

Climate change, extreme weather events, and human health implications in the Asia Pacific region

ABSTRACT

The Asia Pacific region is regarded as the most disaster-prone area of the world. Since 2000, 1.2 billion people have been exposed to hydrometeorological hazards alone through 1215 disaster events. The impacts of climate change on meteorological phenomena and environmental consequences are well documented. However, the impacts on health are more elusive. Nevertheless, climate change is believed to alter weather patterns on the regional scale, giving rise to extreme weather events. The impacts from extreme weather events are definitely more acute and traumatic in nature, leading to deaths and injuries, as well as debilitating and fatal communicable diseases. Extreme weather events include heat waves, cold waves, floods, droughts, hurricanes, tropical cyclones, heavy rain, and snowfalls. Globally, within the 20-year period from 1993 to 2012, more than 530 000 people died as a direct result of almost 15 000 extreme weather events, with losses of more than US\$2.5 trillion in purchasing power parity.

Keyword: Asia Pacific; Climate change; Extreme weather events; Health impacts