

Healthy environment, healthy kidneys

June 7 2021



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Health has always been affected by climate and weather, but is increasingly clear that the change in climate is a significant threat to human health. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 24% of global deaths are linked to environmental factors. Climate

change and pollution can lead to undernutrition, mental disorders, and noncommunicable diseases including chronic kidney disease and acute kidney injury.

The burden of addressing the death and disability associated with [climate change](#) falls to nephrologists and other [healthcare professionals](#). At the same time, the healthcare sector makes a major contribution to the [climate](#) crisis, producing 4.4% of the global carbon footprint. The treatment of kidney disease is particularly resource intensive; for example, current hemodialysis practice is energy demanding, uses large quantities of water and creates substantial waste.

ERA-EDTA President Professor Christoph Wanner commented: "The ERA-EDTA was one of the first international medical societies to urge investment in the transformation to a greener healthcare. The theme of this year's fully virtual Congress, Healthy Environment, Healthy Kidneys, underlines the ERA-EDTA's commitment and the important role of nephrologists in addressing climate change."

The burden of climate change will fall heavily on younger people. During the ERA-EDTA Congress, a symposium will provide the opportunity to hear the views of younger healthcare professionals on climate change and health. There will also be a 45-minute discussion following the symposium between the speakers and medical students and nephrologists.

Dr. Martin Herrmann, President of the German Alliance for Climate and Change and Health, will discuss the threat of climate change to the public health achievements of the last century. At the same time, there is a major opportunity in addressing climate change, since climate protection measures are associated with great health benefits. Climate activists have shown how citizens, including health professionals, can take the lead in building momentum to achieve real change that

transforms policy.

Professor Christian Witt (Germany) will highlight the morbidity and mortality induced by climate change in people with chronic diseases. More research is needed to identify the patients most vulnerable to global warming. Adaptive strategies are essential, especially in the heat islands of metropolitan areas, which will be 11C warmer than rural areas. Examples include the green, climate-adapted hospital of the future, and telemedicine and early-warning systems to prevent disease exacerbation caused by heat stress.

Dr. Sylvia Hartmann, Vice Chair of the German Alliance for Climate Change and Health, will present the perspectives of the coming medical generation on the climate crisis. Healthcare professionals have a unique responsibility to take action. Beyond daily medical routines, healthcare professionals must demonstrate the health emergency represented by climate change. It is essential to act at once to protect the climate, and conserve and restore the environment. This calls for personal, professional and political action, and for the support of all of society.

"Throughout the world [younger people](#) are in the vanguard of action against global warming, and have shown us that addressing climate change is everyone's responsibility. I look forward to hearing their views on climate change and health during the ERA-EDTA Congress," concluded Professor Wanner.

More information: [1] World Health Organization. Health and environment. www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/alth-and-environment (last accessed 15 May 2021)

[2] Borg M & Bi P. Nature Rev Nephrol 2021;17:294-5

[3] Healthcare without Harm. 2019. noharm-global.org/documents/he...

[ate-footprint-report](#)

[4] Blankestijn PJ, et al. Nephrol Dial Transplant 2018;33(6):901-3

Provided by ERA-EDTA

Citation: Healthy environment, healthy kidneys (2021, June 7) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-healthy-environment-kidneys.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.