



## Editorial

# Climate Change & Health

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We are living through a time of huge uncertainty and for many great hardships. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed society perhaps irreversibly. It has revealed cracks in our health and welfare systems, stimulated conversation and triggered innovation and change, through the disruption of many areas of life.

The July edition of Sushruta was initially intended to focus on climate change and health, but as we slowly move toward a new normal in the post-COVID era it became clear we needed to widen the scope of this issue. This edition looks at the various ways in which planetary health interacts with human health. Topics covered range from air pollution and child health, changes in vector borne disease patterns, sustainable nutrition and the winner of our international essay competition on climate change and health.

We also include important articles focusing on the Covid-19 pandemic, such as original research on the differential susceptibility among Black Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

This mixture of topics brought us to reflect on the connections between climate

change and COVID-19 and what it can teach us going forward. The response to COVID-19, though varied between countries and not without controversy, demonstrates the capacity for social and cultural change that, post-COVID, need to be driven and harnessed. This gives hope for climate change mitigation. The drastic changes to government, economy and industry required can be achieved if political and public will is present. Covid-19 has highlighted extreme health inequalities with those from BAME and lower socio-economic groups seeming to suffer more severe forms of the illness and a higher death rate amongst health professionals.

This is something that, as the journal of the British Association for Physicians of Indian Origin, has hit close to home. Particularly as we work to ensure equality and diversity in the NHS for BAME doctors. Similarly, it is poorer populations of countries in the southern hemisphere that will face the greatest hardship from climate change due to extreme heat and weather events, unstable food systems, conflict, and migration. These inequalities must continue to be recognised and

addressed as new health policy is created and even as the West begins to move out of the most tragic phase of the disease, we must not leave LMICs behind.

We want this edition of Sushruta to provide an optimistic view of the future. Throughout the pandemic images of nature regenerating have come to be a symbol of hope such as fish in the canals of Venice or satellite images of skies free of pollution. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic we must take the concept of 'a new normal' and apply it to the way our society addresses climate change. Reductions in carbon emissions can continue as we continue to work from home and limit travel. The government should aim to support a 'green economy' promoting economic recovery with a low carbon footprint. It will be difficult, but we have proved ourselves to be resilient and adaptable in the face of a crisis.