

Understanding Impact of Climate Change on Human Health

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ABSTRACT

A changing climate impacts our health and wellbeing. The major public health organizations of the world have said that climate change is a critical public health problem. Climate change makes many existing diseases and conditions worse, but it may also help introduce new pests and pathogens into new regions or communities. As the planet warms, oceans expand and the sea level rises, floods and droughts become more frequent and intense, and heat waves and hurricanes become more severe. The most vulnerable people—children, the elderly, the poor, and those with underlying health conditions—are at increased risk for health effects from climate change. Warmer average temperatures will likely lead to hotter days and more frequent and longer heat waves. This could increase the number of heat-related illnesses and deaths. Warmer temperatures could increase the concentrations of unhealthy air and water pollutants. Changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and extreme events could enhance the spread of some diseases. Heat waves can lead to heat stroke and dehydration, and are the most common cause of weather-related deaths. Scientists project that warmer temperatures from climate change will increase the frequency of days with unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone, a harmful air pollutant, and a component in smog. Higher air temperatures can increase cases of salmonella and other bacteria-related food poisoning because bacteria grow more rapidly in warm environments. These diseases can cause gastrointestinal distress and, in severe cases, death. Flooding and heavy rainfall can cause overflows from sewage treatment plants into fresh water sources. Overflows could contaminate certain food crops with pathogen-containing feces. Mosquitoes favor warm, wet climates and can spread diseases. changes in temperature and precipitation, as well as droughts and floods, will likely affect agricultural yields and production. In some regions of the world, these impacts may compromise food security and threaten human health through malnutrition, the spread of infectious diseases, and food poisoning.

Keywords: Heat waves, Heat related illness, Climatic Change, Vulnerable people.