

Study: Global warming real, taking toll

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A study published Thursday shows global warming is taking a toll on the world -- 150,000 deaths annually -- mostly in underdeveloped countries. And the number could double in 25 years.

University of Wisconsin at Madison scientists and the World Health Organization have concluded the climate change is escalating diseases that affect more than 5 million a year, like malaria and diarrhea, as well as boosting rates of malnutrition, The Washington Post reports.

Data collected by the two groups is published in the journal Nature.

Professor Jonathan Patz of the university's Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and the lead author of the Nature study, said the ones most affected by global warming are those who did nothing to cause it.

Hit the worst are poor people on the Asian, South American Pacific and Indian Ocean coasts as well as those in sub-Saharan Africa -- areas vulnerable to extreme climate shifts and where diseases get a boost from upturns in temperature.

This week Howard Frumkin, the director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called global warming "a significant global health challenge," an about face for the Bush administration that has previously dismissed the trend.

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