Climate Justice and Health
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Communities with fewer resources or less social or political power in an inequitable society often experience poor health as a consequence. Recognizing and addressing this reality is a moral and professional imperative for all committed to advancing health. But the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent infectious disease outbreaks laid bare another reality: in a global, interconnected world, the poor health of those more vulnerable has direct consequences for all.

The climate crisis is yielding devastating effects across the globe.1-3 Actively confronting this crisis must be an urgent priority for medicine because of the unprecedented physical and mental health consequences4-6 and because of the contribution of modern health care to waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and pollution.6 The impact of the global climate crisis is being and will continue to be borne disproportionately by those with the least means to face these threats7 and who have contributed least to their cause. But as our fellow editors from scientific and medical journals based on the African continent remind us in their Editorial,8 the dire changes on the African continent because of climate change have consequences for all.

JAMA is a global journal dedicated to the science and art of medicine and the betterment of public health. JAMA and the journals of the JAMA Network stand with and are among the more than 250 journals worldwide publishing this Editorial calling for urgent action to address the climate crisis—for Africa and for the entire world.

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