

Win–wins for health and climate - new report

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A zero-carbon economy based on clean renewable energy could avert hundreds of thousands of premature deaths caused annually by air pollutants from the burning of fossil fuels. That's the conclusion of a report released last month by the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC). Many of EASAC's recommendations are relevant worldwide. They include making better use of scientific evidence, filling knowledge gaps and tackling misinformation.

The report describes the direct risks to health from climate change - from extreme heat or flooding, for example. Other threats include food shortages resulting from ecosystem damage, and migration driven by socioeconomic consequences.

The report identifies vulnerable groups, reviews models of projected impacts under different scenarios and suggests adaptation strategies for limiting adverse effects on health. It recommends nutritious, more-sustainable diets and active forms of travel, such as walking and cycling, as ways of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and promoting physical well-being.

We hope that the report will stimulate analysis by all academies of science and medicine through their global network, the InterAcademy Partnership. Science must inform integrated policy to improve systems' resilience and support rapid decarbonization of the economy.