
NEW REPORT SHOWS WIDESPREAD HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Global burden of temperature-related mortality projected to reach 4.6 million deaths a year by 2100**
- **Heat-related mortality in the UK projected to increase by 257% by the 2050s**
- **COVID-19 recovery efforts must be climate-smart and proactive**

3 November 2021 - Slough, UK – By 2100, extreme heat could kill as many people per year as obesity and diet-related illness do now. This is one of the concerning findings gathered in a research review conducted by health experts from London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and EcoHealth Alliance. The paper, commissioned by COP26 Principal Partner Reckitt, highlights the health impacts caused by climate change and calls for urgent action to make climate change a central component of public health strategies.

The new review paper, *The Impacts of Climate Change on Health*, identifies the extent to which increasing emissions, extreme weather and temperatures elevate health risks, from infectious disease to malnutrition, and assesses the associated health burden. It concludes that the health burden will exceed the level of demand that health systems are prepared for.

For example:

- Today, nearly 13 million deaths per year are already linked to environmental factors such as air pollution, infectious diseases and extreme weather events [[Prüss-Üstün et al. 2016](#)]
- Within that, heat is a major issue. By 2100, over 40% of the world's population will be exposed to extreme heat episodes [[Ebi et al. 2021](#)]. The yearly burden of temperature-related mortality alone is projected to reach 4.6 million – on a par with the current impact of obesity and diet-related illness [[Bressler 2021](#)]

Communities everywhere are already experiencing first-hand the health impacts of climate change, which come from flooding, food and water insecurity, climate-sensitive diseases and more. Examples include:

- India faces significant risks, as the world's second most populated country, from climate change's impact on agricultural productivity. The negative effects of weather variability on food security could have serious implications for health - for example child stunting is projected to increase by 35% by 2050.¹

¹ Source: [India: Climate Change Impacts](#)
Media release • 1

-
- Thailand: Even if emissions decrease rapidly, the mean annual temperature will rise by at least 1.3°C, resulting in 70 days of heatwaves per year by 2100 and leading to greater transmission of vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria. By 2070, approximately 71 million people are projected to be at risk of malaria assuming a high emissions scenario.²
 - The UK faces a rise in "tropical nights", those with temperatures remaining over 20°C. Previously a rare occurrence, 16 were recorded last summer. The continued rise will affect overall heat-related mortality, which is projected to increase by 257% by the 2050s.³

Co-author of the paper Catherine Machalaba, Senior Policy Advisor and Senior Scientist, EcoHealth Alliance, said: "While the physical impacts of climate change on infrastructure are the most direct and visible, the health impacts of climate inaction will create a pandemic of climate-induced health impacts that no vaccine can solve. The health and economic burden is rapidly growing, requiring an urgent prioritisation of climate-smart COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts to adequately prevent and prepare for the climate crisis. Taking action to protect the health of people and the planet now will cost far less than trying to cope with and repair damages later."

The connection between planetary health and human health is increasingly clear. Last month, 230 health journals worldwide united in publishing a letter calling on leaders to take emergency action on climate change and nature restoration, to avoid "catastrophic harm to health" [Atwoli et al. 2021].

Co-author Liam Smeeth, Director, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, added: "Researchers around the world are raising the alarm - climate change is a global health emergency. The evidence is there but the will for change, political and public, is not. The impact of climate change on human health continues to be overlooked and underfunded. We need a new era of public health with climate change at its heart to protect the next generation and beyond."

Kris Licht, President Health and Chief Customer Officer, Reckitt, said: "It is apparent from our research that the health of our planet and the health of our communities are intricately linked. As well as supporting consumers in practicing self-care, through providing access to the highest quality hygiene, wellness and nourishment, we also understand our responsibility to minimise the health risks associated with a changing environment. This includes taking steps to reduce our carbon footprint."

"There is only one way to solve this environmental crisis, and that is through bringing the global community together. As Glasgow welcomes over 190 world leaders to COP26, the impacts of climate change need to become a core part of public health. We're working with governments and communities around the world to help deliver this."

Findings from *The Impact of Climate Change on Health* will be presented at COP26 as part of Reckitt's programme of events as Principal Partner and Hygiene Sponsor. Find out more here: https://www.reckitt.com/media/9552/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-health_final.pdf

-ENDS-

² Source: [Climate and health country profile 2015: Thailand](#)

³ Source: [Climate change effects on human health: projections of temperature-related mortality for the UK during the 2020s, 2050s and 2080s | Hajat et al. 2014](#)

CONTACT DETAILS:

Jonny West-Symes, Teneo
Jonny.west-symes@teneo.com | M: +44 7387 057015

Martinne Gellar, Reckitt
martinne.gellar@reckitt.com

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The paper is a joint publication between EcoHealth Alliance, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Reckitt in collaboration with partners: Future Earth oneHEALTH, University of Exeter, BioFeyn Inc., Universities Space Research Association, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, UK Health Security Agency, Health Care Without Harm, Consortium of Universities for Global Health, UK Animal Health and Plant Health Agency, World Organisation for Animal Health.

About EcoHealth Alliance:

Building on over 45 years of groundbreaking science, EcoHealth Alliance is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting wildlife, environmental, and public health from the emergence of disease. Approximately 60 percent of emerging infectious diseases like Ebola, HIV, Zika, SARS, MERS, West Nile virus, and, now, SARS-CoV-2 have all originated in animals before spilling over to human populations. Using environmental and health data covering the past 60 years, EcoHealth Alliance scientists created the first-ever global disease hotspots map that identified at-risk regions to determine where research and field work are needed to help predict and prevent the next pandemic crisis. That work is the foundation of EcoHealth Alliance's rigorous, science-based approach working in nearly 30 countries worldwide. EcoHealth Alliance's strength is founded on innovations in research, training, global partnerships, capacity building, and policy initiatives.

About London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine:

The **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)** is a world-leading centre for research, postgraduate studies and continuing education in public and global health. LSHTM has a strong international presence with over 3,500 staff and 5,000 students working in the UK and countries around the world, and an annual research income of £180 million.

LSHTM is one of the highest-rated research institutions in the UK, is partnered with two MRC University Units in The Gambia and Uganda, and was named University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards 2016. Our mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice.

Follow @LSHTM on Twitter/Listen to [LSHTM Viral Podcast](#)

About Reckitt:

Reckitt* exists to protect, heal and nurture in the relentless pursuit of a cleaner, healthier world. We believe that access to the highest-quality hygiene, wellness and nourishment is a right, not a privilege.

Reckitt is the company behind some of the world's most recognisable and trusted consumer brands in hygiene, health and nutrition, including Air Wick, Calgon, Cillit Bang, Clearasil, Dettol, Durex, Enfamil, Finish, Gaviscon, Harpic, Lysol, Mortein, Mucinex, Nurofen, Nutramigen, Strepsils, Vanish, Veet, Woolite and more.

Every day, more than 20 million Reckitt products are bought globally. We always put consumers and people first, seek out new opportunities, strive for excellence in all that we do and build shared success with all our partners. We aim to do the right thing, always.

We are a diverse global team of more than 43,000 colleagues. We draw on our collective energy to meet our ambitions of purpose-led brands, a healthier planet and a fairer society. Find out more, or get in touch with us at www.reckitt.com

* Reckitt is the trading name of the Reckitt Benckiser group of companies