

Special issue of *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* confronts climate change and health

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Hurricanes Maria and Lee. Credit: NOAA Satellites

A special issue of the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* explores climate change, global health, and the role of nursing in addressing environmental changes and protecting vulnerable people and populations.

The issue is guest edited by Eileen Sullivan-Marx, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean and Erlene Perkins McGriff Professor of New York University's Rory Meyers College of Nursing, and Linda McCauley, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean and professor at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University.

In an editorial, Sullivan-Marx and McCauley write, "Scientists are clear that the planet is experiencing extremes in [climate change](#), but political debate lingers regarding the cause, human or otherwise, for [climate change](#)...Regardless, it is clear that climate is changing, and nursing needs to rise above this debate to address the issue as part of our scope of a discipline that focuses on health promotion, disease prevention, and environment measures within the interrelated concepts of person, environment, health, and nursing."

In the issue, nursing scholars present papers addressing the multitude of challenges that health providers face related to climate change in the United States and globally, and how nurses can play a role in addressing climate change. For instance, two NYU reports examine disaster preparedness and recovery in a hospital during and after its evacuation from Hurricane Sandy, focusing on the nursing workforce's challenges and resilience.

In addition, Ann Kurth, PhD, CNM, MPH, FAAN, dean and the Linda Koch Lorimer Professor of Nursing at Yale University, writes about importance of nursing in protecting planetary health, recognizing the need for the healthcare industry to reduce its carbon footprint and empowering nurses to identify and encourage sustainable practices within their practice domains and hospitals.

The issue also highlights the role that nursing educators can play in preparing the workforce of the future to care for populations - including vulnerable ones, such as children, older adults, and those with chronic

illnesses - experiencing uncertain climate conditions. Several papers in the issue discuss frameworks for integrating climate change content into health professional education, nursing's role in [disaster preparedness](#), and prevention of illness related to climate change.

"Recent natural disasters have had considerable health consequences, including deaths in nursing homes and an extreme lack of access to medical services. Now more than ever, it is critical that the nursing community work with other health professionals to plan for changing conditions and ensure sound decision-making when faced with difficult situations," said NYU Meyers' Sullivan-Marx. "We hope the papers in this issue will serve to lay a foundation for future engagement of nursing scholarship in addressing climate change globally."

"The papers in this special issue demonstrate the important roles that nurses play in extreme weather events, disaster response and protecting our most vulnerable populations," explained McCauley of the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. "As the largest health care profession, nurses will be generating research findings, applying evidence in protecting populations, and educating the workforce of the future."

Provided by New York University

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