



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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A Dengue Vaccine Is Here – Now What?

The first ever dengue vaccine, introduced by Sanofi Pasteur, has been given the green light in Mexico, the Philippines and Brazil. More countries in Latin America and South-east Asia are preparing to follow. But how can we be sure the vaccine gets to those who need it, and what needs to be done to measure its true impact?

Getting the most out of the new dengue vaccine will mean investing in logistics, surveillance and diagnostics.

[Read More on Breakdengue.org](http://Breakdengue.org)



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Transforming Transportation: From Global Targets to Local Action

Last year saw major international commitments on critical topics like climate change, sustainable development and road safety. From the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals to the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety and the climate agreement reached at COP21, these commitments provide clear international targets for the next 15 years; transportation is at the heart of them.

[Read More on Devex](http://Devex)





Device for Speedier Tuberculosis Diagnosis

A device that can magnify tuberculosis bacteria without using a conventional glass lens could soon replace expensive lens-based microscopes in developing countries. The gadget could diagnose tuberculosis in a sample within seven days, while also reducing the danger of lab technicians catching the disease. Conventional tests require a technician to regularly take photos of the growing bacteria over a time period of 10-14 days, typically meaning a long wait before diagnosis. The new device automatically takes photos of samples in a sealed petri dish using an LED light and electronic sensor. The microscope is connected to a computer using software that captures the patterns formed by suspected tuberculosis bacteria.

[Read More on SciDevNet](#)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene 'Challenges' Facing Disabled Malawians

People with physical disability in Malawi name water, sanitation and hygiene facilities as the most challenging things to access in their daily lives. Every single one of the participants in the study reported facing at least one barrier, failure to access to good water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Sanitation facilities which are user friendly must be built.

[Read More on Community-Led Total Sanitation](#)

[Read Also All Africa](#)



Thailand Wants to Jail British Rights Activist for Fighting Exploitation

British human rights activist Andy Hall was indicted by a Bangkok court on charges of criminal defamation and computer crimes relating to a report entitled "Cheap Has a High Price" released three years ago exposing severe working conditions in Thai factories. Hall, who has spent more than a decade working on migrant workers' rights in both Thailand and Burma, now faces up to seven years in jail if found guilty at a 12-day trial at Bangkok South Criminal Court starting on May 19. This case highlights the growing repression of civil society representatives under Thailand's military government.

[Read More on Vice News](#)



Giant Icebergs Boost Southern Ocean Carbon Storage

Icebergs the size of Singapore could be playing a bigger role in how much carbon the Southern Ocean absorbs than previously thought. If more icebergs break off from Antarctica's ice sheets in a warmer world, they could inadvertently boost ocean carbon storage. This could help to offset the accumulating CO₂ in the atmosphere by a few percent.

So, just how giant is a giant iceberg? At least one side of it has to exceed 18km long – approximately the length of the Caribbean island of Grenada – but icebergs have been recorded as long as 295km.

[Read More on CarbonBrief](#)

Hydro Dams Boom Threatens a Third of the World's Freshwater Fish

One third of the world's freshwater fish are at risk if dozens of large hydroelectric dams are built in the Amazon. Very few dams have so far been built in the basins of the world's three great tropical rivers because of their remoteness and vast catchment areas. But rising demand for clean electricity in burgeoning tropical cities, and new roads to areas once considered impossible to access, have led to plans for over 450 dams for the three mega-diverse river basins. If the dams are built tropical freshwater biodiversity, which is at its most diverse in the three river basins, could be devastated.

[Read More on The Guardian](#)



14 Million Face Hunger in Southern Africa Due to Drought

About 14 million people face hunger in Southern Africa because of a drought that has been exacerbated by an El Nino weather pattern. The worst-affected country is Malawi, where 2.8 million people, 16 percent of the population, are expected to go hungry, followed by the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar where almost 1.9 million are at risk. With little or no rain falling in many areas and the window for the planting of cereals closing fast or already closed in some countries, the outlook is alarming. One particularly worrying symptom of southern Africa's vulnerability to food and nutrition security is the alarming rate of chronic malnutrition.

[Read More on Reuters Foundation News](#)



This is a Global Threat as Big as Climate Change

The global mortality rate from the flu pandemic of 1918 was 7,000 times as large as from the recent Ebola outbreak. AIDS profoundly changed the human experience in Africa. No one knows the probability of a recurrence of these kinds of disasters. History is too short to permit reliable estimates and in any event conditions are rapidly changing because of scientific improvements on the one hand, and huge increases in global interconnection on the other. This underscores the urgency of improving public health and doing all that can be done to counter pandemic risks.

[Read More on The Washington Post](#)

Rapid Switch to Renewable Energy can Put Paris Climate Goals Within Reach

Countries can deliver on the promises of the historic Paris climate change agreement by rapid scaling up wind and solar power to 36% of the global energy mix by 2030. The International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena) meeting in Abu Dhabi – the first major global gathering since Paris – is seen as an important test of countries' readiness to put those plans into action. Now comes the hard part, making good on those promises by translating emissions cutting targets into policies, and expanding access to clean energy technologies.

[Read More on The Guardian](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: Racism Faced by Aboriginals May Lead to Drug Abuse

For people who are aboriginal living in a city, experiencing high levels of racism, they're starting to feel that the environment is not safe, that they go to work and they experience discrimination; that they go to the grocery store and the floor walker is follows them aggressively. Systemic racism is believed to be one of the most important source of prescription drug abuse among indigenous people. Current health care systems are only starting to understand the impact.

[Read More on Calgary Herald](#)



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

How will the plummeting cost of oil affect action on climate change, most notably investment in low-carbon technologies?

"Cancelling or delaying high-carbon projects offers an opportunity to steer energy demand in a permanently cleaner direction," said Laszlo Varro, the International Energy Agency's chief economist.

"The low oil price provides a window for countries to implement fossil fuel subsidy reform," said Shane Tomlinson, senior research fellow of energy, environment and resources at Chatham House.

[Read More on CarbonBrief](#)

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Feb. 20	10th Annual Canadian Organic Growers Conference	Toronto Canada	http://torontochapter.wix.com/
Mar. 3-5	Conference on Global Status of Women and Girls	Virginia USA	http://globalstatusofwomen
Mar. 12	Moving Forward Together: Advancing Rehabilitation in a Global Context	Montreal Canada	https://www.mcgill.ca
Apr. 9-11	7th Annual Consortium of Universities for Global Health Conference	San Francisco USA	http://cugh.org/
Apr. 16-17	Global Health and Innovation Conference	New Haven USA	https://maestro
May. 13	Integrative Health Institute (IHI) Inaugural Conference	Edmonton Canada	https://uofa.ualberta.ca/
May. 13-15	Peace, Global Health and Sustainability (PEGASUS)	Toronto Canada	http://www.pegasusconference.ca/
May. 17-20	International Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health (ICIMH)	Las Vegas USA	https://www.cvent.com/
May. 26-27	Indigenous Health Conference	Toronto Canada	http://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/



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Sterilization of Indigenous Women an Act of Genocide

A new book is shedding light on the coercive sterilization of indigenous women in Canada in the 1970s.

An Act of Genocide, Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women was written by Karen Stote, an assistant professor of women and gender studies at Wilfred Laurier University in Ontario.

She documents 580 sterilizations of indigenous women that took place at federal hospitals between 1971 and 1974. The hospital in Moose Factory, Ont. conducted 147 of them. The Sioux Lookout, Ont. hospital is responsible for 61.

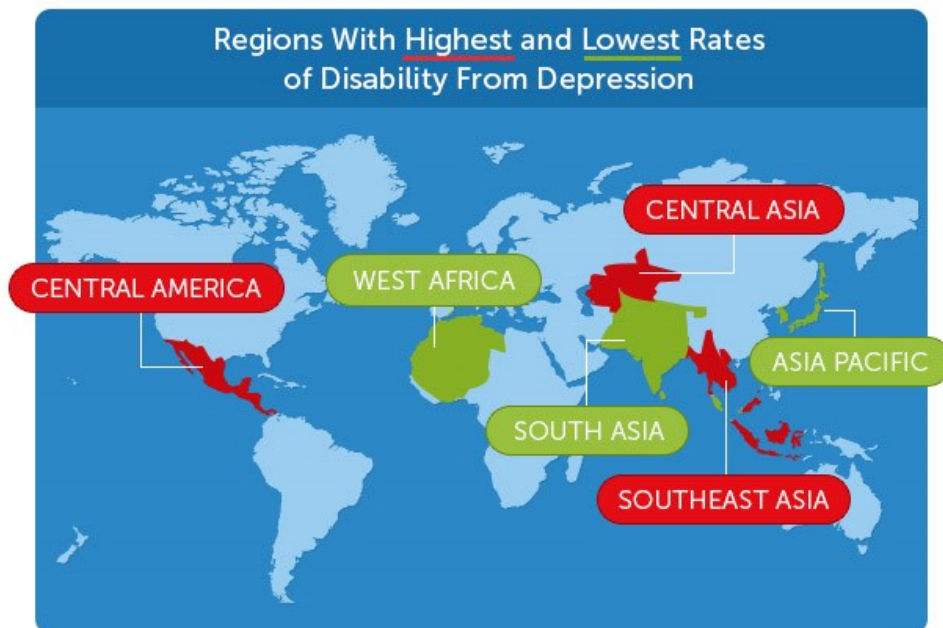
Evidence indicates this practice was carried out by eugenically minded doctors in Ontario and northern Canada, where aboriginal women were the prime targets. Other vulnerable populations were subject to sexual sterilization, but indigenous people are disproportionately represented in the statistics. Preventing indigenous women from getting pregnant was a means of limiting government responsibilities.

[Read More on CBC](#)



DEPRESSION: A LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE

Depression has inched up to No. 2 in worldwide rankings as a cause of disability.



[Find out More on Pinterest.com](#)

More Facts About Depression and Disability

- Globally, an estimated 298 million people had depression in 2010.
- Population growth and aging are said to be responsible for a 37.5% increase in depression-related disability from 1990-2010.
- Women and people of working age – especially those in their twenties – were found to be most affected by depression-related disability.





US Could Cut Power Emissions 78% by 2030 Using Existing Technology

In their pursuit of a connected nation, Americans built transcontinental railroads in the nineteenth century and the interstate highway system in the twentieth century. With a similar level of effort, the US could construct a nationwide energy infrastructure that cuts carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by up to 80%, a group of academics at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a US federal agency proposed. This could be achieved without increasing the cost of electricity, thus providing an economic incentive to tackle the problem of climate change.

This requires the construction of a lot more renewable energy power stations. Building a combination of 1,529GW of solar, wind, natural gas, nuclear and hydro would cover the power needs of the US while reducing CO₂ emissions by 78% and keeping costs lower than current projections.

The challenges involved in implementing a low-carbon, transcontinental system would be far from negligible. Barriers include the current regulatory, commercial and legal system, and the required investment in the new transmission system and power plants.

[Read More on CarbonBrief](#)

Advanced Study Institute
Psychiatry for a Small Planet
Ecosocial Approaches to
Global Mental Health

May 30 - June 1, 2016
Montréal, Québec



Division of Social & Transcultural Psychiatry
McGill University

For information & registration: www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych



For Nepal Double Trouble: Global Climate Changes and Regional Environmental Challenges

Nepal should be worried about how to deal with the climate changes in addition to its current fuel and political crises. The massive amount of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere by human activities, after the industrial age began, has warmed the earth significantly, postponing the recurrence of the ice age. That may come as a respite for the global population because invasion of ice could also become survival issue for many, especially the poor. Worse yet, Nepal's location between two top global emitters China and India means it needs to prepare for even more environmental consequences. Widespread misreporting of harmful gas emissions by Chinese electricity firms is threatening the country's attempts to rein in pollution. China gets nearly 75 percent of its electricity from coal fired power plants that are a major source of its notorious smog that led the country to issue a red alert last month. India's alarming air pollution levels and the stress of its rapid infrastructure development on the region's natural and biodiversity resources are equally worrying.

For Nepal, it will be double trouble: global climatic changes and regional environmental challenges.

[Read More on Kathmandupost](#)



From Havana, Cuba where health care is a priority for all the population and old cars, many from the 1950s, dance around this crumbling historic city in like a scene from an old movie (February 15, 2016).

This Newsletter is FREE.

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