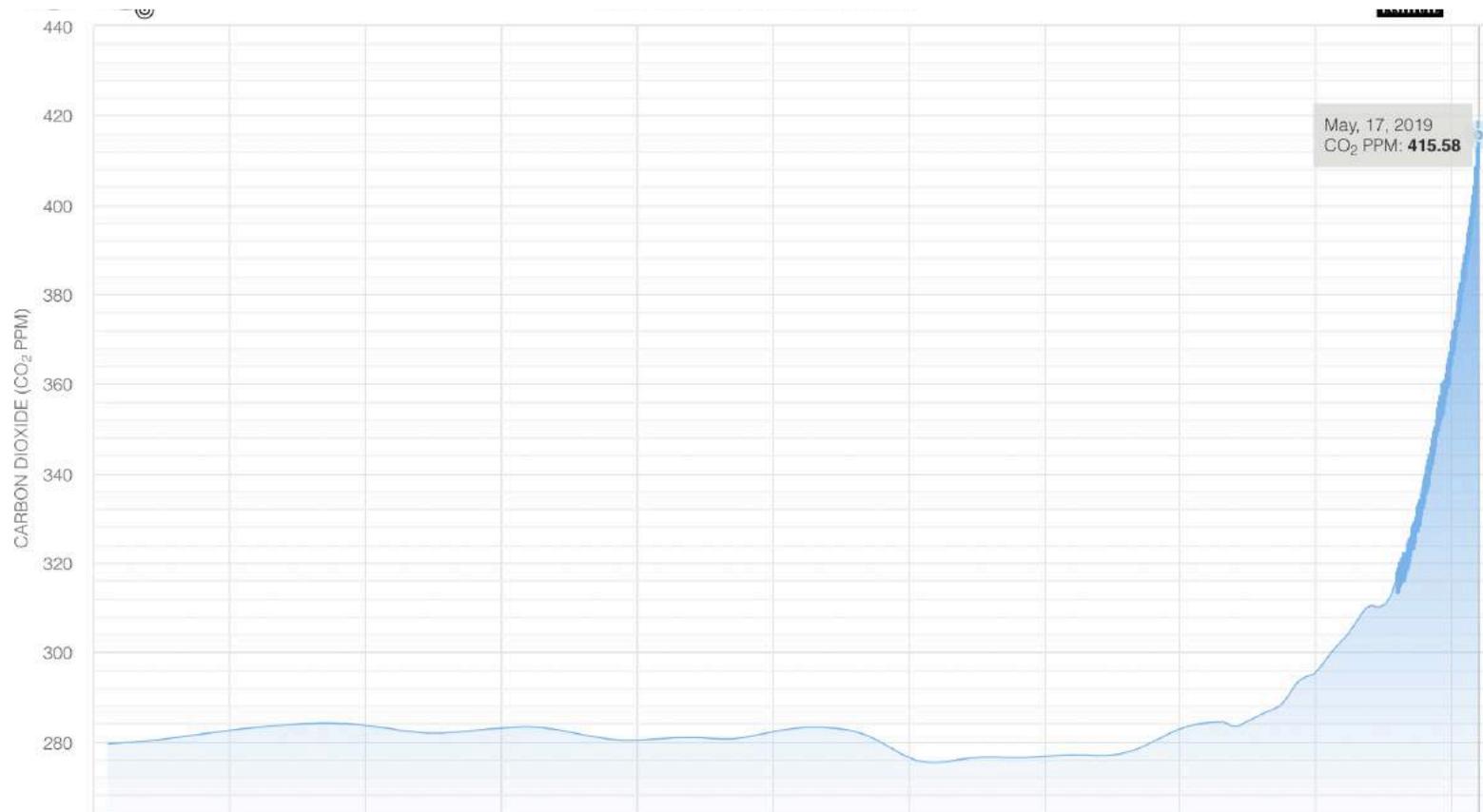
Global Climate and Health Alliance

- + Health NGOs, health professional organisations, health and environment alliances from around the world
- + Set up 2011, 23 member organisations
- + Provide leadership
- + Advocate for climate and health
- + Policy and research
- + Engage and inform

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<http://climateandhealthalliance.org>

CO₂ ppm: 415,58 – 18 May 2019



Source: <https://www.co2levels.org>

Multiple stressors: climate crisis, species loss, air pollution, chemical and pharma pollution, waste, plastic pollution



Quelle: Alexander Gerst/Morgenpost



Coral bleaching

Quelle: Wikipedia



Lancet/BMJ

- + *“The health sector can play a key role in helping societies adapt to the effects of climate change and the risk it poses to human health.”*

Source: The Lancet, Vol. 373 May 16, 2009

- + *“Climate change is global. Emissions know no frontiers. And the necessary measures should be seen not as a cost but as an opportunity(...) what is good for the climate is good for health.”*

Source: British Medical Journal. BMJ; 2009;339:b366g

Some policy documents (2009-2019)

- + 2009 Lancet Commission: "Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century."
- + 2015 Lancet Commission: "Climate change threatens to undermine the last half century of health gains"
- + 2016, 2017, 2018 Lancet Countdown on climate "Climate change isn't just hurting the planet – it's a public health emergency"
Christina Figueres, advisory board to Lancet (2017)
- + 2018 WHO special report on climate change and health
- + 2019 BMJ: "Climate breakdown is an immediate health threat..."

Climate change amplifies existing health risks

- + Asthma, respiratory allergies and chronic respiratory disorders (air pollution – burning fossil fuels for power, transport, industry for products)
- + Heat-related illnesses and death
- + Extreme weather-related injuries and mortality (i.e. cyclone Idai)
- + Chronic diseases
- + Infectious diseases: vector-, zoonotic-, water- and food-borne diseases (malaria, dengue in middle of Italy)
- + Malnutrition and child development complications
- + Stress-related and mental health disorders
- + Population displacement and migration
- + Instability and conflict (i.e. Syria)

4.2 million

deaths every year as a result of exposure to ambient (outdoor) air pollution

3.8 million

deaths every year as a result of household exposure to smoke from dirty cookstoves and fuels

91%

of the world's population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO guideline limits

Who is at risk?

- + Environmental cause about 1 / 4 of all deaths and disease burden globally
- + Air pollution 7 million avoidable deaths/year
- + 50% of world population exposed to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene, more than 800.000 preventable deaths/year
- + Vulnerable people living on small islands, the Arctic, water stressed communities, low lying areas and those in the least developed countries and regions
- + Health equity challenge

Paris Agreement & IPCC report

- + Paris Agreement (2015) – legally binding, 195 countries, hold temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and limit increase to 1,5°C above pre-industrial levels
- + Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (2018) rapid and far-reaching transition in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities. CO₂ to be cut by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050.
- + UN biodiversity report (2019) – 1 million species (plant and animals) will disappear within a decade

WHO: Climate change and health (1990-2009)

- + Potential health effects on climatic change (1990)
- + Climate change and human health: an assessment (1996)
- + Climate change and human health: impact and adaptation (2000)
- + World Health Assembly resolution on climate change and health (2008)
- + Protecting health from climate change: connecting science, policy and people (2009)
- + Healthy hospitals, healthy planet, healthy people (WHO/HCWH) (2009)
- + The health benefits of tackling climate change (Lancet 2009)

WHA72

- + Interlinkage to A72/11 Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Implementation for Sustainable development
- + Resolution WHA69/12 (2016) on the global strategy on human resources for health: work force 2030.
- + A72/15 draft WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change, report by DG, assembly to take note of report and report progress in two years time
- + A72/16 draft plan of action on climate change and health in small islands developing States (Bonn, 2017), report by DG, assembly to take note of report and report progress in two years time

WHO's role and leadership in health, environment and climate change

+ A72/15 report

Key platforms for implementation



Intervention areas



Actions

- + Fridays4Future
- + Cities declaring climate emergencies
- + Extinction rebellion
- + Sense of urgency (11 years left before major systems collapse, Guardian using a different language now: climate emergency, crisis or breakdown, global heating, wildlife, fish populations, climate science denier)
- + Climate justice is an intergenerational justice

Health systems ecological footprint

- + NHS in England, is responsible for 26% of total public sector GHG emissions
- + 8% of US emissions are from healthcare
- + 10% of Brazil's energy consumption comes from hospitals
- + The U.S. healthcare sector is the largest consumer of carcinogenic chemicals in medical devices, disinfectants and building materials
- + China spends \$10 billion a year on healthcare construction
- + Half the world's population is exposed to the negative health impacts of medical waste

Thanks for your attention!

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- + Declaration of interests: none

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Medical students holding a vigil for climate change in Munich, April 2019

Photo copyright: Thomas Vonier