

# Bioethical Insights into Values and Policy: Climate Change and Health

By Cheryl C Macpherson

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This book, a valuable addition to the slowly increasing bioethical literature on climate change, provides an excellent overview of the ethical dimensions pertinent to climate change. Bioethics, in the main, focuses on individual autonomy and the use of emerging technologies in medical practice and research. Even though climate change has resulted in serious health burdens globally, it receives relatively little attention in scholarly bioethics publications and at conferences. The importance of bioethics as an interdisciplinary field, with dilemmas being framed in light of the well-being of humans, ecosystems and other living things and the centrality of natural environments and resources to health and well-being, is underscored in the book. The unfortunate predicament raised by the fact that climate change harms health by *inter alia* reducing the availability of safe food, water, air and shelter (and there is abundant evidence of this), coupled with global population growth and socioeconomic development raising demand for these resources, is discussed, together with the harms of deforestation, energy consumption, pollution and other greenhouse gas-emitting activities. The latter includes direct and indirect health impacts, such as extreme weather, warmer air and seas, rising sea levels, and changing seasonal patterns decreasing agricultural productivity, altering distributions of disease vectors and threatening health and well-being in wealthy and poor nations with most harm resulting in the poor and marginalised, namely those who are least able to protect against or recover from these impacts.

The first chapter, by Cheryl C Macpherson, is devoted to Potter's global bioethics, which is concerned with the dependencies and relationships between humans and other living things, and extends beyond environmental ethics and public health ethics to human health and well-being and other spheres. The chapter develops and supports this proposition and provides an overview of the book's aims, contributors and contents. The book is then divided into three parts. Part I has as its theme, 'Climate Change Is a Bioethics Problem' and situates climate change as a dilemma warranting bioethics analyses. There are four chapters: 'Putting the *Bios* Back into Bioethics: Prospects for Health and Climate Change' (Bruce Jennings); 'Climate Change and Ethical Change' (James Dwyer); 'Climate Change: Causes, Consequences, Policy and Ethics' (David B Resnick); and 'Ethics, Climate Change and Infectious Diseases' (Euzebiusz Jamrozik,

Michael J Selgelid). Regional contexts, priorities and vulnerabilities are the focus of Part I, which demonstrates that contextual features determine the local significance of climate change impacts, and is made up of five chapters: 'Relational Solidarity and Climate Change in Western Nations' (Michael D Doan, Susan Sherwin); 'Climate Change, Vulnerability and Health Impacts in South East Asia and China' (Lisbeth Witthoff Nielsen); 'Ethics and the Impact of Climate Change in South Asia' (Vijayaprasad Gopichandran, Angus Dawson); 'Climate Change in Africa and the Middle East in Light of Health and Salient Regional Values' (Thaddeus Metz); and 'Environmental Harms in Distant Polar Regions and Small Island Developing States' (Cheryl C Macpherson, Satish Bidaisee, Calum N L Macpherson).

Part I focuses on 'Emissions and Policy' while examining mechanisms for responding to climate change. It is comprised of five chapters: 'Beyond the Precautionary Principle: Protecting Public Health and the Environment in the Face of Uncertainty' (Merlin Chowkwanyun, Daniel Wolfe, James Colgrove, Ronald Bayer, Amy L Fairchild); 'Value Judgements in Environmental Risk Assessments' (Kevin C Elliot); 'The Politics of Global Warming in the US' (Michael K Gusmano); 'Health Governance and Policy' (John Coggon); and 'Why Bioethics Should Address Climate Change and How it Might Do So' (Cheryl C Macpherson).

The leading scholars, who have contributed to this anthology, have done justice to and supported the three sequential claims as outlined in chapter 1:

'1. The health impacts and ethical implications of climate change are mostly neglected in bioethics despite bioethics responsibility to examine and inform health-related public and policy dialogue.

2. Climate change generates environmental imbalances that manifest differently, and with different ethical and practical significance, in different locations and contexts.

3. Interdisciplinary bioethics collaborations can, for any given context, identify motivations and conflicts underlying policies that worsen climate change; illuminate the probable effectiveness of proposed interventions; and constructively inform regulatory and policy negotiations.'

This book, which is available both as hard copy and an eBook, adds valuably to the existing bioethics literature and will be of great benefit to students and scholars in bioethics, public health and health policy.

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