



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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## STUDY WARNS OF CASCADING HEALTH RISKS FROM THE CHANGING CLIMATE

A new report in *The Lancet* incorporates the work of 24 academic institutions and United Nations agencies and follows a major climate assessment issued by the United States government. The two studies represent the most serious warnings to date that climate change is posing a series of interconnected health risks for the global population. Most worrying is the compounding effect of extreme weather events that are exacerbated by climate change. Heat waves, floods and storms can batter the very public health systems that are meant to help people. As the world continues to warm, the study also warns of a number of potential domino effects. [Read More at The New York Times](#)  
See Also: [Fourth National \(U.S.\) Climate Assessment](#)



Your results are back. It's climate change. Just how many greenhouse gases have you been consuming?

Credit: NOAA Climate/ Emily Greenhalgh.

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## 1.45 MILLION CHILDREN'S LIVES SAVED BY HIB AND PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES SINCE 2000

Childhood deaths from two leading bacterial causes of pneumonia and meningitis, pneumococcus and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), declined sharply during the period 2000 to 2015, especially as vaccines against these pathogens were introduced in high-burden countries. The sharp declines in child mortality from Hib and pneumococcus were due not just to the introduction of vaccines but also to general factors, such as better hygiene and access to health care. The new estimates will guide ongoing efforts to reduce the burdens of Hib and pneumococcal diseases, which together still kill approximately 900 children per day around the world.. [Read More at Science Daily](#)



Credit: STR/REUTERS





## WE HAVE TIME TO ACT BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT

The live global broadcast of the Club of Rome's Climate Emergency Plan was started by having a fire drill. The host stated that "scientists have been ringing the alarm bells for over a century now. We do see the flashes and the warning signs, we even smell and see the smoke and some of us have already died in that fire. We still have time to act. But we don't have time to wait." The Club of Rome formally launched The Climate Emergency Plan on December 4th in the European Parliament. The call to action is crystal clear and comprises ten major transformations which are essential for the survival of our species and our civilization. Canada is to be the first country in the world to enact a Carbon Fee and Dividend (known officially as the Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop). [Read More at Below 2C](#)

Credit: Rolly Montpellier/Below2C

## BRANSON BACKS COMPETITION TO FIND CLEANER AIR CONDITIONERS

A competition to find a breakthrough in air-conditioning technology has been launched with the backing of Sir Richard Branson and the Indian government, in an effort to avert the climate impact of the huge expected growth in the use of cooling systems. The prize is intended to encourage inventors to find new ideas for indoor cooling that can be economically competitive against current technologies, while reducing energy consumption and the use of refrigerants such as hydrofluorocarbons that contribute to global warming. The International Energy Agency has also sounded the alarm over air-conditioning, describing it as one of the most critical blind spots in international energy policy.

[Read More at Financial Times](#)



Credit: Reuters

## EFFECTS OF AMBIENT CARBON MONOXIDE ON HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN BEIJING

Evidence focused on exposure to ambient carbon monoxide (CO) and the risk of hospitalizations for cardiovascular diseases (CVD) is lacking in developing countries. This study examined the effect of CO exposure on hospitalizations for total and cause-specific CVD in Beijing, China, including coronary heart disease, atrial fibrillation and heart failure. Stratified analysis was also conducted by age group and sex. Ambient CO was positively associated with hospitalizations for total CVD and CHD. However, the observed increased risk was not statistically significant for hospitalizations for AF and HF. This association was robust after adjusting for other co-pollutants and did not vary by age group and sex. Ambient CO exposure increased the risk of hospitalizations for CVD.

[Read More at Research Gate](#)



Credit: The Economic Times





## GLOBAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL BURDEN OF MOTOR NEURON DISEASES 1990–2016

The study produced estimates of incidence, prevalence and disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) for motor neuron diseases for 195 countries and territories from 1990 to 2016 as part of the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) 2016. Motor neuron diseases have low prevalence and incidence, but cause severe disability with a high fatality rate. Incidence of motor neuron diseases has geographical heterogeneity. Between 1990 and 2016, the burden of motor neuron diseases has increased substantially.

[Read More at Research Gate](#)

Credit: NewsHub/ Getty Images

## BABY 'BOOM' AND 'BUST': NATIONS' RATES OF CHILD BIRTH VARY SIGNIFICANTLY

Ninety-one nations are not producing enough children to maintain their current populations, while the opposite is true in 104 countries where high birth rates are driving population increases. The global population increased by 197% since 1950, from 2.6 billion to 7.6 billion in 2017. Regarding health loss (measured in disability-adjusted life years, or DALYs) due to other risk factors, many of the most common, such as high blood pressure and smoking, have changed little in rankings of the top 15 between 2007 and 2017. However, looking back 27 years to the top risks in 1990, major differences emerge, when child wasting, short gestation for birth weight, and low birth weight ranked first through third. [Read More at Science Daily](#)



Credit: Pexels



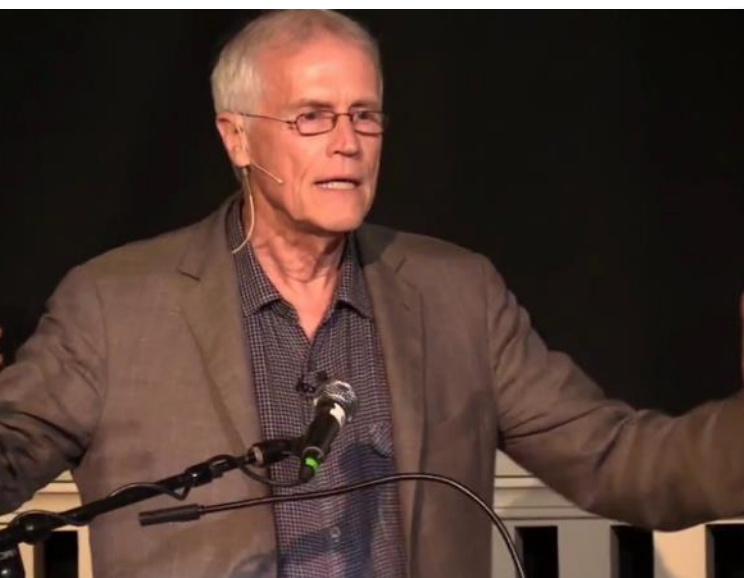
## WHY HOME IS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR WOMEN: UN REPORT

Research published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) disclosed that out of the 87,000 female murder cases worldwide last year, around 58% died at the hands of their "intimate partner" or close family member. This, in turn, makes the home "the most dangerous place for a woman." *The Femicide Report 2018* elaborated that 82% of all partner-related homicide victims were female. For men, the corresponding figure sits at 18%. However, men still account for 8 out of every 10 overall homicides, the majority of which are committed by strangers. The African continent and the Americas recorded the highest percentage of female homicide cases caused by family members, at 3.1 and 1.6 victims per 100,000 women, respectively.

[Read More at Global Citizen](#)

Credit: ELI MEIXLER/ Time





Credit: Climate Cinema

## DRAWDOWN: THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVER PROPOSED TO REVERSE CLIMATE WARMING

The subtitle of Drawdown—The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming—may sound brash. We chose that description because no detailed plan to reverse warming has been proposed. There have been agreements and proposals on how to slow, cap and arrest emissions, and there are international commitments to prevent global temperature increases from exceeding two degrees centigrade over pre-industrial levels. Drawdown maps, measures, models and describes 100 substantive solutions to global warming. For each solution, we describe its history, the carbon impact it provides, the relative cost and savings, the path to adoption, and how it works. The goal of the research that informs Drawdown is to determine if we can reverse the build up of atmospheric carbon within thirty years. All solutions are already in place, well understood, analyzed based on peer-reviewed science, and are expanding around the world. [Read More at Amazon](#)

## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ARE ACCELERATING LIKE A 'SPEEDING FREIGHT TRAIN' IN 2018

Last month the White House published findings by 13 federal agencies predicting that global warming could knock hundreds of billions of dollars off the size of the American economy by century's end, particularly by disrupting trade and agriculture. And in October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations scientific group, issued an alarming report warning that emissions are rising at a rate that will open the door to widespread food shortages, wildfires, coastal flooding and population displacement by 2040. The analysis found that the world is on pace to release a record 37.1 gigatons of planet-warming emissions in 2018, led in large part by China, the United States and India. That is roughly 100,000 times the weight of the Empire State Building. Last year, extreme weather disasters cost the United States a record \$306 billion. [Read More at New York Times](#)



Credit: Wu Hong/EPA, via Shutterstock



Credit: Assembly of First Nations

## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS:

### CANADA'S GLOBAL HEALTH ROLE

In *The Lancet* Series on Canada's global health role (April 28, p. 1736), liberal myths about Canadian nation-building and foreign policy are perpetuated, proffering an uncritical historical assessment of the country's global health involvement. Particularly egregious is the argument that Canada needs to return to the imagined post-war glory days, when core values of health equity and diversity purportedly directed foreign policy. The authors ignore the fact that global health policy has long been compelled by political-economic imperatives that prioritise commercial interests. By highlighting Canada's largely biomedical global health contributions, Nixon and colleagues negate a 21st century health axiom: health is profoundly determined by sociopolitical and environmental structures. Honest assessments of Canadian nation-building reveal how the country's founding colonial and extractive structures continue to contribute to deep inequities and ill health, both domestically and globally. Confounding diversity with equity, the authors trivialise the Truth and Reconciliation Commission accusations of cultural genocide and its demands for a radical overhaul of Canada's relationship with Indigenous nations. Global health equity demands more than aspirational narratives and meek apologies. [Read More at The Lancet](#)

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Entire towns are burning to nothing in California. People are being incinerated alive in their cars attempting to flee. But a majority of Democrats still won’t reject fossil fuel money, and no one has put forward a climate plan that is remotely commensurate with the IPCC findings.”

Claire Sandberg, former Bernie Sanders campaign aide.

[Read More at The Guardian](#)



Credit: Todd Heisler/The New York Times

## EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Jan 8th	The Global Leadership Series: Decolonization as a Pathway to Wellness for Indigenous Peoples	Toronto Canada	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/global-leadership-series-decolonization-as-a-pathway-to-wellness-for-indigenous-peoples-tickets-52686377373?">https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/global-leadership-series-decolonization-as-a-pathway-to-wellness-for-indigenous-peoples-tickets-52686377373?</a>
Mar. 8th-10th	10th Annual CUGH Conference—Translation and Implementation for Impact in Global Health	Chicago USA	<a href="https://www.cugh.org/events/2019-annual-cugh-global-health-conference">https://www.cugh.org/events/2019-annual-cugh-global-health-conference</a>
Mar. 20th -22nd	2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards	Baltimore USA	<a href="https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/">https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/</a>
Apr. 30th- May 2nd	Public Health 2019 (CPHA)	Ottawa Canada	<a href="https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program">https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program</a>
May 13th - 15th	Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB): 2019 Biennial Conference	Ottawa Canada	<a href="https://cseb.ca/conferences/2019-conference/">https://cseb.ca/conferences/2019-conference/</a>
June 10th-2st	5th McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Diseases and Global Health	Montreal Canada	<a href="http://mcgill-idgh.ca">http://mcgill-idgh.ca</a>



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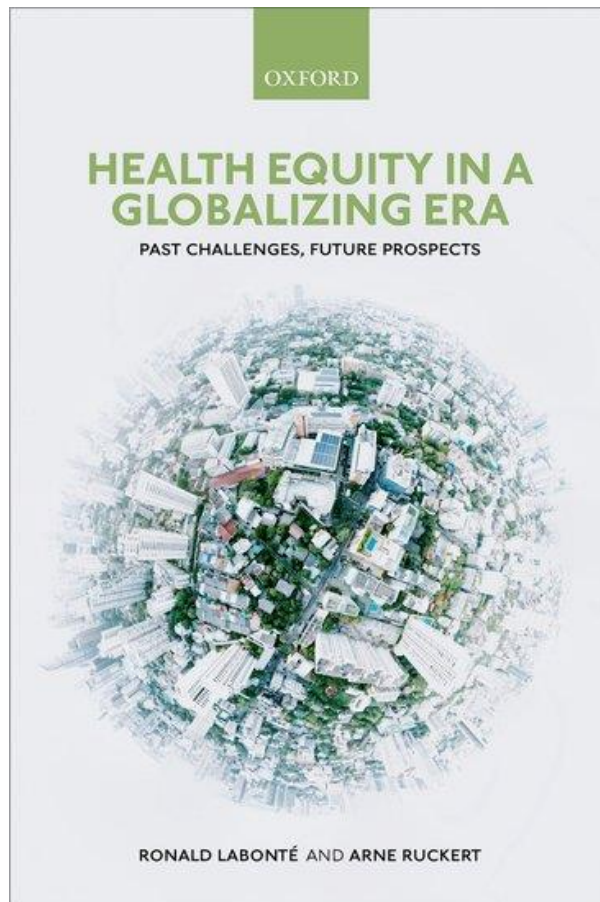
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## SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:

### HEALTH EQUITY IN A GLOBALIZING ERA - RONALD LABONTÉ AND ARNE RUCKERT



Credit: Oxford University Press

This book examines how globalization processes since the on-set of neoliberalism affect equity in global health outcomes, and emphasises important social determinants of health. With a basis in political economy, the book covers key globalization concepts and theory, and presents a thorough background to the field. Why do some countries and populations suffer from poverty and ill health, whilst others are more prosperous and healthy? What are the inherently global (trans-border) issues that affect inequities in disease burden and health opportunities for individuals and nations? Traditionally, the focus of global health has been 'international health': the concern for high burdens of disease in generally low-income countries.

To answer these questions however, we need to modernise our understanding of globalization as a phenomenon. Case studies, illustrations and new research all combine to make this title a comprehensive and current discussion of the various pathways that connect globalization to health equity outcomes. It looks at changes in migration, labour markets, trade and investment rules, international development assistance, health systems, infectious and non-communicable disease risks, environmental health and gendered aspects of globalization's health dialectic. [Read More at Oxford University Press](#)



## AMT COFFEE BREWS UP FULLY COMPOSTABLE PLANT-BASED CUPS AND LIDS



Credit: AMT Coffee

AMT Coffee has introduced compostable coffee cups and lids across its more than 50 UK outlets, in a move the retailer claims is "by far the greenest" alternative to the typical plastic-lined paper cups and plastic lids which continue to dominate the sector. Rolled out to all its coffee kiosks this week, the new 100 per cent "bio-compostable" 12oz cups and lids are made from waste derived from sugar cane crops, a material which naturally breaks down at room temperature and fully decomposes within a year, the company said.

It has taken "years of research and development to source a fully bio-compostable coffee cup and lid". A growing number of firms are switching to compostable packaging in response to public concerns over plastic waste. However, an intense debate is on-going over whether or not compostable materials deliver significant environmental gains.

[Read More at Business Green](#)

See Also: [Kaffeeform reusable coffee cups made old recyclable coffee grounds](#)



## NEPAL RANKED FOURTH AMONG COUNTRIES WORST HIT BY WEATHER-RELATED DISASTERS IN 2017



Credit: OnlineKhabar

A global study has concluded that Nepal is the fourth worst hit country in the world by weather-related loss events in 2017. The Global Climate Risk Index 2019 recently published by German research group, Germanwatch, puts Nepal behind Puerto Rico, Sri Lanka and Dominica. The study has identified massive rainfalls as the major cause behind the disasters in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh and India are in the ninth and the 14th positions respectively.

"Millions were displaced throughout the region. The floods spread across the foothills of the Himalayas and brought landslides leaving tens of thousands of houses and vast areas of farmland and roads destroyed," the report reads, "Nepal experienced flash floods and landslides in August across the southern border, amounting to US\$ 600 million in damages. Nearly 250 people were killed by collapsed buildings or drowning in regions of India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

[Read More at Onlinekhabar/ English Edition](#)





## THE PROJECTED EFFECT ON INSECTS, VERTEBRATES, AND PLANTS OF LIMITING GLOBAL WARMING TO 1.5°C RATHER THAN 2°C



Credit: Scales N Tails

In the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the United Nations is pursuing efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C, whereas earlier aspirations focused on a 2°C limit. With current pledges, corresponding to ~3.2°C warming, climatically determined geographic range losses by 2100 of >50% are projected in 49% of insects, 44% of plants and 26% of vertebrates. At 2°C, this falls to 18% of insects, 16% of plants and 8% of vertebrates; and at 1.5°C, to 6% of insects, 8% of plants and 4% of vertebrates. When warming is limited to 1.5°C as compared with 2°C, numbers of species projected to lose >50% of their range are reduced by ~66% in insects and by ~50% in plants and vertebrates.

Insects are the most diverse group of animals on Earth and are ubiquitous in terrestrial food webs. We have little information about their fate in a changing climate; data are scant for insects compared with other groups of organisms. Warren et al. performed a global-scale analysis of the effects of climate change on insect distribution. [Read More at Science and AAAS](#)





## **‘A KIND OF DARK REALISM’: WHY THE CLIMATE CHANGE PROBLEM IS STARTING TO LOOK TOO BIG TO SOLVE**



Credit: Pascal Rossignol/Reuters

The world has waited so long that preventing disruptive climate change requires action “unprecedented in scale,” the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said in an October report. Climate scientists and policy experts realize that they walk a fine line between jolting consumers and policymakers into action and immobilizing them with paralyzing pessimism about the world’s ability to hit climate targets. That’s partly because international organizations lack the authority to enforce rules on wayward nations. At the climate conference in Poland, several major countries will admit to missing the targets they agreed to at the Paris conference three years ago.

One example is Brazil whose President-elect, Jair Bolsonaro, has talked about clearing more of the Amazon for roads and development. That would damage the world’s lungs — the trees that absorb carbon dioxide and pump out oxygen at high rates. Companies already know how to take carbon dioxide from the air and stuff it below the earth’s surface. But it’s expensive, and unless it’s used for enhanced oil recovery, it makes no economic sense without large subsidies or a carbon tax large enough to make capture worth it.

[Read More at Washington Post](#)





## LANGUAGE AND OTHER CHALLENGES: FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Credit: Bremen University

At the November NAFSA: Association of International Educators conference sessions focused on challenges faced by international students, both those perceived by faculty and those reported by students. The results of a survey of DePaul University faculty presented at the conference identify limited English proficiency and different academic preparation or expectations as the two biggest academic challenges international students face. The top challenges they identified were, as noted above, limited English proficiency, cited by about 66 percent of faculty, and different academic preparation or expectations, which were cited by 26.3 percent of faculty surveyed.

Other top challenges identified included social challenges related to loneliness and cultural differences. In addition to the quantitative research, the researchers also conducted interviews with two to three faculty members from each of DePaul's five largest colleges about effective practices for teaching international students and how their backgrounds inform their practices. Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, reported on a research project they did in which international students interviewed their peers about their goals and expectations and also the barriers they faced in achieving those goals. Students express the most disagreement with the idea that students are respected regardless of language ability or accent. [Read More at Inside Higher Ed](#)





Post-doctoral Research Defence  
Faculty of Nursing, Fudan University  
Shanghai, China  
December 12, 2018

Credit: David Zakus

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Publisher and Editor: Dr. David Zakus, [david.zakus@utoronto.ca](mailto:david.zakus@utoronto.ca)

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