

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 29 SEPTEMBER 2022
AT 00:01 AM CEST**



Press release

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH INEQUITY A DEADLY MIX FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE: WORLD HEART FEDERATION

Geneva, 29 September 2022 - On World Heart Day, the World Heart Federation (WHF) is calling for urgent action on climate change and health inequity, with millions more lives now at risk from cardiovascular disease, which is still the world's biggest killer.

2022 has seen historic heatwaves and, with climate change disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations, we can expect a further widening of the gap in global cardiovascular healthcare equity. Climate change and related air pollution is already responsible for 25% of all deaths from cardiovascular disease, killing 7 million people annually.¹

Professor Fausto Pinto, President of WHF, says: "Millions of already vulnerable people are doubly exposed to extreme weather events and limited access to healthcare. World leaders must step up efforts on the two biggest threats of our time: climate change and global health inequity."

Pakistan is currently battling one of its worst climate-related disasters. According to the World Heart Observatory, almost 1/4 of all deaths are due to cardiovascular disease in the country and air pollution is the second leading risk factor for death and disability.² Additionally, 50% of the population does not have access to primary healthcare services.

Working hand in hand with the World Health Organisation (WHO), WHF is calling on governments, civil society, and global industry to meet net-zero targets, to tackle global warming and curb air pollution, and to deliver healthcare access for all.

"Climate change is not about polar bears or icebergs anymore. It's about people's health, especially poor people's health. We need to reduce emissions in the name of health otherwise we will see more and more disasters and more suffering everywhere," says Dr Maria Neira Director of Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health at WHO.

A new global survey by WHF³ highlights the global concern surrounding the link between climate change and cardiovascular disease, with climate change and air pollution ranked as the third most serious issue in relation to cardiovascular health among the respondents. The survey also revealed that awareness of healthcare inequity is growing: in reply to a question about which global issues affected cardiovascular health the most, the second most common answer was social inequality and

¹ <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/indicator-groups/indicator-group-details/GHO/ambient-air-pollution>

² World Heart Observatory

³ In 2022, the World Heart Federation conducted a global pulse survey of 2500 people across 25 countries.

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access to healthcare. These survey insights, combined with the almost 80% of participants believing that government action can significantly reduce the burden of CVD in their countries, underline the important role of policymakers.

WHF is also urging healthcare providers to help improve cardiovascular health and to prevent CVD mortality by issuing regular reminders to at-risk groups about the dangers of extreme weather events, including tips on managing excessive heat events.

“We know what works in prevention and in treatment of the world’s biggest killer. It is time for scaled up implementation and shared responsibility. Beating cardiovascular disease should matter to every beating heart.” Prof. Pinto adds.

About World Heart Day 2022

Everyone is encouraged to get involved in World Heart Day and to maximise their heart health by learning more about resisting harmful coping mechanisms and bad habits induced by stress.

Everyone can join the conversation across social platforms using the hashtag #UseHeart and the World Heart Day post builder (world-heart-federation.org/world-heart-day/get-involved/create-and-share).

WHF and its member organisations are marking World Heart Day with events around the world and a campaign message of **Use Heart for Every Heart**, including celebrations in Switzerland. In addition, the World Health Organization is commemorating World Heart Day with events in the Philippines, where WHF will be present with the President, Prof Fausto Pinto.

For more information about World Heart Day, visit world-heart-federation.org/world-heart-day.

Fast facts

Air pollution is responsible for 25% of all deaths from cardiovascular disease, taking the lives of 7 million people annually.⁴

Over 75% of premature deaths from CVD occur in low- and middle-income countries⁵ and half the world’s population has no access to essential health services.⁶

Despite the shadow that the coronavirus pandemic continues to cast (with the death toll approaching 6.5 million), CVD remains the world’s largest killer, claiming three times as many lives (18.6 million) every year.⁷

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⁴ <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/indicator-groups/indicator-group-details/GHO/ambient-air-pollution>

⁵ <https://www.who.int/health-topics/cardiovascular-diseases>

⁶ <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259817/9789241513555-eng.pdf>

⁷ [World Heart Observatory](https://www.who.int/whodoc/publications/2022/01/world-heart-observatory)

Notes to Editors

- 1. Media Contact:** Borjana Pervan, Strategy and Communication Director, World Heart Federation
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- 2. About Professor Fausto Pinto, President of WHF**
Professor Fausto Pinto is the current President of the World Heart Federation and Past-President of European Society of Cardiology. He is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lisbon (Lisbon, Portugal), and Full Professor of Cardiology. He is also the Head of the Cardiology Department and of the Heart and Vascular Department of Santa Maria University Hospital, CHULN E.P.E. Follow Professor Pinto on Twitter
<https://twitter.com/fjpinto1960>
- 3. About World Heart Day**
World Heart Day is celebrated each year on 29 September to raise awareness and mobilize international action against cardiovascular disease (CVD), the leading cause of death on the planet. It is the global initiative under which individuals, governments and the entire heart community come together to engage in fun activities, increase public education, and advocate for universal access to CVD prevention, detection and treatment. For more information, visit <http://worldheartday.org>.
- 4. About the World Heart Federation**
The World Heart Federation (WHF) is an umbrella organisation representing the global cardiovascular community, uniting patient, medical, scientific, and civil society groups. Together with its Members, WHF influences policies, shares knowledge and inspires behaviour change to achieve heart health for everyone. For more information, visit <https://www.world-heart-federation.org>.
- 5. About Boehringer Ingelheim and Lilly Alliance**
The Boehringer Ingelheim and Lilly Alliance are driven to transform care for people with cardio-renal-metabolic conditions, a group of interconnected disorders that affect more than one billion people worldwide and are a leading cause of death.

The cardiovascular, renal and metabolic systems are interconnected, and share many of the same risk factors and pathological pathways along the disease continuum. Dysfunction in one system may accelerate the onset of others, resulting in progression of interconnected diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, heart failure, and kidney disease, which in turn leads to an increased risk of cardiovascular death. Conversely, improving the health of one system can lead to positive effects throughout the others.

This World Heart Day, they are proud to continue to support the World Heart Federation. Through their research and treatments, their goal is to support people's health, restoring the balance between the interconnected cardio-renal-metabolic systems and reducing their risk of serious complications. As part of their commitment to those whose health is jeopardized by cardio-renal-metabolic conditions, they will continue embracing a multidisciplinary approach towards care and focusing our resources on filling treatment gaps.
<https://www.boehringer-ingelheim.com/>
- 6. About Servier**
Servier is a global pharmaceutical group governed by a Foundation. Servier is an independent group that invests over 20% of its brand-name revenue in Research and

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Development every year. To accelerate therapeutic innovation for the benefit of patients, the Group is committed to open and collaborative innovation with academic partners, pharmaceutical groups, and biotech companies. It also integrates the patient's voice at the heart of its activities.

A leader in cardiology, the ambition of the Servier Group is to become a renowned and innovative player in oncology. Its growth is based on a sustained commitment to cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, oncology, neuroscience and immuno-inflammatory diseases. To promote access to healthcare for all, the Servier Group also offers a range of quality generic drugs covering most pathologies.

As an official global partner for World Heart Day 2022, Servier's support helps raise awareness and encourages individuals, families, communities and governments to drive the CVD agenda and help people live longer, better, more heart-healthy lives.

<https://servier.com/en/>

7. **About World Heart Observatory**

The **World Heart Observatory** is the first-ever global data platform for cardiovascular disease, aiming to tackle the world's leading cause of death by breaking down silos in research and practice, with data collated from a diverse set of international sources. It is made possible with the support of the Novartis Foundation and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

<https://worldheartobservatory.org/>