
Children's Environmental Health Research Findings
November 2015

Topic: Climate change

Title: Global Climate Change and Children's Health

Conclusion: The effects of climate change on child health include: physical and psychological sequelae of weather disasters; increased heat stress; decreased air quality; altered disease patterns of some climate-sensitive infections; and food, water, and nutrient insecurity in vulnerable regions.

Authors: American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Environmental Health.

Citation: Pediatrics. 26 October 2015.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/120/5/1149>

Abstract: Rising global temperatures are causing major physical, chemical, and ecological changes in the planet. There is wide consensus among scientific organizations and climatologists that these broad effects, known as "climate change," are the result of contemporary human activity. Climate change poses threats to human health, safety, and security, and children are uniquely vulnerable to these threats. The effects of climate change on child health include: physical and psychological sequelae of weather disasters; increased heat stress; decreased air quality; altered disease patterns of some climate-sensitive infections; and food, water, and nutrient insecurity in vulnerable regions. The social foundations of children's mental and physical health are threatened by the specter of far-reaching effects of unchecked climate change, including community and global instability, mass migrations, and increased conflict. Given this knowledge, failure to take prompt, substantive action would be an act of injustice to all children. A paradigm shift in production and consumption of energy is both a necessity and an opportunity for major innovation, job creation, and significant, immediate associated health benefits. Pediatricians have a uniquely valuable role to play in the societal response to this global challenge.

Keywords: climate change, child