# Radiology experts call for urgent action on sustainability



Representatives from 11 prominent radiology societies globally are urging leaders in the field to address the environmental sustainability of radiology practices. This call to action was spearheaded by Dr. Andrea Rockall of Imperial College London and was published in the journal Radiology on February 26.

The authors argue that the healthcare sector is a significant contributor to the climate crisis. Key factors include greenhouse gas emissions from the manufacturing and operation of medical devices, as well as the generation of both medical and non-medical waste, alongside the pollution of water supplies. Dr. Rockall and her team stated, "As healthcare professionals, we can protect our patients by responding to the health effects of climate change and other environmental exposures and signal the importance of an urgent transition to environmentally sustainable imaging practice."

The paper highlights that the implications of climate change are felt around the world; however, some groups are disproportionately affected, a situation exacerbated by existing inequities in healthcare access, particularly in low- and middle-income nations.

To address these pressing issues, the authors outlined eight priority actions directed at the global radiology community:

**Advocate**: The authors encourage radiological societies and advocacy groups to engage actively in policy discussions that represent the interests of radiologists, aiming to influence policies that enhance sustainability.

**Address Global Disparities**: They emphasise the need for radiological societies and NGOs to identify and endorse initiatives that ameliorate disparities in access to sustainable radiological care for vulnerable populations.

**Offer Climate Literacy Education**: The team advocates for the education of radiologists and radiology students on sustainable practices, fostering a collaborative environment for learning.

**Create and Distribute a Toolkit**: There is a call for the development and dissemination of decision-support tools and training materials that promote sustainability within the healthcare continuum.

**Conduct Research**: The authors urge radiological societies, funding bodies, and research institutions to focus on research aimed at mitigating the environmental impacts of medical imaging, alongside exploring sustainable technological innovations, including AI.

**Prepare**: Emphasising the importance of resilience, the authors suggest that the radiology field should formulate guidelines in anticipation of crises linked to climate change, collaborating with disaster-response agencies to assess healthcare vulnerabilities.

**Collaborate with Industry**: The authors recommend partnerships between radiological societies and the industry to establish common standards for emissions and waste management.

**Work with Patients**: Finally, they highlight the necessity of involving patients in the journey towards healthcare sustainability, advocating for partnerships between radiology societies and patient advocacy groups to develop sustainable methods that preserve patient trust.

Dr. Rockall and her colleagues concluded the article by stating that fostering a culture of global collaboration can significantly diminish the environmental impact of radiological practices while enhancing access to care amid the challenges posed by climate change. The collaborative work includes contributions from several notable organisations, such as the American College of Radiology, European Society of Radiology, and others, indicating a concerted effort within the medical community to address these critical issues.

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## References

* <https://pubs.rsna.org/doi/10.1148/radiol.250325> - This article supports the call to action by radiology societies to address environmental sustainability, highlighting the need for urgent changes in radiological practices to mitigate climate impacts and improve access to care.
* <https://www.auntminnie.com/practice-management/administration/sustainability/article/15738610/8-ways-for-radiology-to-improve-environmental-sustainability> - This article provides strategies for improving environmental sustainability in radiology, aligning with the eight priority actions outlined by Dr. Rockall and her team.
* <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-and-a/detail/climate-change-and-health> - The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the health impacts of climate change, supporting the argument that healthcare professionals must address these environmental issues.
* <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change> - This United Nations resource explains climate change and its global implications, underscoring the importance of addressing environmental sustainability in healthcare.
* <https://www.acr.org/Advocacy-and-Economics/Advocacy-News/ACR-Advocacy-News-Archive/2023/ACR-Advocates-for-Sustainable-Radiology-Practices> - The American College of Radiology's advocacy for sustainable radiology practices aligns with the collaborative efforts mentioned in the article.