New network on climate and health

The Norwegian network on climate and health has been established to promote urgently-needed climate change measures.

Global warming is described in The Lancet as the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century (1). The serious health consequences predicted include diseases resulting from water shortages, drought and a decline in food production, more extreme weather events, heat waves, floods, sea level rise and migration. Effective measures to prevent climate change are urgently needed to limit harmful impacts on life and health (2). The Norwegian network on climate and health has been established in order to contribute to this work (3).

The purpose of the network is to inform members about the health consequences that will result from climate change, and how these can best be prevented and managed. Moreover, we want to engage and inspire individuals to take greater environmental responsibility through the reduction of personal emissions of greenhouse gases, and to encourage individuals, organizations and institutions, in particular within the health sector, to reduce their emissions of CO₂. Measures to counter climate change should be included in the regional and global climate debate to influence politicians and other important decision makers to implement climate measures sufficiently quickly to prevent serious health consequences. The network publishes the electronic journal Bærekraftig helse («Sustainable health»), which can be accessed on the network’s website at www.klimaoghelse.com (3).

The consequences of climate change for life and health can be compared to the effects of the use of nuclear weapons. Medical practitioners have played a major role in the struggle against nuclear weapons and helped to achieve substantial disarmament. As health workers, we can also take the lead in preventing serious health impacts from climate change. By joining the Norwegian network on climate and health, you can contribute to this work.

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References