

Background of climate emergency declaration by The Kamakura City Medical Association

Due to the attention on the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a tendency to assume that nothing much else is going on around the world. However, in recent years the frequency of natural disasters and extreme weather events, such as record high temperatures, heat waves, bush fires, rising sea levels, and floods, have increased. These changes have severely impacted human societies, wildlife and fauna.

The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change is a project hosted by the medical journal - The Lancet - and involves multiple other organisations from around the world (e.g., 24 universities and the WHO). The collaboration focuses on investigating the relationship between climate change and public health. Every year, results from their studies are published in The Lancet and are used to help inform policymakers and health professionals. According to the most recent report - published in December 2020 - the rate of heatstroke-related mortality in people 65 years and older was 53.7% higher than the rate reported 20 years earlier. The number of Dengue fever and Malaria cases was also found to have risen over the years. The authors warned that climate deterioration would lead to further destruction of ecosystems and the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19.

In October 2019, the World Medical Association declared a climate emergency and globally urged health professionals to commit to ensuring the health of communities in relation to climate change. It can be said that the health community is responsible for acknowledging that climate change is a threat to everyday health of people on earth and to minimise its effects.

To date, more than 1890 organisations across 34 countries have made a climate emergency declaration. In Japan, both the House of Representatives and House of Councilors unanimously passed a climate emergency declaration on the 19th and 20th November 2020. The Kamakura City council proposed a climate emergency on 4th December 2019 and Kamakura City declared it on 7th February 2020. In aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Kamakura City switched 30% of their electrical power to that derived from renewable energy in February 2021.

Based on the situation in Japan and around the world and resolutions from the 180th general meeting held on 26th March 2021 by the Kamakura City Medical Association, we acknowledge the climate crisis facing humanity. To provide sustainable medical services, we announce a climate emergency in the name of the Kamakura City Medical Association chairman.