

HEALTH IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE: A CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

Authors:

- Dr. Luis Sauchay Romero. (Primary Health Care Specialist, Latin American Center for Disaster Medicine, Cuba) E-mail: luis@clamed.sld.cu
- Dr. Guillermo Mesa Ridel, MPhil (Director of Latin American Center for Disaster Medicine, Epidemiologist, Cuba) Email: mesa@clamed.sld.cu

Introduction:

It is well known that the principal greenhouse gases (GHG) emissors are the developed countries. As early as 2000 the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that globally the mortality attributable to climate change was estimated at 154.000 (0.3 %) deaths per year, concentrated on Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the rest of Africa, Asia and Latin America..



Discussion:

$$\text{Global Warming (GW)} = \frac{\text{Greenhouse Gases Emission (GHGE)}}{\text{Prevention-Preparedness-Mitigation* Measures (PPMM)}} \times \text{Adaptation Measures (AM)}$$



Direct

- Harms on human health through direct loss of lives and injuries due to heat waves, and other extreme events.
- Air Pollution.

Indirect

- Increase of vector-borne infectious diseases.
- Increase water-borne infectious diseases.
- Affecting food production and supply and water .
- Social-economic disruption

Risk Communication on Health

Health Sector Leadership

Healthy Life Styles
Safe Health Institutions

Air Pollution Control
Land Use and Transportation
Planning for Smart Growth

Sustainable Energy Policy for CO2 Reduction

What do we expect from developing countries health sector to address the impacts of climate change ?

Firstly, health professionals have to be updated and sensitized about climate change and health, once it has reached the health sector, as a large component of the economy, has the opportunity to find a good leadership from local to national level.

Co-Benefits for health from the health sector actions:

1. Facilitate an actitude of constructive engagement, motivating personal and collective behaviors and decisions to protect health from the effects of climate change.
2. Increase the community interaction and hence the social capital, which in turn promotes health.
3. Reduce risk of colorectal, breast and other cancers, ischemic heart disease, asthma and other chronic diseases (protective effects).
4. Increase longevity.
5. Promote weight loss, cardiovascular health and cancer prevention.
6. Reduction of morbidity and mortality due to air pollution.
7. Reduce of travel demands and energy use, thereby reduction of the greenhouse gases emissions to the atmosphere as well.
8. Risk reduction of motor vehicle crashes.
9. Reduce of the urban heat island effect as green spaces reduce the average of surface temperature at cities.
10. Promote development of health programs and investigation from health and other sectors to address climate change.

Conclusions :

- The actions of the health sector are determinant to mitigate the impact of climate change on human health.
- Good practices and policies be introduced in developing countries in order to mitigate and be adapted to climate change is a challenge that could be managed.

How does Cuba address the climate change impact as one of the most important problems at present?

The Cuban Enviromental Policy is conceived by an economic and social sustainable development, based on three main aspects:

SOCIAL EQUITY ECONOMIC GROWTH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Health sector has implemented sustainable actions and measures in order to reduce risks and vulnerabilities and strenghten them in all phases of the disaster risk management cycle (Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery).

-Promotion and development of research on climate and health with the integration of several institutions.

-The application of Early Warning Systems for some infectious and chronic disease tendencies, together with the National Epidemiological Surveillance and a comprehensive Immunization Program have been very effective.

- Risk communication on climate and health is another field focused in this sector as an important instrument to protect health from the effects of climate change.

-The Latin American Center for Disaster Medicine, as part of the Ministry of Public Health, works on building capacities with a multisectorial and multidisciplinary approach.

Cuban Strategy to address Climate Change:

Building capacities in health and others sectors

Promoting Research Development Early Warning System Development

Educational and Enviromental Programs directed to the population

Development of projects compatible with future scenes

Development of the Energy Revolution Program

System of laws for environmental protection

