

INTRODUCTION

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In December 2018, the 24th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Katowice. A clear signal was given to the international community that anthropogenic factors (e.g. particulate matter air pollution, greenhouse gases) are the cause of global warming and the resulting catastrophic consequences for humanity in terms of both living conditions and health. This is a problem, the overcoming of which will take several decades. However, each of us can already minimise adverse effects of particulate matter pollution, which has been indisputably proven to have a negative impact on health, particularly in relation to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

This issue was addressed in the first paper in the Damage Reduction section. The authors emphasise that individual exposure to particulate matter air pollution, especially during episodes of high PM concentrations, can be reduced by taking appropriate measures, such as staying indoors, reducing the intake of outdoor air into rooms, limiting outdoor physical activity, especially near the sources of emissions. Such actions are supported by an increasing number of public air quality warning systems. Implementation of pro-environmental behaviours to reduce emissions is equally important.

The second paper addresses an important issue of the wide availability of over-the-counter drugs (OTCs). The authors discuss the adverse effects of abuse of widely available non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. In this context, the authors call for extensive health education on the appropriate use of OTCs.

Effective tobacco control is not only about advertising nicotine replacement therapies or pharmacological agents to treat nicotine dependence. It is also the education of health professionals in direct contact with patients, providing them with access to knowledge about tobacco harm reduction strategies. This knowledge is necessary in the process of advising those who want to quit the addiction. The third article in this issue of Damage Reduction section presents basic information on this subject.

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