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Over 100 medical journals call for nuclear weapons elimination

Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 15 November, 2026 — Over 100 medical and health journals, including The Lancet, The BMJ and the International Nursing Review, have issued a joint call to move rapidly to eliminate nuclear weapons. Leaders of the global health community warn that any use of nuclear weapons would be catastrophic for humanity, and they call for primary prevention by abolishing the weapons before they can be used.

The call comes as nuclear risk reaches levels unseen even during the Cold War. In January, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set its Doomsday Clock to 85 seconds to midnight, the closest in history, and the facts support this move. The nine nuclear-armed states spent a record US $119 billion on their arsenals in 2025, a 19% rise in a single year; New START, the last treaty limiting the US and Russian arsenals, expired in February 2026 with no replacement in the works; and implicit and explicit nuclear threats have become a recurring feature of today's wars.

The call takes the form of an editorial co-authored by the editors of 12 leading medical and health journals, the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), and leaders of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). It follows joint editorials on nuclear risk in 2023 and 2025. It is published this week ahead of the first Review Conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which meets at UN Headquarters in New York from 30 November to 4 December 2026.

"Humanity's survival is…in the hands of a few fallible decision-makers," the editorial warns.

Citing the special responsibility of the health community, the editorial states, "Health professionals have a vital role to play in keeping a health focus in public discussions on nuclear risk. We need a verifiable, deadline-driven agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons. This is why it is essential that the health sector continues to demand that every country – including the nuclear armed states – should join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The flourishing, and even the survival, of the human species is at stake."

The editorial is the first introducing a series of four total. The other three will cover:

1. New insights from psychology and neurology on nuclear risk and deterrence
2. The potential One Health consequences of nuclear war
3. The role of AI, other new technologies and information disorders (mis- and disinformation) on nuclear risk

According to Chris Zielinski, Past President of the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) and co-author of the editorial, "This is not merely a broad communications effort. There has never been anything remotely like it in the health sector – or in any other sector."

"Nuclear war would be the end of human civilisation," added Dr. Kati Juva, IPPNW Co-President and co-author of the editorial. "As health professionals, we have a duty to work for the prevention of the use of nuclear weapons, and push all governments to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."