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YOUR NEW HEAD OF THE UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL

An introduction from Prof. Malcolm Shepherd

A long time ago..... and by a long time I mean before new Dr Who, before iPhones and around the first appearance of Star Wars Lego truly a very long time ago, things were simpler. Not necessarily better, different, much simpler....not clearly better, but definitely better! Conversations never ended, lasting long into the night without conclusion; no one was blessed with facts, just opinions and passion.

'Britain will remain at the centre of Europe....'

'no way William Shatner (original Captain Kirk for non-geeks) will ever get into space ...'

'Glasgow could never host the biggest cycling event of all time....'

'no, you could not possibly be allergic to red meat, you are made of red meat...'

Of course now smartphones and the internet have relegated the art of conversation to a list of facts and dates, and no one speaks to each other without a series of emojis and hand gestures. Or I might have got that wrong you tell me.....

'But surely. Old man' you say, carefully picking the most contentious topic from the list above, Surely you cannot be allergic to red meat, we are all mammals,



and the rules of Immunology say you cannot be immune to self.'

'Ah' says the wise old man (In this scenario bizarrely that is me), 'a long time ago you would be correct, but in 2002 strange reports emerged that people with a history of tick bites, experienced anaphylaxis after eating red meat'.

Now across the world from Australia to North East USA the phenomenon of red meat allergy causing strange delayed onset anaphylaxis, often as much as 4

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hours after eating has been recognised. Breaking many rules of allergy from rapid onset to variable presentation the strangest aspect of this allergy is that sensitisation seems to follow the bite of particular species of ticks. One of those ticks is the indigenous Deer tick in the UK and so yes this allergy is found in relatively high numbers in Scotland. Don't worry, it is very very rare, but we have identified around 40 patients who have this allergy after being bitten by ticks in Scotland.

'So what?' you may say 'its so rare why should we worry'. Well the truth is that tick populations are growing in the UK. There are a number of reasons, but global climate change with warmer moister winters probably play a part. Increased use of rural environments with Scotland's amazing right to roam legislation and wonderful landscape increases the exposure of urban and rural populations to ticks and we are seeing sufferers from all regions of the country.

Climate change is an engine of change in health science and while self-allergy may seem a trivial example, it is a very powerful concept; our immune systems turning on ourselves in the face of a warming climate. Allergy medicine is full of the human consequences of a warming climate from self-allergy to pan-allergens crossing botanical species and we see new patterns of



disease emerging from the environmental catastrophe we are facing.

Learning about the engines of change in medicine and discovering what health science can do to limit our global impact will become an increasingly important aspect of Medicine as you become leaders and innovators of the future. I hope we can inspire you to think about the ways we can all work to limit this and avoid potential catastrophe.

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Your production team



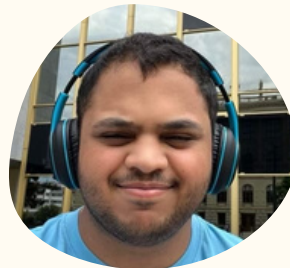
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