
Global Warning: Hotter Days, Increased Hospitalisations For Respiratory Problems

As climate change has gone from a scientific theory to an accepted and encroaching reality, more extreme weather, including hotter summers, is anticipated around the planet. But the secondary effects of climate change are also coming into sharper focus.

The PHEWE project evaluated the effects of higher temperatures on hospitalisations for a number of different conditions in Europe. They found that for every degree increase over a temperature threshold, there was a four percent average increase in respiratory-related hospitalisations, but not for cardiovascular or neurovascular-related problems.

The results were published in the first issue for March of the American Thoracic Society's American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

"The PHEWE project represents the first attempt to evaluate the effect of temperature on several morbidity outcomes using a standardised methodology in a multi-center European study," wrote Paola Michelozzi Ph.D., head of Environmental Epidemiology at the Department Epidemiology of the Local Health Authority, in Rome.

The study tracked hospital admissions in twelve European cities. Each city provided data for a minimum of a three-year period between 1990 and 2001 that included hospital admissions, meteorological and air pollution data. They then computed a "maximum apparent temperature"

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