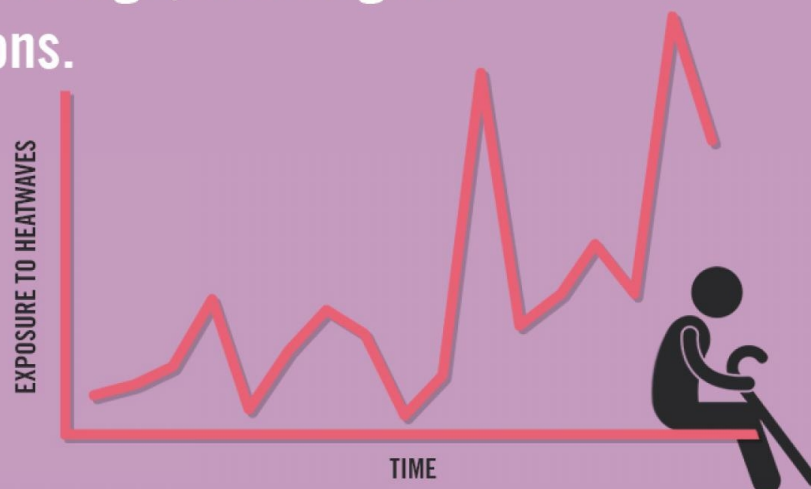

Global health emergency looming as a result of climate change

175 million people exposed to heatwaves in 2015. A record high, harming the health of millions.



Climate change is already having major effects on health worldwide and a global health emergency looms, according to new research released by The Lancet medical journal.

The largest impact identified is undernutrition, including a 6% decline in global wheat yields and 10% fall in rice yields for each additional 1C rise in global temperature, says the report, produced by the research collaboration, [Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change](#) [1].

Leading doctors, academics and policy professionals from 24 organisations contributed analysis and jointly authored the report.

Other impacts of climate change on health include:

- Over 803,000 premature and avoidable deaths in 2015 as a result of air pollution across 21 Asian countries, attributable to just one type of air pollution from coal power, transport and use of fossil fuels in the home
- An average 5.3% fall in productivity for rural labour estimated globally since 2000, as a result of rising temperatures. In 2016 this effectively took more than 920,000 people globally out of the workforce, with 418,000 of them in India alone.

“We need urgent action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The health and economic benefits on offer are huge. The cost of inaction will be counted in preventable loss of life, on a large scale.” - Prof. Anthony Costello, Co-Chair of the Lancet Countdown

The authors argue that responding to climate change still provides an opportunity to realise substantial gains in public health. “The outlook is challenging, but we still have an opportunity to turn a looming medical emergency into the most significant advance for public health this century,” said Prof. Anthony Costello, Co-Chair of the Lancet Countdown and a Director at the WHO.

“We hope for a step-change from governments to tackle the cause and impacts of climate change,” he added. “We need urgent action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The health and economic benefits on offer are huge. The cost of inaction will be counted in preventable loss of life, on a large scale.”

The findings of the report, *From 25 years of inaction to a global transformation for public health*, also show that climate change is affecting the health of all populations, today. The impacts are disproportionately felt by communities least responsible for climate change and those who are the most vulnerable in society, it argues.

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[1] <http://lancetcountdown.org>

[2] <http://www.lancetcountdown.org/the-report>

[3] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/627>

[4] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/ncds-and-climate-change-shared-opportunities-for-action>

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