

OP ED

“No need for another era of a mandatory facial mask”

A new angle on healthcare professionals and patients’ perspectives on atmospheric environmental toxics.

As a physician and a representative of CAPE (Canadian Association of Physicians for Environment), I am very concerned about the above issue, and as a result, I have decided to address it because the health care professionals, patients, and other citizens are finding it very difficult to tolerate.

Firstly, there are a lot of similar issues on climate change which have been raised through this platform recently and severally about the present of wastes which were dumped within the environments of both the poor and the low income population, and as a result, these have caused them a lot of harm and also affected their physical, psychological, social, and mental well being, including their lives. Also, a lot has been said about the present of smoke, plastics, and fire in our environments. Since no justice has been done on the effect of these indoor atmospheric greenhouse gases, I have decided to take it on board by writing on this issue.

These atmospheric toxic gases could be present in our homes, offices, hospitals, institutions, malls etc., oozing out from the locations where their valves and tanks are installed. Most of the cylinders or containers that are used to store them might have been worn out or outdated, and as a result, they can start leaking from their broken and torn edges, pipes, valves and installed locations. Inhaling these toxic gases is not healthy for anyone who is from any socioeconomic backgrounds present in our societies. It can fatally hospitalise the healthy individuals at some point in their lives, and, on the other hand, deteriorate the health conditions of the already hospitalised patients, including the ones undergoing surgical procedures in the OR, as per one of the Articles on *The Effect of Nitrous Oxide in the OR. (Dr Faustina AAI, 2024)*. Based on my personal experience as a physician and the testimonies of other surgeons, a lot has been said on this issue, and as a result, it will be advisable to continue to raise awareness about it because prevention is better than cure.

In addition, some individuals have testified how they have sensed the profuse smell of gas in one of the malls when they went shopping. Let’s review this fact a bit more and think if it is ideal to have innocent children, toddlers, and babies in such an environment. In addition, the impact of what this atmospheric toxics has on our healthy population should not be equally rated to the impact it has on the unhealthy or unconscious population, mostly those that are present in the ICU and OR. Some of the patients were curious to know if these toxics are actually present in the OR during their operations. In response to that, we have no choice but to keep assuring them that both the operation and the hospital emergency toxic team are currently working on this, and we are doing our best to keep reviewing every department in

the hospital during pre-, peri-, and post-admission in order to rule out this possibility. Literally, having this as part of every department and hospital's patients' safety protocols will be another way to show everyone that we are concerned and are putting this issue into consideration.

Finally, we are writing to the government to include this project in other prioritised climate change projects. Some ways in which this can be prevented and also by conserving these gases are by delegating some organisational staff to occasionally review every location where the cylinders of these gases are stored for maintenance and also decommissioning the big central greenhouse gas delivery system and switching to portable local cylinders less vulnerable to leaks. In conclusion, wearing face masks cannot be an option because our little children, toddlers, and babies are not permitted to wear them.

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