



e.Posit

POSIT: A Posit on Global Warming

"Whether humanity contributes significantly to global warming is a matter of no significance to health or to the practice of medicine at this time."

THE CURRENT E-POSIT was prefaced by this assertion: "The world will never significantly reduce or control production of greenhouse gasses voluntarily."

It is important for a representative body like the SSVMS Board of Directors to exercise its authority to endorse the candidate for political office who most clearly reflects the views of the majority of our members.

Posits do not necessarily reflect the views of SSV Medicine, the Medical Society, or its Board of Directors. Among 102 responses, 78 disagreed, while 22 agreed with the posit. Edited commentary from 27 people appears below. Unedited commentary is viewable online.

"Any factor that affects health care is a matter of significance to the practice of medicine. The true human contribution to climatic change has not been determined. It is unknown if human contribution is significant. It is politically correct to join the bandwagon of 'global warming.' I seem to recall that Greenland was, in fact, green some long time ago. The question is what can reasonably be done about it." - **Lee Snook, MD**

"Clearly, it MATTERS if human activity contributes to global warming. The debate (not clearly delineated in the mainstream media) is whether global warming even exists (vs. being a 'normal' cyclical change in climate) and if human activity does contribute significantly to it...there IS valid scientific debate on that topic." - **James Sehr, MD**

"Adverse climate changes will affect human health. Therefore, as citizens of the world, whether we are part of the medical profession or not, we should participate, as best as we are able, to prevent adverse climate changes caused by man." - **Bryant Sheehy, MD**

"Regarding greenhouse gases, water vapor is by far the most significant, with carbon dioxide relatively insignificant. Of the latter, a tiny fraction may be attributed to human activity.... [In the past] the consequences of higher global temperatures were apparently beneficial to humans. The wild imagination of fear mongers (some with a lust for power) has brought us some dramatic fictional scenarios of global warming consequences.... [Their hope] is to achieve more centralized control of power and resources - ostensibly to save us from warmer temperatures. This would be at the expense of individual liberty and of activities for which people might choose to spend their resources, such as medical care. This...represents the triumph of political propaganda and indoctrination over true education, science, and open debate. Responsible, intelligent citizens must educate themselves and act accordingly." - **Lee Welter, MD**

"Unfortunately the federal government is so divided between the left who favor regulation and litigation to solve the problem and those on the right who consider it of no consequence to the environment that no measurable standards for developing a healthy environment will be realized in our lifetime." - **William Johnson, MD**

"That is one of the most abominable statements I've heard regarding the crisis of global warming. As health care providers we should be leaders, being examples for the rest of the industries, showing everyone that taking care of the earth is all of our responsibility. As people get sick from problems associated with global warming (everything from mental health to respiratory problems), we, in our over-stretched systems, will feel the ramifications first." - **Tracy Burns, MSI**

"This is a confusing posit, and hard to know exactly what I am agreeing or disagreeing with. I disagree with the Posit, but agree strongly with the Assertion. Global warming will never voluntarily be stopped or slowed significantly. Greed and fear will ALWAYS trump good sense. A large enough percentage of the earth's population will continue to produce significant quantities of greenhouse gases despite all attempts to curb them. Global warming will dramatically affect health, the practice of medicine, and almost every aspect of life in the next 100 years and beyond." - **Ivan Schwab, MD**

"The monetary loss will be too high to be acceptable to the lobby unless something catastrophic occurs - and, as usual, always too late then." - **Kenneth Corbin, MD**

"Many other concerns that affect the health and well-being of people in this world and medicine should be at the forefront of those issues. The importance of preventative medicine and public health will contribute significantly to sustaining culture and surviving this world's climatic changes." - **Forrest Junod, MD**

"You MUST be kidding!" - **Nancy Gilbert, MD**

"Whatever man does to negatively impact his health is an issue for the delivery of health care...global warming...this weekend is not as high on the list as drunken driving, wars, famine, etc...there is a difference between global warming as it is portrayed in the current political media and cyclical weather patterns...both affect health as they affect people. This is not a 30 sec sound bite problem." - **Walter Malhoski, MD**

"The two questions are independent and should be posed separately." - **Thomas Blumenfeld, MD**

"Genuine science is exposing the theory of man-made global warming as a fallacy and political fraud. I strongly believe that we should discard prejudicial political correctness-driven research (aka junk science) and put our efforts towards meaningful discovery. Only through honest science can we expand our knowledge, improve the human condition and fulfill our obligation as a responsible custodian of our planet." - **Don Hause, MD**

"We have a responsibility, especially those of us in the occupational environmental field, to endorse preventive actions." - **Janet Abshire, MD**

"To consider any environmental alteration of no consequence to human health science is absurd. In basic physiology, responding to changes in one's surroundings brings about physical responses, not the least of which is stress." - **Jose Ma C. Leuterio, MD**

"We'd better get working at a fix - we are already pretty late thanks to the current Administration of non-believers in science." - **Mary Cunningham, MD**

"Increased incidence of allergic rhinitis due to the increased presence of ragweed pollen is just one simple example. If a few retired US generals can create a report outlining suggested war games (to include a new theater of operations in an ice-free Arctic Ocean and to include the war for drinking water instead of the war for oil), then why can't we physicians prepare for the strong likelihood that our patients will have multiple co-morbidities and complications related to global warming? Whether or not it will happen is less a debate now, but even if one still believes that global warming is not a reality, why not help prepare for such a contingency - for the sake of our patients' well-being - or would we prefer to stay within 'party lines' as we see more cases of heat related diseases?" - **Syed Ameen Khasimuddin, MD**

"I agree [but the posit is] poorly worded." - **Kent Hart, MD**

"Whether humanity contributes significantly to global warming is a matter of conjecture at this time." - **Richard Gray, Jr., MD**

"When global warming causes the oceans to rise such that places like Bangladesh flood, I would think drowning or being in an environment with tons of bacterial and vermin infestation would have impact on human health." - **Erica Li, MSI, MD**

"According to the WHO, an estimated 150,000 people died from the effects of climate change in 2000. That is not an insignificant impact on humanity's health and survival!" - **Stephanie Voyles, MSIII**

"Hope I read the question appropriately. Global warming bad. Too many people on the planet. Population control/reduction is the real key." - **Stephen Ferronato, MD**

"The thing that makes us fairly unique as human beings is our ability to control our behavior, and to understand its consequences. What could be more pertinent to health than maintaining the habitability of our planet?" - **Francisco Prieto, MD**

"Ridiculous [sic] statement." - **Anthony Russell, MD**

"It is already a fact that many informed and thinking Americans and most civilized governments are actively and seriously working to reduce the causes of climate change. The leaders of a few large polluting nations (including the current internationally isolated Bush administration), for reasons related to the politics of short-term profit, ignorance and lack of vision, have either cynically denied the facts or attempted to delay their accountability. This will change when their disastrous turn at governing is over. If those who practice medicine are first human beings and citizens of (before any country) the human race, then the consequences of climate change must be of significance to them." - **Daniel Egerter, MD**

"There are probably multiple causes for global warming to include increased solar radiation to natural and man-made greenhouse gasses. Some of the factors are beyond human control. Nevertheless, smart and efficient use of energy is crucial to world health, stability, and security. Current US production of ethanol is not smart or efficient. At best, it takes as much energy to produce as it generates while more greenhouse gasses are generated in the production and burning of ethanol than gasoline. We have been lucky to weather the 200% price increase in oil over the past few years without severe economic impact. Even if more oil reserves are found, worldwide demand is climbing and supply lines will remain constrained. If we do not become more efficient with our energy generation and consumption, our economy and the money required to deliver quality healthcare will be severely impacted." - **Craighton Chin, MD**

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