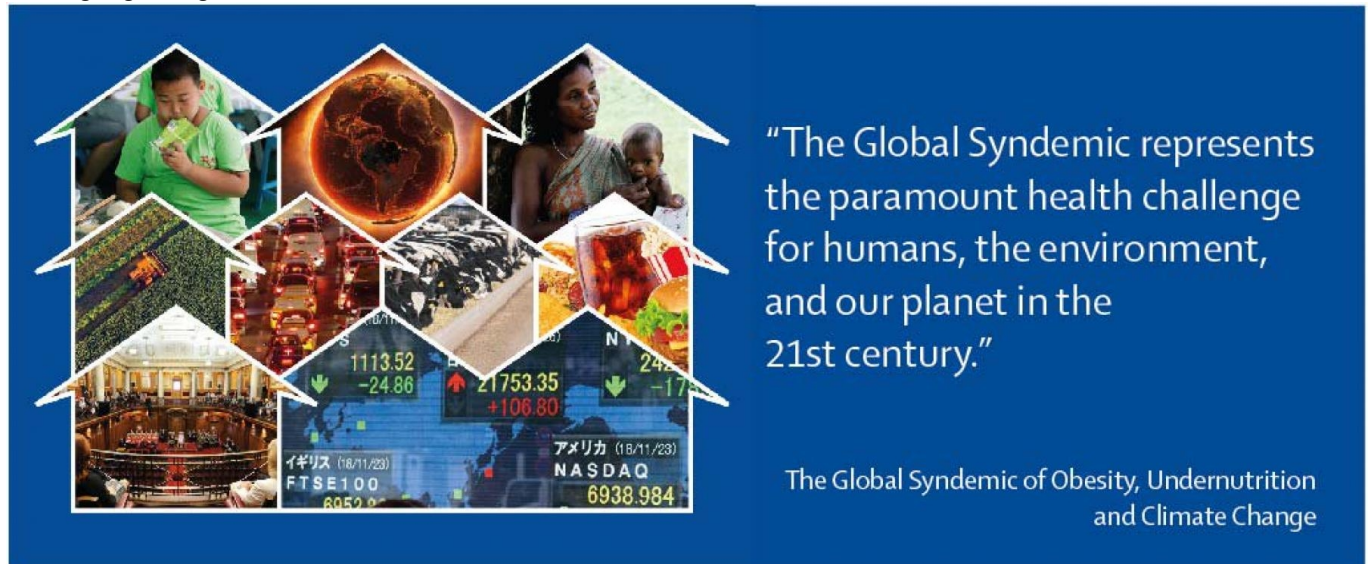


Global syndemic of obesity, undernutrition and climate change is gravest health threat - The Lancet

Language English



THE LANCET

The best science for better lives

Unchecked production of unhealthy foods is resulting in a double burden of obesity and undernutrition, which will be exacerbated by climate change. This 'global syndemic' is the greatest threat to human health in every part of the world, says a new report by The Lancet Commission on Obesity.

Stopping this trend urgently requires a new social movement for change and radical rethink of the relationship between policymakers, business, governance and civil society, adds the report, **The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change**.

Malnutrition = biggest cause of ill health, premature death

It notes that malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition and obesity, is by far the biggest cause of ill health and premature death globally. For example, excess body weight is estimated to affect 2 billion people worldwide, causing 4 million deaths, at a cost of \$US2 billion annually, or 2.8% of the world's GDP.

Both undernutrition and obesity are expected to be made significantly worse by climate change, says the report. Climate change will increase undernutrition through increased food insecurity from extreme weather events, droughts, and shifts in agriculture. The phenomenon may also affect prices of basic food commodities, especially fruit and vegetables, potentially increasing consumption of processed foods.

The Commission is calling for a global treaty to limit the political influence of Big Food (a proposed Framework Convention on Food Systems – modelled on global conventions on tobacco and climate change); redirection of US\$5 trillion in government subsidies away from harmful products and towards sustainable alternatives; and advocacy from civil society to break decades of policy inertia.

[See the report](#) [1]

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