

# Mental Health of Humans Affected by the Changes in the Climate

Rashmi Chauhan

Department of Nursing

Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

**ABSTRACT:** *In the shape of heatwave hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and droughts, climate is changing. Psychological health may be influenced by climate change. Substantial evidence has reported the adverse effects of vulnerability to extreme weather conditions that are associated with changing climate on physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, and social interactions. Both displacement and violence are expected to escalate the more incremental changes associated with a changing world. Recent times, via emotional reactions, like heightened fear, focus has shifted to the potential consequences of climate change on mental wellbeing. This paper explores, and hypothesises on how to resolve, the essence of climate anxiety and any evidence for its existence. While climate anxiety seems to be a real problem that needs therapeutic treatment, it is important to differentiate between the levels of anxiety that are evolutionary and self destructive. A emphasis on human mental wellbeing should not divert attention from the public reaction required to counter climate change.*

**Keywords:** *Climate Change, Droughts, Floods, Mental Health, Psychological, Wildfires, Environment.*

## INTRODUCTION

In terms of heatwave, hurricane, floods, wildfires, and drought, we are still seeing the consequences of climate change. The gradual shifts in mean temperature, ocean level, and precipitation trends that will characterise our atmosphere in the coming decades are much less noticeable, but potentially even more significant, because of their ability to influence more people. Although climate change has often been conceptualised as a phenomenon that specifically concerns polar bears born in 2019, it is increasingly clear that it includes human well-being. In addition to the extreme effects of natural disasters and the socially driven impacts of forced displacement and war, physical wellbeing would be affected by drought, the intensified proliferation of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, natural disasters, and malnutrition. Owing to increased visibility, loss of political or economic influence, or physiological causes, certain populations are especially vulnerable: aboriginal people, the elderly, infants, and, in some situations, people with pre-existing health conditions.

Less clear is the relation among mental health and climate change. And still there is substantial proof for that. Global change is correlated with elevated incidence and intensity of severe weather events, and decades of studies showing heightened levels of PTSD, anxiety, depression, drug misuse, and even domestic abuse accompanying the occurrence of storms has shown the impacts of discrete incidents such as natural disasters on mental health. For those who have endured greater pain, the consequences appear to be greater and are moderated by networks of social reinforcement and endurance. There are also indirect impacts of natural disasters on physical and social structures, affecting educational, medical, commercial, and transport networks. This adds to people's stress strain and endangers the mental wellbeing of those who are fragile.

Both displacement and violence are expected to escalate the more incremental changes associated with a changing world. Owing to a number of causes, such as increasing sea levels, thawing permafrost, melting glaciers, or desertification, people may want or are compelled to abandon their homes, both of which make it impractical or unacceptable to stay. But migration, particularly when it includes crossing borders, can be highly stressful. The path itself is unpredictable and it is difficult to transition to a new home, especially when individuals are not accepted by the current inhabitants. Economic problems often surround migration. This helps to understand why, among forced refugees, there is a high incidence of mental illness. Mental wellbeing may be threatened simply by losing one's residence, as an important source of encouragement and resilience. Similarly, rivalry for insufficient natural resources will intensify civil tension, another challenge to mental health, such as fertile soil, safe and adequate water, or only enough space to create a home[1].

Slow, incremental changes in the climate have essential consequences as well. In fact, heat has been consistently related to violence and confrontation, and more recently, it has been shown to associate with elevated rates of suicide and mental disorder hospitalisation. It is impossible to link heat waves to mental health results definitively, but years of studies in both laboratory and field settings will give more faith that heat has a negative causal effect on the mental condition. More imprecisely, there is mounting evidence that poor air quality may have an effect on the mental health both in the short and long term. If the combustion of fossil fuels continues to emit toxins such as particulate matter, ozone, and biomass, climate change is expected to be met by higher amounts of air pollution. Warmer air also appears to hold these toxins at higher levels. An correlation between the amount of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) and cognitive disability in the elderly, or behavioural difficulties (related to impulsivity and concentration problems) in children has been identified in many systematic reviews[2].

The highest results can be witnessed by adolescents. Children are much more susceptible to the consequences of witnessing climate change directly. They have poorer reactions to adverse weather conditions on average, such as PTSD, stress, sleep disturbances, etc., partly because of their greater dependency on adult family members and networks of social support that could be affected by the occurrence. Because of the incompletely evolved capacity of their bodies to thermo regulate, they are often more susceptible to heat. The risk of long-term and/or lasting impacts of early trauma events is of special concern, which can affect the capacity of children to manage their own impulses which can contribute to learning or behavioural difficulties. Early stress can also raise the risk later in life of mental health issues[3].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Climate Anxiety*

A correlation between geophysical climate change and adverse effects on mental health is indicated by all of this data. Recently, however, more focus has been paid to the likelihood of a more subtle effect: uncertainty correlated with views of climate change, even among individuals that have not witnessed any serious effects directly. Popular media are full of stories, to the point that Grist magazine named climate fear the "biggest pop-culture trend" of 2019, about climate anxiety, eco-anxiety, and climate grief. Due to the spectrum of possible patients suffering, this anxiety reaction is necessary to consider in part: everyone who learns

about climate change, in other words, virtually anyone, considering the scope of communications technologies, may be threatened by climate change anxiety irrespective of their own personal risk or relative protection.

### *Evidence for Climate Anxiety*

The biggest achievement of Albrecht was undoubtedly to call attention to the probability of detrimental effects on mental health from the understanding of environmental change. These results are attested to by an increasing body of scientific evidence. Higginbotham, Connor, Albrecht, Freeman, and Agho used an environmental distress scale (EDS) for example of a real changes in the environment and noticed that the environmental harm associated with mining in the Hunter Valley in Australia was related to mental distress amongst local residents, with higher environmental distress recorded among residents of a highly impacted area compared to areas that aren't impacted by mining. It is no surprise that most of the study has been carried out in Australia, where climate change has already had extremely noticeable impacts; in the 21st century, it was associated with severe drought waves, cited as affecting the Great Barrier Reef, and lately and most visibly blamed for catastrophic wildfires that endangered villages and killed large numbers of iconic species.

By studies of large national populations of Australians, Australian psychologists Joe Reser and colleagues dedicated themselves to characterising the Australian reaction to climate change. One of their results was that climate change was the modal reaction to the opening question, "What do you think will be the world's most serious future problem if nothing is done to stop it?" , with a full 39 percent of replies dropping into the classification of "climate change/environment." Not only did the researchers examine the emotional responses of "experienced apprehension, anxiety, sorrow, or loss due to threats and expected effects of climate change," that they described as psychological distress, but also the empirical awareness and personal understanding of climate change, and also behavioural participation and adjustment. They characterize depression as "integral to climate change's subjective experience and impacts." Reser et al. found that some anxiety was reported by 86 percent of their study, and 20 percent reported experiencing "appreciable distress" connected with climate change[4].

Other analysis indicates that changing climate is a worldwide cause of concern. In 2016, between 20 and 40 percent of Europeans, ranging from country to country, described themselves as "very worried." 38 per cent of Greenlanders reported that they felt anxiety "moderately" or very intensely" in a nationally representative 2018 survey; 19 per cent reported medium or extreme depression, and 18 per cent reported medium or extreme hopelessness." In Tuvalu, a country at severe climate change risk, 95 percent reported climate change distress; in 87 percent of cases, it was identified as hindering normal functionality.

### *Climate Anxiety as a Threat to Mental Health*

Is concern about the climate pathological? Anxiety alone does not imply a mental health issue. Anxiety does, in turn, have an adaptive role as a future-oriented position that can signify a threat's strategy and inspire individuals to brace accordingly. It is necessary to prevent the emotional reaction to climate change being pathologized. An emphasis on mental health may mean that the emotional reaction is inadequate and that concern is focused

towards people and away from social issues and future social responses to climate change. However, anxiety can become psychologically relevant when it is impossible to manage and continues to interfere with the capacity of a person to sleep, work, or socialise. It can also, as with Generalized Anxiety Disorder, become chronic and disconnected from a real source. The distinction between "usual ecological worry" and "environmental anxiety" was addressed by researchers, with the latter reflecting an excessive and "potentially disabling" risk reaction.

It is necessary to mention that the social context mediates emotional impacts of climate change that are not based on direct experience. The risk assessment is somewhat qualitative and social interpretations will influence the question of how much concern is suitable or excessive in response to climate change. The cultural background also has the capacity to lead to the incidence of climate-related distress through the quantity and framing of climate change data that is distributed, for example, by popular media. Media representations, as well as the actions and articulated attitudes of one's social context, are likely to play a significant role in deciding people's expectations of risk [11]. To some degree, climate change is a threat that is collectively constructed; it is possible that both attitudes and reactions differ across societies.

## CONCLUSION

Climate change is not only an environmental catastrophe, but a psychological one as well. While psychologists have been active for years in discussing the effects of climate change, much of the study has centred on risk assessment, methods of thinking about climate change, climate change perceptions, and interventions to encourage mitigation by more sustainable conduct. There has been comparatively little awareness of the impact of climate change on mental health, although growing attention has been drawn to the topic over the last decade. It is time to think critically about the ways in which climate change can affect mental health, based on the growing facts. Psychology and psychology, as a mental health discipline, should have climate change on their radar. That may mean that clinical practice should provide education and knowledge about the issue. That may mean working on implementing best practises to assist individuals who suffer what could be described as climate anxiety.

A social epidemic, too, is climate change. The fear that characterises the reaction of certain individuals to climate change is shaped in part by the manner in which culture tackles the issue or does not address it. In the lack of societal, or even global, exposure to the issue, action to protect human psychological health is unlikely to be completely successful. As with other social concerns impacting mental health, like misogyny, prejudice, and poverty, without losing sight of the social implications, we should figure out a way to relate to different problems-to speak regarding climate anxiety as a neurological experience without assuming that the triggers are intrapsychic, and effective solutions.

Ultimately, a big worry is global warming. Societal adjustment cannot be done by individual coping strategies, but personal adjustment may have to be incorporated in societal adjustment. If citizens don't really find the appropriate ways to alleviate or deal with emotional reactions to the changing environment, increased amount of climate-related anxiety will jeopardise social functioning. The value of having systems that allow people to come to terms with this new paradigm would need to be understood by international consideration of adaptation, prevention, and resilience.

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