

31. THE CLIMATE CHANGE PROBLEM IN THE VIEW OF MEDICAL STUDENTS



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Introduction. Climate change has a significant impact on human health. Information about climate change is essential to identify, prevent and treat health problems that may be exacerbated or triggered by phenomena such as extreme heat, increased pollution levels or increased risk of infectious diseases. In light of these reasons, knowledge about climate change is essential for training future physicians, helping them to provide more comprehensive care and contributing to health promotion in a manner that takes into account the impact of climate change on human health.

Aim of study. Assessing medical students' level of knowledge about climate change and the importance of its study.

Methods and materials. A cross-sectional epidemiological study was carried out using an online questionnaire. In the study participated 122 2nd and 3rd year medical students. The data was collected throughout 2023 and was processed via Excel.

Results. The average age of the students was 20.5 ± 1.3 years. 27.9% male respondents participated in the study, respectively 72.1% - female respondents. The analysis of the questionnaire data elucidates the following picture: 97% of the respondents believe that climate change is a problem impacting the health of the population. Respondents stated that extreme temperatures (93.3%), drought (83.3%), air pollution (95.5%), the hole in the ozone layer (68.2%), floods (60.6%) are caused by climate change. The main sources from which students get information about the issue of climate change are: the Internet (92.4%), television (39.4%), conferences/symposia (19.7%), family/friends (4.5%), courses held within educational institutions (25%). Regarding the need to include topics about this specific problem in the educational program, 94% of the students spoke favorably, the most requested topics being food and water security (60.6%), extreme temperatures (57.6%), air pollution (65.2%), vector-borne diseases (60.6%) and mental health (60.6%). Students consider it appropriate for these topics to be discussed during theoretical courses (39.4%), conferences (51.5%), fieldwork and activities (45.5%) and practical work (28.8%).

Conclusion. Climate change is a major concern for human health and should be studied and discussed in medical school courses with the purpose of training future physicians to manage and prevent its damaging effects on public health.