

Climate Change, Human Health, and Social Stability: Addressing Interlinkages.

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Abundant historical evidence demonstrates how environmental **changes** can affect social stability and, in turn, human **health**. A rapidly growing body of literature, largely from political science and economics, is examining the potential for and consequences associated with social instability related to current **climate change**. However, comparatively little of this research incorporates the effects on human **health** or the role of **health** systems in influencing the magnitude and types of instability that could occur. **OBJECTIVE:** The objective of this commentary is to articulate a conceptual framework incorporating **health** outcomes and **health** systems into theorized and observed linkages between **climate change** and social instability, illustrating in particular the **health** effects of natural resource shortages, infectious disease outbreaks, and migration. **DISCUSSION:** Although increasing evidence exists that **climate change**, **health**, and social instability are related, key questions remain about the pathways linking these factors, as well as the magnitude, causality, and directionality of relationships across spatial and temporal scales. Models seeking to explain and predict **climate**-related social unrest should incorporate the many linkages between **climate change**, human **health**, and social instability. Members of the environmental **health** research community should work closely with those in the political science and economics communities to help deepen understandings of **climate**-related stressors and shocks that affect instability and worsen **health** outcomes. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]

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