

The 'Woke' Lancet Asks if It's Acceptable to Have Children



By Alex Berezow, PhD — November 12, 2019



Credit: Ernest F/Wikipedia ^[1]

What should we make of a scientific journal that has decided that being culturally "woke" is more important than presenting evidence-based reports and opinions? Alas, this is what has become of *The Lancet*.

For decades, *The Lancet* was seen as one of the world's preeminent biomedical journals, along with publications such as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) and the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM). But something has changed, and the journal now regularly publishes bad research and bizarre opinions.

The latest example is *The Lancet's* decision to publish a [review](#) ^[2] of a theatrical performance called *Lungs*, which is about climate change. (Why a biomedical journal is publishing theatrical reviews at all is a legitimate question in itself.) The very first paragraph is already full of misinformation:

*"With industrialisation, deforestation, and **large-scale agriculture**, greenhouse gas emissions have risen to record levels." [Emphasis added]*

No, large-scale agriculture reduces greenhouse gas emissions. (It also [uses less water and causes less soil erosion](#) [3].) While an individual organic farm produces fewer emissions than a conventional farm, organic farms are less efficient. That means more land has to be converted to agriculture, which means that organic causes a net increase in emissions. Here is the conclusion of a recent paper in [Nature](#) [4]:

*"Here we assess the consequences for net GHG emissions of a 100% shift to organic food production in England and Wales using life-cycle assessment. We **predict major shortfalls in production of most agricultural products** against a conventional baseline. Direct GHG emissions are reduced with organic farming, but when increased overseas land use to compensate for shortfalls in domestic supply are factored in, **net emissions are greater**. [Emphasis added]*

So, not only are net emissions greater with organic farming, there's also the added bonus of producing less food. Then, comes the real showstopper:

"Knowing the carbon footprint of a child throughout its life—described in the play as 10 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide—is it acceptable to have a child? As W points out: 'That's the weight of the Eiffel Tower. I'd be giving birth to the Eiffel Tower'."

The Lancet thinks that it's reasonable to ponder one's pollution sins before having children. This is insane and misanthropic, and it's precisely why so many people don't take environmentalists seriously. Followed to its logical conclusion, nobody should ever have any children, which means we'll leave a clean and healthy planet for precisely no one.

Unsurprisingly, the article also gives a nod to Extinction Rebellion, a group of activists that tries to convince people to act boldly on climate change by, as I described [previously](#) [5], "preventing people from going to work, spraying graffiti, smashing glass doors, protesting naked, and gluing themselves to street furniture."

The Lancet Is Downright Weird

Instead of being an anomaly, *The Lancet* has demonstrated a long track record of sheer weirdness. Let us not forget that it was *The Lancet* that kicked off the "vaccine-autism" nonsense by publishing Andrew Wakefield's (now known to be) fraudulent paper in 1998.

But that was just the beginning. Here's a list of bizarre things *The Lancet* has published, keeping in mind these examples are from just the last few years:

- Editor-in-chief Richard Horton [praised Karl Marx](#) [6] and wrote that medicine and Marxism have "respectable histories," despite the fact that Marxist philosophy led to the deaths of roughly 100 million people.
- *The Lancet* [blamed surgeons for killing millions of people](#) [7].

- It [claimed](#) [8] that "disease, violence, and inequality threaten more adolescents worldwide than ever before," despite the well-known fact that life expectancies are up precisely because disease, violence, and inequality have all decreased.
- *The Lancet* published [two ridiculous puritanical studies on alcohol](#) [9], the worse of which claimed that [any alcohol consumption whatsoever is unhealthy](#) [10].
- The journal proposed to [ban food experts from discussions on food policy](#) [11], if those experts happen to be from industry.

It is difficult to come to any conclusion other than *The Lancet* is an ideologically driven outlet with a very clear political agenda where being sensationalist and culturally woke trumps evidence and reasonability. What a shame.

Source [12]: Marco De Ambrogi. "The carbon footprint." *The Lancet*: 394 (10209), PE 34. 2-Nov-2019. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32639-X

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- [1] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant#/media/File:HumanNewborn.JPG>
- [2] [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32639-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32639-X/fulltext)
- [3] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/09/22/corporate-farms-are-better-environment-organic-farms-13438>
- [4] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-12622-7>
- [5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/04/15/april-15-extinction-rebellion-broke-windows-save-earth-13957>
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- [7] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/02/01/lancet-slanders-surgeons-globally-13778>
- [8] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/03/12/lancet-has-gotten-really-weird-13870>
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