



Dentistry in the Context of COP27

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Recently, the United Nations Climate Change Conference took place this year, the Conference of the Parties - COP27, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, between 6 and 18 November 2022. During this period, we experienced multiple effects triggered by COVID-19 and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Concomitantly, unprecedented climate disasters caused devastating and widespread shaking. Extreme weather events accounted for about US\$65 billion in total losses in the first half of 2022. Faced with natural gas shortages, several European Union members are reactivating coal plants and calling on countries in Africa and other parts of the world for new gas suppliers. Rationing of water and electricity in several countries around the world has led to a fall in the production of food and inputs, as well as an increase in prices.

From this perspective, there is urgency for countries to accelerate care on climate action and restore confidence that global and collective efforts can help humanity overcome its greatest challenges by mitigating damages and risks.

Several objectives were established at COP27, particularly regarding the creation of a monetary fund for future actions, with the purpose of channelling resources to reverse, minimise or cope with environmental losses and damages, additional funding for adaptation, humanitarian aid and social and sustainable development assistance.

Other targets defined by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) have been defined before, since the 1st COP (Berlin, 1995), although Rio-92 (or Eco-92) was the birthplace of COPs. Rio-92 was the first movement carried out by the UN to negotiate targets and deadlines for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Later, among the most important agreements are the Kyoto Protocol (COP3, in 1997), the Paris Agreement (COP21, in 2015), and the global carbon market (COP26, in 2021, Glasgow).

The attention to climate change and the search for solutions to environmental problems should not be a practice adopted by specific groups, but by the whole society. Despite all these efforts that should be established and contemplated by the States, it is important to consider the individual participation of each one of us in this scenario. Thus, it is very important that the entire population, as well as companies from all sectors, follow COP27 and its developments.

Dentistry is a clinical specialty that involves numerous physical and chemical processes, besides including biological risk. Additionally, research environments and laboratories and the pharmacological and biomaterials industry must be considered as possible sources of contamination.

In this perspective, every individual and collective effort is always welcome!

Over the years, we have opted for appliances that save on electricity consumption; we have replaced incandescent lamps with fluorescent ones and today we are seeking LED lamps; we have reduced water consumption, particularly in our dental chair spittoons; we have practised selective collection of our waste, not only domestic waste, but also waste from our clinics, among other changes resulting from awareness.

Constant high temperatures can cause a reduction in soil humidity, reducing plant growth, reducing local rainfall, and leading to drought and all its consequences. The composting of organic waste can be carried out in small spaces, such as houses, flats or even in our clinics, as well as the selection of recyclable waste. In the same perspective, the possibility of reusing rainwater for washing the yard or watering the gardens can also be applied.

Seeking solutions to minimise the day-to-day impacts on the climate, such as food shortages, the risk to human health and the extinction of species. The review of the current industrial process; the search for sustainable energy alternatives; the replacement of fossil fuels; limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C (34.7°F); the reduction of methane emissions and the search for carbon neutrality; the reduction and reversal of forest loss. These promises need to be converted into concrete action and include visible evidence of progress towards the bold targets to sustain the planet.

The technological evolution does not stop and we take advantage of this evolution! More and more, new devices and technologies can be used to save water and energy and increasingly restrict the production of waste. Thus, we promote more self-sustainable and more economical professional environments, collaborating to environmental sustainability. We must raise awareness to increase the generation of energy from renewable sources, increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption. The search for events and knowledge related to sustainability is also a crucial factor in the market, since companies that develop good practices aimed at the environment tend to be more well-liked by consumers. People consider important companies with actions focused on ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance). And the environment thanks you!