We are living in an area of increased public attention and knowledge about the interaction of the environment and health. The public, the medical profession and the government have become increasingly aware of health hazards both in the work place and in the environment.

The American College of Physicians defined environmental and occupational medicine as a field "concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases caused by agents in the environment. Its preventive approach stresses the physical, chemical and biologic properties of the external environment that affect human health".

Occupational health is a subset of environmental health. In fact, the substances present in the work place may be emitted into the community, often with profound effects on community health. Environmental factors outside the work place affect health; also there is virtually no major chronic disease to which environmental factor does not contribute, either directly or indirectly.

Physicians and in particular primary health care doctors must be knowledgeable about occupational and environmental health because primary health care doctors and family physicians will see occupationally and environmentally-related diseases in their practices, in addition, they are required to provide preventive services and health education to the community, they will often be considered as advocates for the community health issues.

Recommendations:
The last two uprisings (Intifada) directed most of the Palestinian Authority Resources for poly-trauma, but now we need to develop a clear understanding of the community in which we work: its industries, environmental hazards and the overall standard of living, so I encourage my colleagues to increase their effort and their understanding in this issue by conducting researches and continuous medical education. Your Palestinian Medical Journal (PMJ) will be happy to give all the needed support and also publishing all articles related to occupational and environmental health.

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