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COP26 Legacy Series – Webinar 5 – Building our COP26 legacy with eyes on COP27 **26 May 2022**

The role of the College - Professor Andrew Elder, President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

Does the College apply pressure to the Scottish Government to influence its policies on sustainable healthcare?

The College is in regular conversation and correspondence with the SG, both directly and via the Scottish Academy and seeks to influence issues of relevance – such as air pollution.

Will the Royal Colleges work together collectively to embed topics around the health effects of climate, environment, biodiversity loss and pollution in all areas of their postgraduate examinations? Encouraging all health professionals to take an interest in these areas is vital for our future.

Yes, both the UK Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Scottish Academy have climate related issues as part of their regular agendas. However, getting relevant material into curricula, and then examinations, is not something that as yet, has been taken forward, or indeed suggested so thanks for raising this.

Are efforts underway to push pharmaceutical companies to outline “the greenest option” for treatments and products?

UKHACC are the most active group in this field at the moment. Substantial pan-professional and patient pressure will be needed to effect change.

How do we fight feelings of futility/doom that Prof Elder mentioned?

By empowering people and by educating people. We have to ensure that everyone knows simple things that they can do to help in their own everyday lives and by providing them with the information necessary to form questions they can direct at their own politicians.



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Creating the space where climate scientist and health professionals can meet – reflections – Liz Willetts
MEM-MMSc, Senior Advisor International Institute for Sustainable Development

Scotland or any other nation on its own cannot solve our climate and environmental crises - global transdisciplinary and transnational collaboration is essential. What more can we do to encourage all nations of the UK to work constructively together with each other and our colleagues in Europe?

Networks of national institutions can take initiative for change, and create visible, meaningful impact. For example, the New Zealand Medical Association put forward a position statement on planetary health this year:

<https://www.nzma.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Planetary-Health-Position-Statement.pdf>

Can more medical associations do this? This changes thinking and invites action, and it moves to align implementation with global efforts (and, importantly, vice versa).

In addition to how we can influence each other as health professionals to make changes to how we practise in a greener and more sustainable way. How do we pass on that change and further influence to the population through the conversations we have with our patients?

There are many opportunities to translate policy to practice.

For example, the message of pollution has not reached primary care clinics in a tangible way. Why don't clinics have posters about chemicals and how to avoid exposure for kids in daily lifestyle? Chemicals in soils, foods, water, landscaping, and plastic devices or clothing?