



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

March 1, 2018

<https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>

Volume 4, Number 9

'SILVER BULLET' TO SUCK CO2 FROM AIR AND HALT CLIMATE CHANGE RULED OUT

Scientists say climate targets cannot be met using these technologies, which either risk huge damage to the environment or are very costly. Ways of sucking carbon dioxide from the air will not work on the vast scales needed to beat climate change, Europe's science academies have warned. From simply planting trees to filtering CO2 out of the air, the technologies that some hope could be a "silver bullet" in halting global warming either risk huge damage to the environment themselves or are likely to be very costly. [Read more on businessGreen.](#)



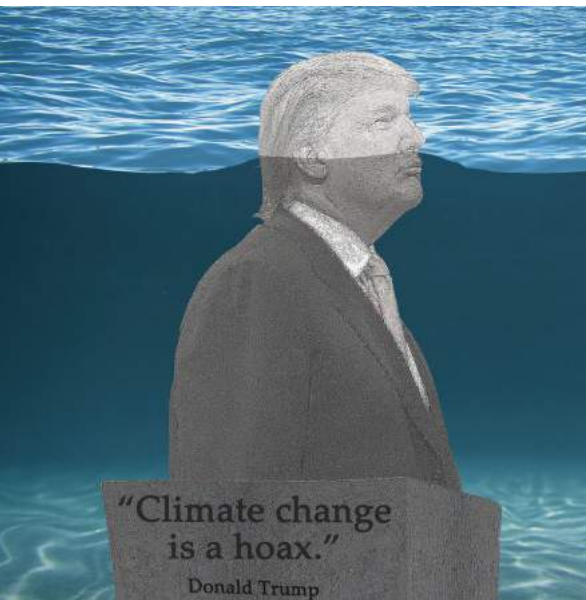
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FAO ADDRESSES THREAT OF ANIMAL-TO- HUMAN DISEASES AND AMR ACROSS ASIA- PACIFIC

The UN FAO has warned that Zoonotic diseases and misuse of antibiotics in animals and humans resulting in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) are converging in Asia-Pacific countries with potential deadly effects. 'Superbugs,' otherwise known as multiple-drug resistant bacteria, are on the rise worldwide, threatening the last lines of defence in treating humans and endangering food production systems because of the indiscriminate use of antimicrobials in livestock, including use of 'last hope' antibiotics such as Colistin in clinics, food and farming. Studies have shown that about all emerging infectious diseases reported during the second half of the 20th century (95 per cent) were zoonotic related (i.e., come to humans from animals). [Read more on Far Eastern Agriculture.](#)





U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES BREAK WITH TRUMP OVER CLIMATE THREATS

The U.S. intelligence community is at odds with the White House about threats America faces from climate change. The intelligence report describes how warming temperatures will exacerbate disasters, war, shortages, economic volatility and migration. Citing research showing that human activities have accelerated extinctions worldwide 100 to 1000 times normal rates, the analysts write that losses “will jeopardize vital ecosystems that support critical human systems.” President Donald Trump has called global warming a “Chinese hoax” and rejected the otherwise unanimous Paris Agreement to cut carbon pollution.

[Read more on Bloomberg.](#)

EXXON SUES THE SUERS IN FIERCE CLIMATE CHANGE CASE

As climate-change lawsuits against the oil industry mount, Exxon Mobil Corp. is taking a bare-knuckle approach rarely seen in legal disputes: It's going after the lawyers who are suing it. Experts say Exxon's combative strategy -- an extraordinary gambit to turn the tables -- is a clear sign of what's at stake for the fossil-fuel industry. So far, New York City and eight California cities and counties, including San Francisco and Oakland, have sued Exxon and other oil and gas companies. They allege that oil companies denied findings of climate-change scientists despite knowing that the use of fossil fuels posed “grave risk” to the planet. Some experts say Exxon's strategy goes beyond mere litigation tactics. “Exxon is positioning itself as a victim rather than a perpetrator.” [Read more on Bloomberg.](#)



CHINA IS RE-ASSIGNING 60,000 TROOPS – TO PLANT TREES

China will plant new forests covering an area of 84,000 square kilometers, roughly the size of Ireland, in 2018, as it aims to increase forest coverage to 23% of total landmass by the end of the decade. The current forested area stands at 21%. The actual number of soldiers mobilized is said to be over 60,000. The armed police force has a specially designated forestry branch to patrol and exercise jurisdiction in forested areas such as the northeastern Greater Khingan mountain range – dubbed ‘China's green lungs’ – in Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia provinces. Heavily polluted Hebei province, which encircles Beijing, has pledged to raise its total forest coverage to 35% by the end of 2020, and the bulk of the troops pulled back from the frontlines will be dispatched there for afforestation in a province that is seen as the major culprit in producing the fumes and smog that blanket not only Beijing but also large parts of northern China in cold seasons.

[Read more on Asia Times.](#)



AND THE GOLD MEDAL FOR VOMITING GOES TO...

This year's Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, now seem poised to offer spectators an epidemiological crash course in an even more pernicious human pathogen. By Feb. 8, at least 128 people in the host city had developed the vomiting, chills, diarrhea, and fevers caused by norovirus, and another 1,200 were under quarantine restrictions, suspected of being infected. None of these people were Olympic competitors — but that may not matter. Virologist Aron Hall of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called norovirus the “perfect human pathogen” because it rarely kills people but is so contagious and causes such violent illness to further spread its progeny that it is virtually impossible to eliminate the bug from a crowded human environment.

[Read more on Foreign Policy.](#)

SUICIDES INCREASE IN PUERTO RICO AFTER HURRICANE MARIA AS THE ISLAND FACES A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Children, veterans, parents, the elderly, the disabled, people with existing mental illness—there is likely no demographic that hasn't experienced anxiety or trauma due to this catastrophic event. We've heard a lot about infrastructure and debt reform in the months after Hurricane Maria. But whatever relief aid comes to Puerto Rico must include plans and services to address mental health. It is not sufficient to only pay attention to rebuilding physical structures and the economy, especially if it comes at the price of ignoring human beings who are suffering. Not only has the island changed forever, so has the psyche and mental well-being of its people.

[Read more on Daily Kos.](#)



ACCESS TO EMERGENCY HOSPITAL CARE PROVIDED BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Timely access to emergency care can substantially reduce mortality. International benchmarks for access to emergency hospital care have been established to guide ambitions for universal health care by 2030. However, no Pan-African database of where hospitals are located exists; therefore, we aim to complete a geocoded inventory of hospital services in Africa in relation to how populations might access these services in 2015, with focus on women of child bearing age. Physical access to emergency hospital care provided by the public sector in Africa remains poor and varies substantially within and between countries. Innovative targeting of emergency care services is necessary to reduce these inequities. This study provides the first spatial census of public hospital services in Africa.

[Read more on The Lancet.](#)



11 BRUTAL TRUTHS EVERY BABY BOOMER NEEDS TO HEAR (WRITTEN BY A MILLENNIAL)

The generation gap is fascinating. The most prized spending demographics lean younger, however, and to capture their attention you need to speak their language. Older generations, the ones who own the big companies and big brands, then need Millennials to help translate those messages to the demographics they hope to target—and in turn, Millennials need the older generations to help support our wild ideas. And, statistically speaking, the older generations are the ones with the funding. This has less to do with our generation, actually, and more to do with how our world is changing. More and more older adults, too, are making career changes not geared around making more money but focused on personal health, well-being, and fulfillment. When Millennials find something we love and that connects with us emotionally, our work ethic is unrivaled. If you can cater to that, we will work endlessly to be part of it. [Read more on ART+marketing.](#)

GERMANY EYES FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OFFER TO WEAN NATION OFF POLLUTING CARS

Proposals to offer Germans free travel on buses, trains, and trams across the country are currently under consideration by government ministers keen to wean the country off polluting private cars, according to reports. Germany wants to test free public transport offers across five cities in western Germany including Bonn, Essen, and Mannheim before the end of this year, with a view to expanding the policy nationwide in future. Germany is among nine EU member states including the UK, France and Spain currently in breach of legal air pollution limits, all of which were warned last month by EU environment commissioner Karmenu Vella they face court action unless they urgently clean up their air. The recent letter to Vella from the German ministers came in response to that warning. [Read more on businessGreen.](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: CORD BLOOD, BLOOD AND HAIR TESTS SHOW MERCURY EXPOSURE IN GRASSY NARROWS

Results support what people here have been saying for decades: That they have been exposed to dangerously high levels of mercury and younger generations have likely been affected as well. Here in Grassy Narrows, as more becomes known about the legacy of mercury contamination and more people receive their blood, hair and cord blood test results, time is measured in two parts — before and after the mercury was dumped. Before, most people worked in the local fishing and trapping industries, catering to tourists taking daytrips to catch walleye. After, the jobs disappeared. And the community has been plagued with intractable problems that affect First Nations communities across the country: extreme poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction and suicides.

[Read more on thestar.](#)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The impacts of the long-term trends toward a warming climate, more air pollution, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity are likely to fuel economic and social discontent -- and possibly upheaval -- through 2018,”

From an annual report from US intelligence agencies, the Worldwide Threat Assessment, which was officially submitted on February 13, 2018 to the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-13/u-s-intelligence-agencies-break-with-trump-over-climate-threats?wpsrc=nl_energy202&wpmm=1

EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Available Now	Global Health Watch 5 Launch	Online-available now	http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10778
March 9	Webinar Series: Preparing Your Article and Submitting to a Journal	12:00-1:30 p.m. GMT	http://www.healthsystemsglobal.org/webinars/34/Preparing-your-article-andsubmitting-to-a-journal.html
March 16-18	2018 CUGH Conference	New York Canada	www.CUGH2018.org
April 6-7	Closing the Gap: The Next 150 <i>Reconciliation and Health</i>	Ottawa Canada	https://www.upstreamconference.ca/
April 20-22	BioVision Alexandria 2018	Alexandria Egypt	http://www.bibalex.org/bva2018/home/StaticPage.aspx?page=69
May 25-27	Bethune Round Table: The Role of the Trainee in Global Surgery	Toronto Canada	https://bethuneroundtable.com/
June	McGill University Summer Institutes in Infectious Diseases and Global Health	Montreal Canada	http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/tuberculosis-research-methods/
Oct 8-12	5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Liverpool England	http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2018/



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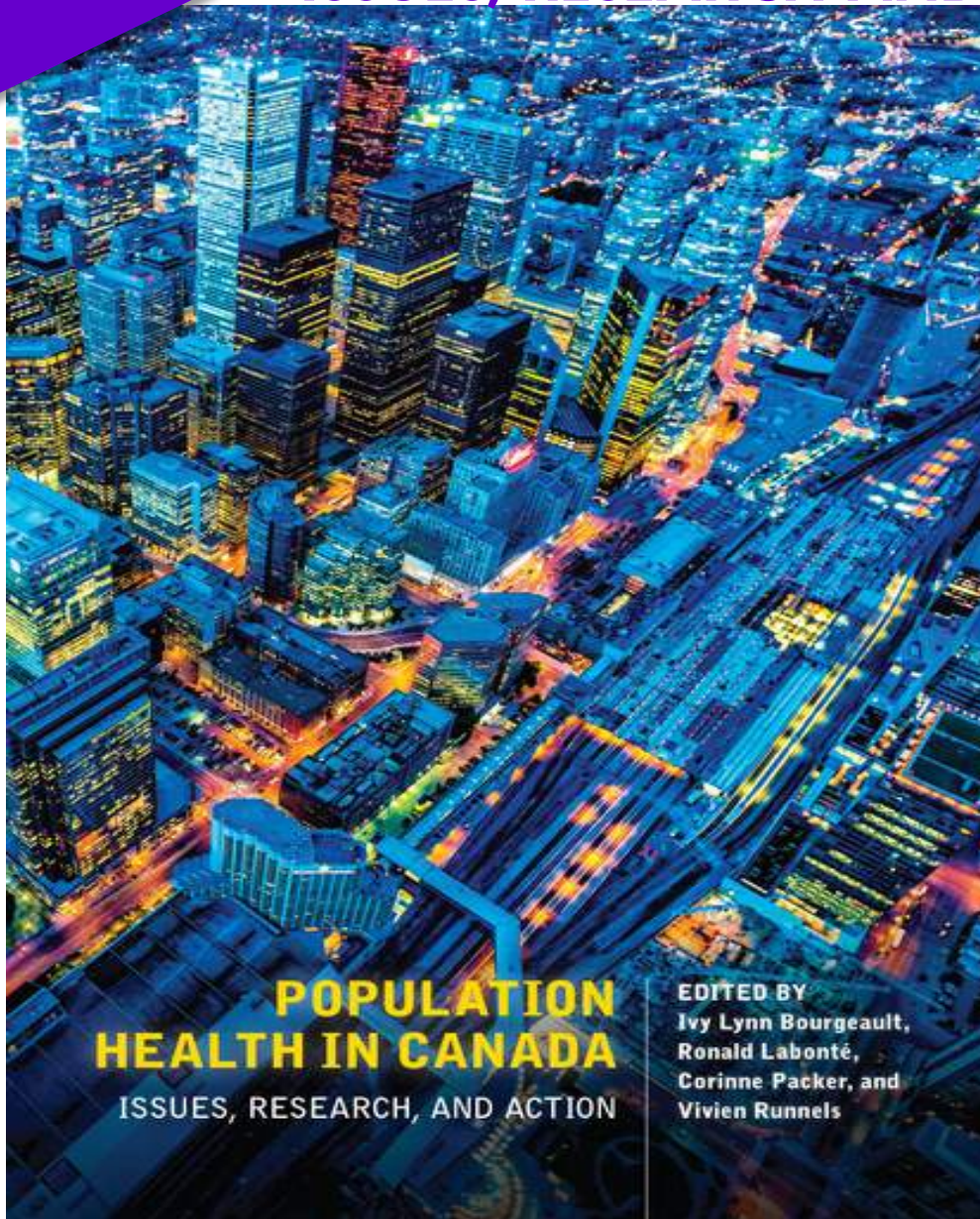
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NEW BOOK: POPULATION HEALTH IN CANADA ISSUES, RESEARCH AND ACTION



This contributed volume includes papers from the Population Health Improvement Research Network (PHIRN) of Ontario and offers a focused analysis of the social and economic determinants of health that impact the health status of populations in Ontario as well as the conditions that can improve the health status of populations across Canada.

The different sections address health policy theories, research methods, program interventions, and strategies for knowledge translation. *Population Health in Canada* is appropriate for use in upper-year undergraduate health sciences, social sciences, and political science programs, and for graduate study on the multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary nature of population health research. [Read more on Canadian Scholars.](#)



BORNEO'S ORANGUTAN POPULATION PLUNGED BY 100,000 SINCE 1999, NEW STUDY FINDS



The most comprehensive study of Borneo's orangutans estimates their numbers have plummeted by more than 100,000 since 1999, as the palm oil and paper industries shrink their jungle habitat and fatal conflicts with people increase. Researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and other institutions said the original population of the gentle ginger-haired great apes is larger than previously estimated but so is the rate of decline. The most dramatic declines were found in areas where tropical forests were cut down and converted to plantations for palm oil, which is used in a vast array of consumer products, and for timber.

Earlier this month, an orangutan on the Indonesian part of Borneo island died after being shot at least 130 times with an air gun, stabbed and clubbed, the second known killing of an orangutan in the Indonesian part of Borneo this year. Erik Meijaard, a conservationist involved in the study, said current estimates of the orangutan population on Borneo range from 75,000 to 100,000. According to the IUCN, their numbers could drop to 47,000 by 2025 from their 2016 population estimate of about 105,000. Sumatra's orangutan, a separate species, is even more endangered, with a population estimated at about 12,000 animals.

"Orangutans are a very slow breeding species," he said in a statement. "If only one in 100 adult orangutans is removed from a population per year, this population has a high likelihood to go extinct."

[Read more on South China Morning Post.](#)



THE BREAKNECK RISE OF CHINA'S COLOSSUS OF ELECTRIC-CAR BATTERIES

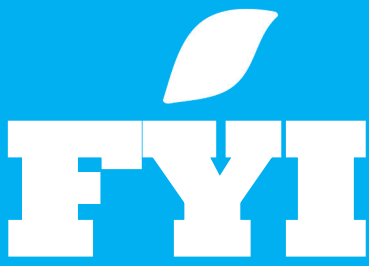


The next global powerhouse in the auto industry comes from a small city in a tea-growing province of southeast China, where an unheralded maker of electric-vehicle batteries is planning a \$1.3 billion factory with enough capacity to surpass the output of Tesla and dwarf the suppliers for battery-powered cars by GM, Nissan and Audi. Contemporary Amperex Technology Ltd., or CATL, already sells the most batteries to the biggest electric-vehicle makers in the biggest EV market: China.

Now it wants to use proceeds from a pending initial public offering backed by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. to get under the hoods of more European marques and secure customers in the U.S. The company plans to raise 13.1 billion yuan (\$2 billion) as soon as this year by selling a 10 percent stake, at a valuation of about \$20 billion. The share sale would finance construction of a battery-cell plant second in size only to Tesla Inc.'s Gigafactory in Nevada—big enough to cement China as the leader in the technology replacing gas-guzzling engines.

China surpassed the U.S. in 2015 to become the world's biggest market for electric cars. Sales of new-energy vehicles—including battery-powered, plug-in hybrid and fuel-cell vehicles—reached 777,000 units last year and could surpass 1 million this year, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers estimated.

When completed, the new 24 gigawatt-hour factory will catapult CATL to the top of the manufacturing capacity rankings. Currently, it has 17.5 gigawatt hours a year in capacity either in operation or about to come online. A gigawatt hour is the equivalent of 1 million kilowatt hours of electricity—about enough to power 1 million homes for an hour. The factory will boost that total to 41.5 gigawatt hours, surpassing LG Chem's production. By comparison, Tesla's Gigafactory will have a capacity for 35 gigawatt hours. [Read more on Bloomberg.](#)



A BRIDE-BURNING VICTIM IN NEPAL SAYS HER COUNSELORS ARE HELPING HER HEAL AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE



A couple of miles from a small village in south-central Nepal, four huts made of roped-together branches and tin sheets sit amid lush, green fields. Rihana Shekha Dhapali, 23, lives in the compound with her parents and some of her seven brothers and sisters. The family sleeps on mats laid out on hard dirt. She helps with cooking, cleaning and caring for the family's buffaloes and goats. Dhapali is a victim of a violent practice called bride burning (a form of “dowry death”), in which a husband sets his wife on fire — or the mother-in-law does. It might be because the wife has borne only girls, or her husband wants to marry someone new. The most common reason, however, is that the victim came to the marriage with a small dowry or none at all.

Dhapali wants people to know what happened to her. It's a story of sickening brutality that occurs with uncertain frequency in this part of the world. Her case, though, has a twist — a mental health therapist has been helping her heal.

[Read more on PRI.](#)



BANGLADESH'S GARMENT INDUSTRY BOOM LEAVING WORKERS BEHIND



Although Bangladesh has made remarkable recent strides like building green factories and meeting stringent safety standards, garment workers here are still paid one of the lowest minimum wages in the world. While the fashion industry thrives in the West, the workers who form the backbone of the 28-billion-dollar annual garment industry in Bangladesh struggle to survive on wages barely above the poverty line.

Meanwhile, annual export earnings in Bangladesh from the industry grew from about 9.3 billion dollars in 2007 to 28.6 billion in 2016. Encouraged by the growth, Bangladesh has set a target of exporting 50 billion dollars' worth of apparel annually by 2021, yet the vision mentions no plans to improve workers' living conditions. The picture is even worse when it comes to living, food, transport, healthcare and education for the 4.5 million workers employed in about 4,600 vibrant factories. The Oxfam report revealed grim poverty conditions and calculated that a top fashion industry CEO earned in four days the lifetime pay of a factory worker.

[Read more on IPS News Agency.](#)



CONFESSIONS OF AN AFRICAN STUDENT ABROAD: TRADING FREEDOM FOR WESTERN EDUCATION



The contract. “You signed an agreement that you will be returning home after you graduate.”, “You promised you will come back with your skills, disrupt and innovate in Africa and lead the continent into a new era.” says your government, your scholarship donor, or the third-party that helped you get that scholarship.

The idea of giving back to one’s country is honorable, but why do third-parties perceive themselves as the most suitable authorities to decide how and when the African student should give back to his country? According to that contract, the African student doesn’t really know what he is doing, or what his country needs from him despite spending the majority of his life on that land with the people he cares the most about. Somehow, someone has to decide what is good for him, and his country.

Not only does the contract suppress the African voice, but it also splits the future generation into “Them” and “Us”: “Them”, being the African students who never left, and who are having a hard time being employed, and “Us”, those who left and who are being hired by multiple companies, mainly not because they have tested our skills and competence, but mostly because they assume that we are better than “them”, and therefore we deserve the job.

When a government focuses on bringing back those who left, what message is conveyed to those who stayed? Most, if not all, African countries have universities with thousands and thousands of students currently being formed and trained. These students not only get an education, but they also have the privilege to experience the realities on the ground and to find immediate solutions. They are sometimes in a way better position to contribute to the development of their communities, than those who are watching, commenting and writing papers from the outside.

RISING ABOVE THE COMMOTION

Mount Rainier, Washington State

February 26, 2018



This Newsletter is FREE.

Planetary Health Weekly is an e-newsletter published in collaboration with the **Planetary Health Commission** at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada.

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