

Study warns of climate health threats

April 21 2010, By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID , AP Science Writer

(AP) -- Climate change poses a growing threat to health, from heart disease to heatstroke and from illness carried by water to bug-borne sickness.

A group of federal agencies issued a report on the threat Wednesday, looking at what areas need to be studied.

"To mitigate and adapt to the [health](#) effects of [climate change](#), we must first understand them. This report is a vital new roadmap for doing that," said Jane Lubchenco, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "There is an urgent need to get started."

Published by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the report concludes that climate will force people, "to negotiate with their changing environment as never before to find ways to reshape it both for short-term protection and long-term alleviation of [health consequences](#)."

Among the proposed research areas are efforts to determine how climate change might contaminate seafood, beaches and drinking water, and the effects of changes in extreme weather events on sewage discharges and run-off and what this will mean to human health.

[Disaster planning](#) and management improvements may be needed and the report encourages research aimed at strengthening health care and emergency services, especially when events such as floods, drought and wildfires threaten health.

Areas stressed for research were:

- Asthma, respiratory allergies and airway diseases.
- Cancer.
- Diseases spread by insects and other vectors.
- Foodborne diseases and nutrition.
- Heat-related sickness and death.
- Heart disease and stroke.
- Human growth and development.
- Mental health and stress-related disorders.
- Neurological diseases.
- Waterborne diseases.
- Weather-related injuries and death.

More information:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Research report:

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/docs/climatereport2010.pdf>

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