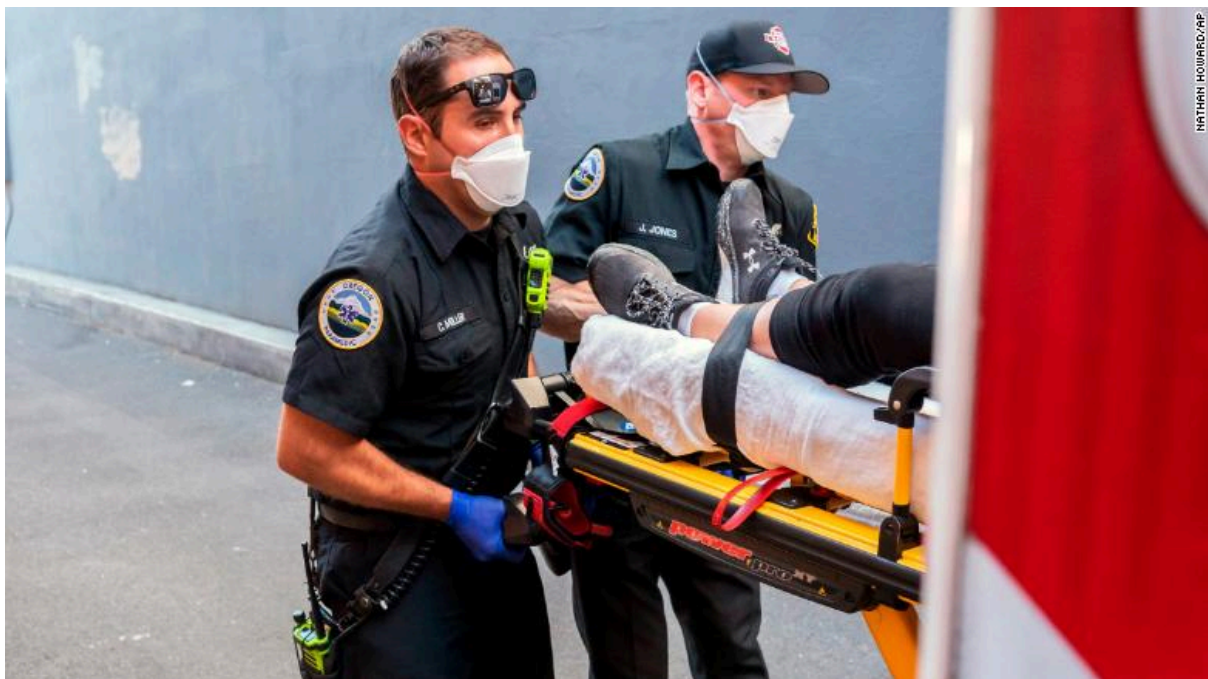


More than 230 journals warn 1.5°C of global warming could be 'catastrophic' for health

By [Angela Dewan](#), CNN

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Paramedics respond to a heat exposure call during a heat wave on June 26, 2021, in the US city of Salem, Oregon.

(CNN) Human [health is already being harmed](#) by the climate crisis, and the impacts could become catastrophic and irreversible unless governments do much more to address global warming, the editors of more than 230 medical journals said in a joint editorial Monday.

The editorial points to [established links between the climate crisis](#) and a slew of adverse health impacts over the past 20 years: Among them are

an increase in heat deaths, dehydration and kidney function loss, skin cancer, tropical infections, mental health issues, pregnancy complications, allergies, and heart and lung disease, and deaths associated with them.

"Health is already being harmed by global temperature increases and the destruction of the natural world, a state of affairs health professionals have been bringing attention to for decades," the editorial reads.

It warned that an increase of global average temperatures of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and the loss of biodiversity risked

"catastrophic harm to health that will be impossible to reverse."

Governments around the world are laying out plans to try to contain global warming to 1.5°C to stave off worsening impacts of climate change, a target that the editorial said did not go far enough to protect public health. Warming is already at around 1.2°C.

"Despite the world's necessary preoccupation with Covid-19, we cannot wait for the pandemic to pass to rapidly reduce emissions," the authors wrote, calling on governments to respond to the climate crisis with the same spirit of "unprecedented funding" dedicated to the pandemic.

The UK-based BMJ, one of the journals that published the report, said that "never before" had so many health publications come together to make the same statement, "reflecting the severity of the climate change emergency now facing the world."

The authors also warned that the aim to reach net zero -- where the world emits no more greenhouse gases than it removes from the atmosphere -- was relying on unproven technology to take gases like carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. They added it was more likely that global warming would surpass 2°C, a threshold that climate

scientists say would bring catastrophic extreme weather events, among other impacts to human, animal and plant life.

Simply urging the world and energy industry to transition from fossil fuels to renewables falls short of the action needed to meet the challenge of the climate crisis, they said.

The editorial was published as a call to action ahead of a several meetings between global leaders to discuss and negotiate action on the climate crisis, including the UN General Assembly next week, a biodiversity conference in Kunming, China, in October and crucial climate talks in the Scottish city of Glasgow in November.

Among key climate issues expected to be addressed at these events are the 1.5°C target, putting an end date on the use of coal and protecting biodiversity, both on land and sea.

"The greatest threat to global public health is the continued failure of world leaders to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5°C and to restore nature. Urgent, society-wide changes must be made and will lead to a fairer and healthier world," the authors wrote.

"We, as editors of health journals, call for governments and other leaders to act, marking 2021 as the year that the world finally changes course."