

Combat warming to save on healthcare â€“ study

Tackling climate change makes economic sense, a new report claims. A **Health24** report notes that the cost of cutting carbon emissions – enough to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement – would be offset by reductions in health problems and deaths caused by air pollution, the researchers found. ‘These health “co-benefits” of climate change policy are widely believed to be important, but until now have not been fully incorporated in global economic analyses of how much the world should invest in climate action,’ said study co-lead author Mark Budolfson. He is a fellow at the University of Vermont's Gund Institute for Environment. **The health benefits alone could be worth trillions of dollars a year, depending on the air quality policies implemented by different nations**, the researchers explained. ‘We show the climate conversation doesn't need to be about the current generation investing in the further future,’ Budolfson said. ‘By making smart investments in climate action, we can save lives now through improved air quality and health.’ The study found that the greatest short-term health benefits of significantly reducing carbon emissions would be in China and India, which have among the highest death rates from air pollution.

UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock has commissioned a review of the impact of dirty air on health, including updated estimates of the number of new cases of illness that could be caused by air pollution by 2035. According to a report in **The Guardian**, Public Health England (PHE) predicted in May 2018 that there would be 2.4m new cases of disease by 2035 if current air pollution levels persisted. According to PHE, diseases with a strong association with air pollution include child asthma, coronary heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. In January the government published its clean air strategy, which pledged to reduce people's exposure to particulate matter and to halve the number of people living in areas breaching World Health Organization guidelines on particulate matter by 2025. **The new review aims to identify how many cases of disease the clean air strategy could prevent, and where more attention could be placed.** ‘Our health is shaped by the environment we live in and dirty air is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK,’ Hancock said. ‘We cannot underestimate the very real impact that dirty air – this slow and deadly poison – is having on our lives, our health and our NHS.’