

NEWS

Climate Change Poses Serious Health Risks for Pregnant Women, Children, and Elderly

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The literature reveals that climate change is having a disproportionate impact on the health of pregnant women, children, and older adults.

Heaping literature puts a face to the shocking health implications of climate change in populations already made vulnerable.

Pregnant Women Face Higher Risks

Changing climate is placing pregnant women at a heightened level of risk. High temperatures are linked to a 16% increased risk of premature birth and a 12% higher risk of stillbirth. Meanwhile, the increased pollution worsened by climate change can trigger gestational hypertension and gestational diabetes.

Children's Health and Development at Risk

Children are at risk as well. Higher temperatures lower cognitive function; poor air quality decreases lung development. Climate-related disasters, particularly floods, can cause mental health complications to children, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. Unique problems face older adults.

Older members of the population are another proportion that is disproportionately affected by climate change. Heatwaves have been related to an increase in heart attacks and hospitalization in older adults. In addition, air pollution has been linked to the causation of Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Stronger climate-related events pose a serious threat to older adults who have underlying chronic conditions through disruptions in healthcare services.

Call to Action

Accordingly, critical stakeholders are demanding region-specific interventions that include, among others, the development of early warning systems for extreme heat events, enhancement of air quality monitoring, and expansion

in access to climate-resilient health facilities. Besides, adaptation to heat has to be implemented in schools, with communities setting up supporting arrangements for children affected by climate disasters. Community-based heat action plans and residential air quality improvement become key issues for older adults.

The literature emphasizes on the issues of climate justice and health equity. The hard blows of these changes were more felt by vulnerable populations, especially pregnant women, children, and older adults. Therefore, addressing these health inequities through these multiple concerns would need to be multi-faceted and aimed at social, economic, and environmental factors.

In view of this continuous climate change challenge, the protection of health and well-being of these vulnerable populations becomes very critical. This will call for greater investments in research, evidence-informed interventions, and resilient health systems in the future for a path to be more equitable and sustainable.



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