

# SURGO

MARCH 24'

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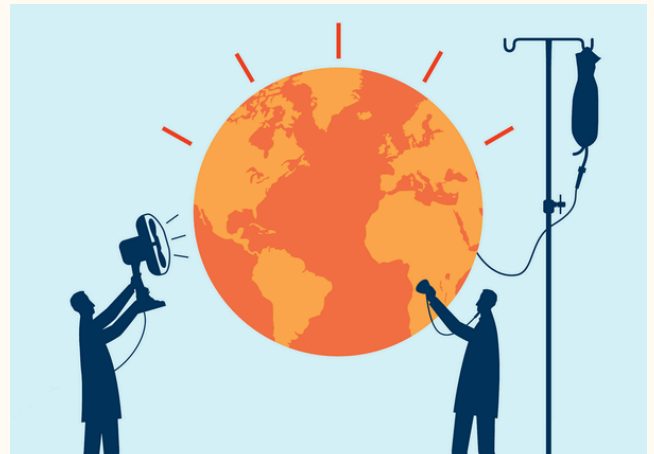
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## **A CONVERSATION WITH DR CAMILLE HUSER**

# Glasgow's fight against climate change

Prof. Malcolm Shepherd's introduction in our December 23' issue highlighted that climate change is an extremely important topic which merits further coverage in Surgo. With the guidance and knowledge of Dr. Camille Huser (recently appointed Deputy Director of the Undergraduate Medical School (Bioscience)), I was able to explore this topic and understand our role as a medical school in the fight against climate change.

Climate change will continue to become an enormous burden on healthcare. However, healthcare plays an alarming role in accelerating climate change. Today's warmer climates have seen an increase in global droughts, floods and heatwaves. They allow water and food borne diseases to thrive and vectors carrying fatal illnesses such as malaria, dengue fever and zika virus to survive at higher altitudes and for longer periods of time. In fact, eggs of the non-native aedes albopictus mosquito (known to transmit both dengue fever and zika virus!) have been found in the UK within recent years. However, it isn't just so-called "tropical diseases" we need to consider. Warmer summers are altering our air quality, causing prolonged periods of high pollen that can amplify the number of asthma exacerbation and allergic reaction cases that we see coming through our hospital doors each year.



Climate change is deadly. I was alarmed to read that the UK government predicts that by 2070 there will be a 1244% rise in heatwave related deaths; unfortunately and unjustly affecting economically and socially marginalised individuals the most. (1, 2)

You may be thinking we will have our work cut out as future clinicians, taking on the burden of climate change. However, we also face the large task of trying to limit our contribution to global warming as clinicians. The faculty of Public Health estimates that internationally, healthcare accounts for 4.4% of global net emissions (that is more than aviation!). Although, it is not all doom and gloom as our requirement to do better has been identified and NHS Scotland aims to have a net 0 carbon footprint by 2040. Already, there have been improvements from NHS GGC: reduced desflurane usage in anesthetics, opting for powdered/soft mist

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inhalers and minimizing SABA usage, encouraging staff to use sustainable transport methods to travel to work and purchasing products and services from suppliers aligned with the net 0 commitments. (3, 4)



But what are we doing as a medical school? I met with Camille to find out more. In line with the sustainability requirements of GMC good medical practice (January 2024), the Medical Schools Council (MSC) have highlighted the need to incorporate sustainability into the MBChB curriculum. Glasgow University were key in coordinating an MSC network of 38+ UK medical schools, aiming to facilitate sharing of expertise and resources. Dr. Noy Basu (lead of the vertical theme: Global and planetary health) has been key to delivering these changes in Glasgow after a survey of our medical students revealed that >90% wanted sustainable healthcare to feature in the curriculum. Now, sustainability in healthcare appears in assessment, lectures and SSC opportunities, particularly in years 1 and 2. Camille acknowledged that a key driving force behind improvement is students. Every year, students have grouped together to complete the planetary health report card (PHRC): a tool for evaluating and improving

planetary health content in health professional schools. Furthermore, we have a global goals student group who collaborate and focus on ways in which we can alter our behavior to achieve the United Nations sustainable development goals by 2030 (which largely consider the environment and climate change). Glasgow University is also part of Universitas 21 (U21): a global network of universities that aims to connect students and staff. They have a subgroup (the sustainable development group) with a shared commitment to fighting climate change.

I asked Camille about ways in which we could still do more. She believes progress can be made through engaging and educating staff; as it is every lecturers' job when teaching students to incorporate sustainable healthcare into the curriculum. Furthermore, continued partnership with students is essential in cultivating new ideas surrounding this topic. If you have ideas as to how we can combat climate change as a medical school or, if would like to get involved with some of the student groups mentioned above, please contact Camille ([Camille.Huser@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Camille.Huser@glasgow.ac.uk)).

It is our job as clinicians of tomorrow to practice sustainably. Lots of progress has been made to reach NHS targets but there is still so much to be done. - Anna, Editor in Chief.

Further reading: [Breaking the Fever report\\_0.pdf](#)

**DECEMBER 2023**

# Your production team



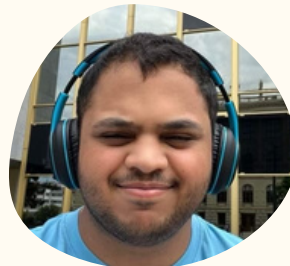
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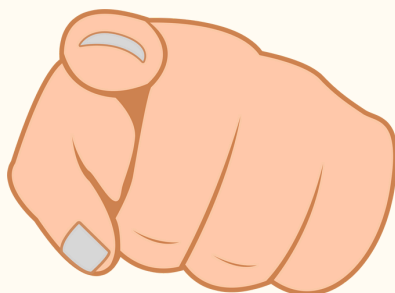


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