

# Scientists: Bacteria spreading in warming oceans

September 13 2011, By DON MELVIN , Associated Press

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(AP) -- Warning: The warming of the world's oceans can cause serious illness and may cost millions of euros (dollars) in health care charges.

That was the alarm sounded in a paper released online Tuesday on the eve of a two-day conference in Brussels.

The 200-page paper is a synthesis of the findings of more than 100 projects funded by the European Union since 1998. It was produced by Project CLAMER, a collaboration of 17 European marine institutes.

The paper says the rising temperature of ocean water is causing a proliferation of the *Vibrio* genus of bacteria, which can cause food poisoning, serious gastroenteritis, septicemia and cholera.

"Millions of euros in health costs may result from [human consumption](#) of contaminated seafood, ingestion of waterborne pathogens, and, to a lesser degree, though direct occupational or recreational exposure to marine disease," says the paper. "Climatic conditions are playing an increasingly important role in the transmission of these diseases."

The paper also describes a host of other effects of ocean warming, both documented and forecast, including [melting ice](#), [rising sea levels](#), [coastal erosion](#), increased storm intensity and frequency, along with chemical changes in the sea itself, including acidification and deoxygenation.

"What was striking to me was the enormous pile of evidence that things

are already happening," Katja Philippart, a marine scientist at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Sea Research, told The Associated Press. "There is so much happening already. We are just in the midst of it."

The Project CLAMER is holding a conference in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday.

**More information:** <http://www.clamer.eu>

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Citation: Scientists: Bacteria spreading in warming oceans (2011, September 13) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-09-scientists-bacteria-oceans.html>

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