

Full Report of Environmental Health Day Symposium:

The World Environment Health Day Symposium took place on Tuesday, October 1st, 2024, in the Shahid Rahimi Hall of the Faculty of Public Health and Safety. This event was organized by the Research Institute for Health Sciences and Environment at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, the Iranian Association of Environmental Health, and the Faculty of Public Health and Safety. Attendees included students, faculty members, and experts from Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran, and Alborz Universities of Medical Sciences.

During this event, the following distinguished speakers presented their speeches in the specified order:

Dr. Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpei, the esteemed Dean of the Research Institute for Health Sciences and Environment and the Iranian Association of Environmental Health; Dr. Mohammad Hassan Naami, the honorable Deputy Minister of the Interior and the Head of the National Crisis Management Organization; Dr. Sedigheh Torabi, the esteemed Deputy of Human Environment of Environmental Protection Organization; Dr. Mohammad Esmail Motlagh, the respected secretary of the Supreme Council of Health and Food Safety; and Dr. Jafar Jandaghi, the esteemed head of the Occupational Health and Environment Center of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Dr. Mohseni-Bandpei delivered his speech on the topic "The Status of Environmental Health in the Country: Challenges and Solutions.

He addressed the importance of environmental health in enhancing overall health, stating that according to estimates by the World Health Organization, approximately one quarter of all health burdens (deaths and diseases) are attributable to environmental risk factors. In Iran, this figure is estimated to be 19%. He continued by outlining the most significant environmental hazards in Iran, which include, in order: air pollution (suspended particulate matter), exposure to lead, suboptimal ambient temperatures and climate change, unsafe drinking water, and inadequate sanitation.



Dr. Nosratinejad delivered a speech on social health. Dr. Nosratinejad explained that achieving high social health requires the enhancement of four key indicators of happiness and well-being: culture, social relations, economy, and politics.

In continuation, he elucidated that the environment is also a significant indicator of social health in the world, and proceeded to examine Iran's status in various international environmental indices. Then regarding climate change, he stated that this phenomenon significantly alters environmental indicators. Consequently, to achieve social health, the status of these four social indicators must be improved.



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Dr. Naami delivered a speech in which he addressed the issue of crises, stating that Iran is exposed and vulnerable to floods, earthquakes, landslides, fires, and other disasters, in that order. He asserted that, given the global climate changes that are intensifying day by day, the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters have become increasingly challenging. Furthermore, he emphasized that flood control can be effectively achieved through aquifer and watershed management. Such management practices contribute to the preservation of water and soil, thereby protecting communities from the devastating impacts of floods.



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Dr. Torabi provided a comprehensive overview of climate change and the contributions of environmental health in this domain. According to her, given that population growth and the consequent increase in industrial activities exacerbate climate change, environmental health experts must help mitigate the risks by educating the public about the causes and consequences of climate change. Climate change and its impacts need to become a serious topic of discussion within society. Universities, educational institutions, and research centers play an important role in understanding these impacts and in proposing effective, economically viable solutions. In her opinion, consolidating and implementing these strategies and research efforts could yield highly significant results.



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Dr. Mohammad Esmaeil Motlaq highlighted the critical role of management in environmental health and the well-being of communities. In his opinion, effective management in environmental health should prioritize issues such as public health protection (identifying general threats like air pollution), sustainable development (which ensures that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the resources of future generations), social justice (ensuring equal access to the environment and natural resources for all individuals), and reducing healthcare costs (focusing on preventive healthcare, which can lower healthcare expenses, rather than merely treating patients).



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Dr. Jandaghi discussed the significant impacts of climate change, including air pollution, forced migration, effects on mental health, and food insecurity. He emphasized the importance of resilient healthcare systems in responding to these challenges. He pointed out that healthcare facilities are among the top contributors to air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions globally, underscoring the urgent need for solutions to mitigate this issue. Notably, 42 countries, including Iran, have pledged to reduce air pollution from healthcare facilities. Dr. Jandaghi also mentioned the “Resilient Hospitals” initiative, which is being implemented in 2024. This initiative aims to develop innovative solutions that enhance climate resilience and promote environmental sustainability within healthcare and treatment centers across the country.



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