How Climate Change Impacts the Cancer Fight

A group of oncologists has advised colleagues to join the fight against climate change.

May 26, 2020 By Benjamin Ryan

Climate change threatens the global fight against cancer, according to a new essay by a group of oncologists published in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians. Consequently, the essayists argue, their colleagues in the cancer field would do well to join the fight against climate change.

Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, have become more common as global temperatures have risen, and can cause major disruptions to cancer preventive care as well as treatment, according to the essay. These events can also compromise laboratories and clinic infrastructure related to cancer care.

Research has indicated that a plant-based diet can be protective against cancer. Eschewing meat and dairy for a vegetarian diet can also greatly lower an individual's carbon footprint.

Further, various pollutants related to climate change can cause cancer.

"While some may view these issues as beyond the scope of responsibility of the nation's cancer treatment facilities, one need look no further than their mission statements, all of which speak to eradicating cancer," write the authors.

"Climate change and continued reliance on fossil fuels push that noble goal further from reach," they continue. "However, if all those whose life work is to care for those with cancer made clear to the communities they serve that actions to combat climate change and lessen our use of fossil fuels could prevent cancers and improve cancer outcomes, we might see actions that address climate change flourish, and the attainment of our missions to reduce suffering from cancer grow nearer."

To read a press release about the study, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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