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Together we can counter the effects of climate change

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity, threatening our livelihoods and our secure future. The impact of anthropogenic environmental change on human health and well-being is increasing. Public health systems worldwide need to address this significant and complex burden by strengthening both their capacity to act and their resilience.

As highlighted in the Roadmap of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI) and supported by the G7 health ministers in a communiqué, national public health institutes have a key role to play in climate change mitigation and adaptation [1, 2]. Nutrition and mobility are particularly relevant in this context, as health-promoting behaviour in these fields simultaneously aids climate protection, as does the transformation to sustainable and resilient (public) health systems. Within the framework of the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (DAS), health is an important topic when considering effective and sustainable measures for dealing with the climate crisis. Climate change affects many other fields that intersect with health, such as water management, construction or urban and regional development. Therefore, health-sensitive climate protection and climate adaptation require intersectoral cooperation and the continuous exchange between different actors in line with the ideas behind One Health and Health in All Policies [3, 4].

In this context, the German Status Report on Climate Change and Health is an important project that can help to address the health challenges of the climate crisis and

to strengthen the cooperation between different institutions and authorities. We, the leaders of public authorities in Germany working on public health issues, consider interdisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation to be a key prerequisite for best addressing the health challenges of climate change. This implies the need for innovative and cooperative collaboration between different sectors, not only at the municipal, state and federal level, but also in terms of exchange between these levels.

The German Status Report on Climate Change and Health 2023 is published in an article series in the Journal of Health Monitoring in three issues.

The first issue begins with an introductory article outlining the range of topics covered in the status report, and devotes four thematic articles to the influence of climate change on infectious diseases (vector- and rodent-borne diseases, waterborne infections and intoxications, foodborne infections and intoxications) and antimicrobial resistance.

In the second issue, six articles describe the influence of climate change on non-communicable diseases caused by heat and other extreme weather events such as floods, by increased UV radiation, by allergic diseases and by increased air pollution. The impact of climate change on mental health is also discussed.

The findings from these first two issues are incorporated into the contributions of the final issue. They examine health equity with regard to the effects of climate change, highlight the importance of target group-specific climate

change communication, and make concluding recommendations for action based on those formulated in the other articles.

In addition to the various topic-specific recommendations, all contributions have one thing in common: they point to a continuing need for research. Extended monitoring of many of the health effects of climate change is also recommended. The cooperation of the authorities and research institutions dedicated to these important tasks is crucial.

We hope that this report will be an important step towards even better cooperation between science and decision-makers in politics and society.

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