



Population, development and climate change: links and effects on human health

Climate change, population health, maternal and child health, development

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Introduction

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KEY MESSAGES

Increased collaboration in research policy and practice is needed to tackle the complex challenges they present.

Future population growth in poor countries will have significant consequences for health and the environment.

Family planning reduces unintended pregnancy, improves maternal and child health, and changes the social and economic status of women in turn generating economic benefit.

Population growth, together with urbanization and industrialization in some countries, have bigger implications for health and reducing carbon emissions than the total number of people in the world.

Urbanization, rather than people per se, drive climate change: compact, high-density urbanization represents the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions.

Reducing carbon emissions can have substantial health benefits; consideration of human health should be integral to consideration of tackling climate change.

According to the IPCC Working Group II contribution to the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), **demographic trends are more significant for climate change than total population. Poor populations will be affected most.**

Impacts on human health

Improved sanitation, nutrition and healthcare are essential for reducing the impact of climate change on human health. These measures can help to reduce the burden of disease and improve the overall health of the population.

Family planning is also an important strategy for reducing the impact of climate change on human health. By helping to reduce the number of children born, family planning can help to reduce the overall population and the demand for resources.

Demographic change is another factor that can impact human health. As the population ages, the demand for healthcare and social services increases, which can strain the health system and impact the overall health of the population.

Conditions of human health are also affected by climate change. For example, rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns can lead to more frequent and severe weather events, which can impact the health of the population.

Health co-benefits are another important consideration. Many of the measures that can be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as promoting active transport and healthy diets, can also improve human health.

WAYS FORWARD: COLLABORATION TO MEET THE CHALLENGES

The climate change debate should **include the role of local innovation** and should accentuate the role of local innovation in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and population vulnerability.

Responding to climate change and to related challenges for population, development and human health will require **improved governance**.

Closer **collaboration** is needed to: