

Editorial

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 Given the fault line that seems to have opened up in our profession (whether COVID-19 vaccination is good/necessary or bad/evil/wrong) let us not forget the arguably greater cause around which we can come together and join with medical professionals the world over — the climate emergency. For this reason, the *Journal of Chinese Medicine* is proud to join the *British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet* and over 200 other health journals across the world, who have called in their editorials for emergency action to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees Celsius in order to halt the destruction of the natural world and protect human health.

Back in 2015, a joint report by *The Lancet* and University College London declared that climate change threatens to undermine the past 50 years of progress in global health, and warned of 'very serious and potentially catastrophic effects for human health and human survival'.

As practitioners of traditional East Asian medicine we have an extremely clear model to understand what is happening to our world - for what is the climate emergency other than the *yīn* of mother earth being scorched by the obsessive *yáng* pursuit of economic growth? As clinicians we see a similar imbalance daily in the microcosms of our patients. Human health is being severely harmed by this imbalance.

In the past 20 years, heat-related mortality among people aged over 65 has increased by more than 50 per cent. Higher temperatures have brought dehydration and loss of renal

function, dermatological malignancies, tropical infections, adverse mental health outcomes, pregnancy complications, allergies and cardiovascular and pulmonary morbidity and mortality. These harms disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, including children, older people, poorer communities, and those with underlying health problems. The associated widespread destruction of the natural world, including habitats and species, is eroding water and food security, and because the consequences fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable this will breed more conflict, food insecurity, forced displacement and zoonotic disease - with severe implications for all countries and communities.

Of course, most of us are not world leaders, but as healthcare practitioners we can do our best to live sustainably and provide advice and treatment that fosters health and balance in our patients. We can hold our leaders and the businesses with which we work to account. We can join our communities to provide local solutions to this global emergency. And we can make our clinical practice as green as possible. To read about the environmental commitments of the *JCM* see www.jcm.co.uk/news/community/environmental-policies, and if you have not already done so, consider supporting the Chinese Medicine Forestry Trust to promote planetary health and well-being by planting trees and protecting forests throughout the world (www.jcm.co.uk/news/cmft). 



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