



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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## Closing the Divide on Global Access to Pain Control and Palliative Care

People highly value the avoidance of pain and suffering, yet priority-setting methods that guide health-investment decisions focus almost exclusively on extending life and increasing productivity. In clinical medicine, the obsession with extension of life and treatment of disease, at any pecuniary or emotional cost, displaces adequate attention to human dignity.

[Read More on The Lancet](#)



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## Three Ways Open Data Can Help Forests

The open data movement, the idea that certain data should be freely available to everyone, can drive innovation, make government and corporate activities more transparent and improve decision-making about natural resources. Global Forest Watch (GFW), an online forest monitoring platform, has helped make data accessible and visible to the public. GFW is working to meet these challenges to make timely, decision-relevant forest information available through data mining, partnership and advocacy.

[Read More on wri.org](#)



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## Obesity Gene Discovery Could Forever Change Weight Loss

Scientists have finally figured out how the key gene tied to obesity makes people fat, a major discovery that could open the door to an entirely new approach to the problem beyond diet and exercise. The discovery challenges the notion that when people get obese it was basically their own choice because they choose to eat too much or not exercise.

[Read More on Huffpost](#)

## Can Mobile Technology Revolutionize Data Use in the WASH Sector?

Proposed Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #6, achieving universal access to clean water and sanitation by 2030, is an immense challenge. Considering that over 650 million people still don't have access to safe water and a staggering 2.3 billion people in the world don't have sanitation, getting sustainable access to everyone, everywhere is a complex task. Data will play an integral role in reaching this goal.

[Read More on Devex](#)



## Millions of Ethiopians Face Severe Food Shortages

Millions of Ethiopians face hunger as a result of the failure of crucial seasonal rains, a problem increasingly linked to climate change. 3.7 million of Ethiopia's citizens will require humanitarian assistance between August and December of this year, up from 3.2 million in January. The 16 percent increase follows the failure of the Belg rains, which normally fall between February and May.

[Read More on nazaret.com](#)





## Climate Change Shrinking Uganda's Lakes and Fish

Climate change is reducing the size of several species of fish on lakes in Uganda and its neighboring East African countries, with a negative impact on the livelihoods of millions people who depend on fishing for food and income. Studies conducted on Lake Victoria, which is shared by three East African countries, indicate that indigenous fish species have shrunk in size due to an increase in temperatures in the water bodies.

[Read More on ipsnews](#)

## Without Humans the Whole World Could Look Like Serengeti

The fact that the greatest diversity of large mammals is found in Africa reflects past human activities and not climatic or other environmental constraints. This is determined in a new study, which presents what the world map of mammals would look like if modern man had never existed. The study shows what the natural worldwide diversity patterns of mammals would be like in the absence of past and present human impacts.

[Read More on ScienceDaily](#)



## Shade Balls Protect LA Water Supply During Drought

The black, plastic spheres, partially filled with water, that are now in a Los Angeles reservoir by the millions are part of a \$34 million project to protect the region's water supply from contaminants and evaporation. Pure black carbon gives the balls their color after being added to the plastic to absorb UV rays. That prevents sunlight from penetrating the plastic and getting to either the water inside the balls or beneath them.

[Read More on cnbc.com](#)



## The UN at 70

The United Nations will mark its 70th anniversary when world leaders assemble this month at its headquarters in New York. Though there will be plenty of fanfare, it will inadequately reflect the UN's value, not only as the most important political innovation of the 20th century, but also as the best bargain on the planet. But if the UN is to continue to fulfill its unique and vital global role in the twenty-first century, it must be upgraded.

[Read More on Project Syndicate](#)

## Frequent Air Travel Has Hidden Health Risks and Social Consequences

Consultants who commute to distant cities by air every week, business executives who hop on planes to take meetings around the world, and others whose work requires constant movement are often perceived to be leading glamorous lives. Jet-setting is a symbol of success, being connected and having attained high social status. But such frequent travel is accompanied by frequently overlooked downsides.

[Read More on Newsweek](#)



## Highest Dementia in the World in Remote Australian Aboriginal Communities

The incidence of dementia in remote Aboriginal communities is the highest in the world. Dementia is placing strain on these communities. The greatest risk factors found were head injuries along with stroke, low body mass index and high blood pressure. Head injuries can be explained in the main by the higher than average number of car and other accidents, and falls.

[Read More on ajp.com](#)



## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.”

Bell Hooks

Author & Feminist

## EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
<b>Sept. 15</b>	The Global Leadership Series: Supporting the use of research evidence in policymaking	Toronto Canada	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/global-leadership-series-supporting-the-use-of-research-evidence-in-policymaking-tickets-">https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/global-leadership-series-supporting-the-use-of-research-evidence-in-policymaking-tickets-</a>
<b>Sept. 16-18</b>	Community Health Centers: Agents for Care, Agents of Change	Ottawa Canada	<a href="http://www.cachc.ca/acac2015">http://www.cachc.ca/acac2015</a>
<b>Oct. 5-9</b>	Ryerson Social Justice Week	Toronto Canada	<a href="http://www.ryerson.ca/socialjustice/">http://www.ryerson.ca/socialjustice/</a>
<b>Nov. 5-7</b>	Canadian Conference on Global Health 2015	Montreal Canada	<a href="http://www.csih.org/en/events/ccgh2015">http://www.csih.org/en/events/ccgh2015</a>
<b>Nov. 16-18</b>	2015 Canadian Undergraduate Conference on Healthcare (CUCOH)	Kingston Canada	<a href="http://www.cucoh.com/about">http://www.cucoh.com/about</a>
<b>Nov. 18-20</b>	9th World Alliance For Risk Factor Surveillance (WARFS) & The Americas' Network for Chronic Disease Surveillance (AMNET) Global Conference 2015	St. John's Antigua	<a href="http://warfs15.squarespace.com">http://warfs15.squarespace.com</a>



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**FYI**

## **Six Questions To Ask Before You Invest In a Social Enterprise**

1. Why do I want to do this?
2. Am I impact agnostic, or do I really care about tackling one particular challenge?
3. What returns do I want?
4. What skills can I add?
5. What kind of impact reporting do I want?
6. Can I do this on my own?

[Read More on fastcoexist.com](http://fastcoexist.com)



**CCGHR CCRSM**

Canadian Coalition for  
Global Health Research

Coalition canadienne pour la  
recherche en santé mondiale

## **Funding of Global Health Research**

In Canada, we are witnessing disturbing trends in global health research funding, if not health research more generally:

1. interference with academic freedom, independence of researchers and muzzling of publicly funded researchers, For example, well-documented cases of intimidation have prompted wide-spread concern throughout Canada scientific research community (<http://www.truenorthsmartandfree.ca/>)
2. decreased, untied funding of GHR, in particular among university-based researchers, and increased emphasis on matched funding as a requirement, creating a bias in favour of corporate funding. For example, changes being implemented at CIHR and other federal agencies are prompting concern about the capacity to conduct independent study, especially about equity-sensitive matters that affect health <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/scientists-will-be-forced-to-knock-on-doors-under-health-research-grant-changes-1.2858862>

As the Canadian federal election campaign unfolds and a new government (whatever party) assumes control this October, addressing these issues represents an opportunity for the Coalition to engage in advocacy for global health research (GHR). As part of the CCHGR's advocacy role, we encourage our members to consider and actively bring forward the following three talking points: Canada must regain its status as a respected global leader in global health and the promotion of health equity. The health of Canadians is affected by global events – investments by Canada to address global health problems and health equity are a critical part of an overall national health strategy that is needed now. The trend to subordinate public sector research funding for global health and development to the narrow interests of Canadian private sector corporations undermines progress. It is in the interest of Canadians for our government to change this policy and restore unfettered access to funds for excellent high impact innovative research in this area. Strong, publicly funded research, based on merit and free of conditions for matching funds, has historically been shown to be the engine of progress.

Independence of science must be respected. There should be no government interference or intimidation that interferes with the communication of research findings.

Prepared by: Garry Aslanyan, Peter Berti, Michael Clarke, Steven Hoffman, Charles Larson, Jerry Spiegel and Annalee Yassi





## Conversation on Conflict, Transition and Recovery

The global development community invests more than \$100 billion in aid over the course of a year to promote growth and make progress toward development goals. But what happens when a country faces obstacles such as a civil unrest, political transition or natural disaster? Lapses in development due to crises can erase progress in an instant, making mitigation and transition all the more critical.

Every country has its own unique challenges. How can we differentiate the successful transitions we've witnessed in Rwanda and Somaliland from the prolonged conflicts in Syria and South Sudan so that we might achieve more stability and peace in the world?

Part of the solution is dialogue and sharing lessons learned in some crises that could be applied to other situations.

[Read More on Devex](#)





## PHYSICIANS

Medical practitioners had to conjure supernatural powers. They are often represented as priests with shaven skulls to show that they abided by the laws of ritual purity. Physicians used magical spells along with medical prescriptions and surgery.

### Seated statue of Luty

Luty was a royal scribe and chief physician of the Pharaoh.

Tomb statue

Limestone

Saqqara

19th Dynasty (1307–1196 BC)

Collection Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, AST 10

From the Magic Egypt exhibition at the Museum of Civilization, Quebec City, Canada (August, 2015).

#### This Newsletter is FREE.

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