Dr Rita Issa MBBS BSc DTMPH MSc MRCGP(2021) FRSA
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Higher Education

2022 -	PhD candidate *(in progress)*	*Tyndall Centre, University of East Anglia*
2021	Membership	*Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP)*
2020	Master of Science in Public Health	*London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*
2015	Diploma Tropical Medicine & Public Health	*Charité Universitätsmedizin, Berlin*
2012	Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS)	*University College London*
2009	BSc International Health	*University College London*

Relevant Work Experience

06/24 - Consultant — *Climate change and health, World Health Organization*
As a global health practitioner and domain expert, I was brought in to lead the COP29 Special Report on Climate Change and Health – Health is the Argument for Climate Action - where climate and health action become synonymous. The report was subsequently used as a key piece of evidence to the International Court of Justice Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change. I continue to work across partnerships, advocacy, and communications for WHO head office, including as a speech writer for Dr Tedros and in setting up and running the WHO Climate-Health communications hub.

2/21 - Family Medicine Doctor (GP) — *Bromley by Bow Health Partnership*
Clinician working in primary care in Tower Hamlets - in a community of high deprivation and pollution.

09/23 - Visiting Scholar — *FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard*
Researching health as it intersects with environment, climate change and human rights. Visiting Lecturer on "Environmental Justice, Climate Action, and Health" course. On the advisory board and lecturer on the Global COACH fellowship, training community organisers for climate and health action.

10/22 - PhD Candidate — *International Development, University of East Anglia, UK*
Funded by the Leverhulme Trust to research loss due to climate change through the concept of Solastalgia, a mental health response to climate change. Research includes fieldwork with frontline communities to the climate crisis. Outputs include engagement with the UNFCCC mechanism for loss and damage through WHO and UNEP. Health lead, CliMigHealth interdisciplinary research network.

3/21 – 10/22 Clinical Research Fellow (0.5 FTE) — *UCL Institute for Global Health | Lancet Migration*
Climate Change, Migration and Health research fellow, leading on expanding the climate aspect of migration and health research for Lancet Migration.

9/18 – 9/20 Research Fellow — *Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, LSHTM*
"Non-communicable disease management in Humanitarian Settings" for the Novo Nordisk Global Access to Care department, as part of the Partnering for Change initiative.

8/16 – 3/21 Academic Clinical Fellow General Practice/ Primary Care — *Bart's Health NHS Trust*
Clinical rotations in A&E, paediatrics, GUM, psychiatry and general practice working at the Bromley-By-Bow Health Centre. Competent skills in general practice managing the range of acute and chronic conditions, paediatrics, antenatal care, and mental health. 1-year integrated research based at QMUL/ LSHTM, working on diabetes management in humanitarian settings, and integration of migrant and climate data into health system strengthening, alongside an MSc in Public Health.

9/15 – 6/16 Consultant (1) and Referrals Coordinator (2) — *Médecins Sans Frontières, Lebanon*
1. Needs assessment and project planning for new clinical services in Bourj el Barajneh refugee camp

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2. Clinical medic role as the referral and transfer coordinator for the primary care and maternity centres in Shatila refugee camp, Beirut.

9/15 –5/16 Lecturer in Public Health *University of Balamand, Lebanon*
8/12 - 14 Foundation year 1 and 2 Doctor *University College London Hospital, Watford General Hospital*

Leadership

2023 - 2024 Commissioner leading Sustainability for the future of the NHS, *British Medical Journal*
2022 - Co-editor "Resistance, Activism and Health" (Oxford University Press, 2026)
2022 - Co-founder and advisor, Unexia – a funding platform for the Sustainable Development Goals
2022 - Co-founder and coordinator of planet:health – a planetary health imagination lab
2021 Co-editor "Handbook of Refugee Health" the BMA Medical Book Awards book of the year 2022
2020 - Steering committee of "Build Back Better", advisor to Parliament on the Green New Deal

Teaching

- Visiting lecturer at UCL, Harvard School of Public Health, NYU (in London), St Georges University of London, The University of Balamand - undergraduate and MSc level
- Community workshops in the Netherlands, Kenya and London with young adults - visioning the future of planetary health

Fellowships, Honors and Awards

- Public Sector Changemaker of the year 2022 – Lord Mayor's sustainable city award
- Wellcome Trust Public Engagement Grant co-PI – Envisioning Environmental Equity, 2021-2022
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, 2021–, and catalyst grant awardee 2022
- BMA Book of the Year, 2022 – for the Handbook of Refugee Health
- RCGP North East London Faculty Scholar in Sustainable Healthcare, 2020 –
- BMJ Women in Health Leadership, 2020

Writing and media

Full publication list (H-Index 19) can be read here.

Selected publications:

1. *Expert Contributor.* UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (2026). Loss and Damage Beyond Economics: Exploring Health as a Non-Economic Loss in National Climate Planning- A Global Stocktake of National Climate Policies. Copenhagen, Denmark: UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre
2. **Issa R**, Forbes C, Baker C, Morgan M, Womersley K, Klaber B, et al. Sustainability is critical for future proofing the NHS. BMJ. 2024;385: e079259.
3. *Lead author*. COP29 special report on climate change and health: Health is the argument for climate action. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024.
4. **Issa R**, Thomas A, Firaq N, Wyns A. Loss and damage responses to climate change. BMJ. 2023;383: 2182.
5. Shannon G, Faddoul A, Lai A, Lai T, Lauer J, Rajagopalan S… **Issa R (senior author)**. Planet.Health: An Ecosystem Approach to Imagine and Coordinate for Planetary Health Futures. Challenges. 2023;14: 39.
6. Deivanayagam TA, English S, Hickel J, Bonifacio J, Guinto RR**… Issa R**, et al. Envisioning environmental equity: climate change, health, and racial justice. Lancet. 2023. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00919-4
7. **Issa R,** Robin van Daalen K, Faddoul A, Collias L, James R, Chaudhry UAR, et al. Human migration on a heating planet: A scoping review. PLOS Clim. 2023. 2(5): e0000214.

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8. Deivanayagam TA, Selvarajah S, Hickel J, Guinto RR, de Morais Sato P, Bonifacio J, **Issa R**, et al. Climate change, health, and discrimination: action towards racial justice. Lancet. 2023;401: 5–7.
9. **Issa R**, Wood C, Rajagopalan S, Chestnov R, Chesters H, Shannon G. Addressing Planetary Health through the Blockchain—Hype or Hope? A Scoping Review. Challenges. 2023;15: 3.
10. **Issa R**, Sarsour A, Cullip T, Toma S, Ruyssen I, Scheerens C. Gaps and opportunities in the climate change, migration and health nexus: Insights from a questionnaire based study of practitioners and researchers. J Migr Health. 2023;7: 100171.
11. Huq, M., English, S., Nagginda, H. P., Bonifacio, J., Deivanayagam, T. A., **Issa, R.,** . . . Devakumar, D. (2022). A Plan For Developing a Guide to Climate & Health Justice Education: Process and Content. *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*, 100188. doi:10.1016/j.joclim.2022.100188
12. Shannon G, **Issa R**, Wood C, Kelman I. Regenerative economics for planetary health: A scoping review. Int Health Trends & Persp. 2022;2: 81–105.
13. **Issa R**, Baker C, Spooner R, Abrams R, Gopfert A, Evans M, et al. Mapping the movement for climate change and health in England: a descriptive review and theory of change analysis. Perspect Public Health. 2021;141: 328–337.
14. Abubakar I, Aldridge RW, Devakumar D, Orcutt M, Burns R, Barreto ML… **Issa R,** et al. The UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health: the health of a world on the move. Lancet. 2018;392: 2606–2654.

Other writing and public communications:

- Op-Ed writer for The Independent
- Media contributions including BBC R4 ‘Moral Maze’, Sky News, BBC news.

Selected talks

- "The future of planetary health," Devex panel, London Climate Action Week, 2026
- "Ecologies of future ancestry," Mapping Revelations, France, 2026
- “Re-imagining Health as Relationship and Resistance”, BEE Diploma. London, 2026
- “Rethinking Care” - CLiP Keynote, Rotterdam, 2025
- Podcast, "Making the health impacts of climate change visible," Wellcome Trust (X/Twitter space)
- Panellist, Europe launch of the Lancet Countdown report
- Panel moderator, "Climate and Health Justice," Planetary Health Hub
- Panellist, "Political and Social Movements," Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC)
- Keynote, "Converging crises: climate change, migration and child health," International Child Health Group winter meeting
- Speaker, "Time for action: climate change in the humanitarian sector," MSF Paediatric Days
- Panellist, "Mobilising health professionals towards climate and health justice," Race & Health
- Speaker, Enough is Enough rally (on the state of the NHS)