



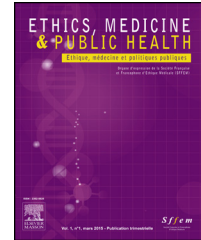
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## EDITORIAL

# While the COVID-19 pandemic persists, our house is on fire



### KEYWORDS

Environmental health;  
 Global health;  
 Pollution;  
 Climate change;  
 Covid-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic will soon enter its third year of existence, and some countries are entering their fifth epidemic peak despite the existence of effective vaccines (not yet accepted by the entire world population, or not yet accessible to some requesting populations). At the same time, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its annual report which describes, for our planet, an absolutely catastrophic situation. The situation could make one think of this engraving by Dürer, depicting *The four horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1498), in a totally eschatological vision of this beginning of the 21st century.

What is the place of public health policies facing these large-scale events? What is the place of health systems, and what new risks will they have to tackle in the coming years? While international experts predict climate consequences that are now irreversible for the next hundreds or thousands of years (melting ice and warming, in particular), how to adapt and how to predict future evolutions (including pathological ones)?

Warming should reach the threshold of 1.5 °C around 2030, that is to say ten years earlier than estimated. This evolution could cause disasters never before known to mankind (floods, droughts, fires, etc.) endangering locally or globally the survival of our species. Macro-fires are already developing everywhere on the planet's surface: Siberia, California, Algeria, Greece. In India, urban pollution mixed with the acrid fumes of countless cremations due to the COVID pandemic totally unchecked by the Modi government, causes respiratory problems for the population and animals.

What vision to adopt? That of an interdependence of human, animal and environmental factors, as advocated by the "OneHealth" method? Supported by the WHO, this vision calls for the decompartmentalization of disciplines, sciences and structures working to preserve health. It is indeed urgent, but is it not too late? For overall health, the time is no longer for the preventive, but for the curative. Man has always been able to adapt, until now; this is moreover, for the paleontologist Yves Coppens, one of its characteristics. Will he get there again, when everything seems to be conspiring to ruin him?

## Disclosure of interest

The author declares that he has no competing interest.

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