No more than 4pg

**Summary of GHHIN**

The Global Heat Health Information Network (GHHIN), pronounced ‘*jin’*, is an independent, voluntary, member driven forum of scientists, professionals, and policymakers. The GHHIN focuses on enhancing and multiplying the global and local learning and resilience-building for heat health.

**Background:**

“Heat Health” is the term used to express the concept of the multiple dimensions which characterize the “direct human health risks of ambient heat Exposure”. This includes conditions contributing to: vulnerability (e.g. physiological and social vulnerability, place based exposure); acclimatization rates and adaptive capacity; and environmental conditions which determine the exposure (e.g. extremes, humidity, daytime vs. nighttime exposures, long term change, urban heat islands, indoor vs. outdoor exposures; as well as compounding factors such as air quality). This risk is recognized to function across multiple timescales (from days, to seasonal, to annual and beyond)

**Problem:**

Every year, tens of thousands of people die as a result of avoidable extreme ambient heat induced health consequences such as heat stroke, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, dehydration, and other complications of heat stress. Countless others experience physiological stress and ill health, and lose productivity and wages as a result of exposure to prolonged excessive ambient temperatures.

Over the last couple of decades rising concerns of extreme heat and its management has emerged as a major societal problem. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects the observed trends of heat waves lasting longer, occurring more frequently, occurring earlier in the year, and at increasingly higher than normal temperatures in many parts of the world will continue with high confidence into the future. Recognizing this hazard will only intensify, without additional interventions, these heat waves will increase morbidity and mortality, particularly as the population of vulnerable individuals increases. Fortunately, nearly all adverse health outcomes are preventable through measures that reduce human exposure to dangerous heat in the near and long term.

GHHIN seeks to serve as a catalyst, knowledge broker, disseminator of good practices, and a forum for facilitating exchange and identifying needs. The GHHIN aims to create a global common space to promote evidence-driven interventions, shared-learning, co-production of information, synthesis of priorities and capacity building that can empower multi-disciplinary actors to take more effective and informed life-saving preparedness and planning measures. In summary, it will help link local solutions to address the global challenge of extreme heat.

In order to synchronize learning across global to local heat-health related activities, GHHIN will propose a generic framework that can be used as appropriate by members in their own work, as a common thread to help connect local efforts and learning into the global dialogue. The concept of the GHHIN was launched in June 2016 by the WMO/WHO joint office for Climate and Health and NOAA Climate Program Office who act as stewards to initiate this effort and propose to build on the US-NOAA NIHHIS Framework 2 as a guiding backbone to the common framework. It is envisioned that network interactions will occur predominantly through virtual connectivity using online, video- and teleconference communications. Annual and periodic technical meetings will be focused on clear objectives, be action-oriented, and produce results-based decisions. Individuals and organizations are invited to participate according to open and agreed upon criteria. Voluntary members are expected to include representatives of academia, governments at all levels, professional associations, international organizations, donor organizations, private sector and non-governmental organizations.

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This is a unique user interface platform for the global extreme heat health community. GHHIN seeks to serve as a catalyst, knowledge broker, disseminator of good practices, and a forum for facilitating exchange and identifying needs.

The GHHIN will create a global common space to promote evidence-driven interventions, shared-learning, co-production of information, synthesis of priorities and capacity building that can empower multi-disciplinary actors (e.g. health system practitioners, government authorities, community service organizations, urban planners, and the meteorological community) to take more effective and informed life-saving preparedness and planning measures. In order to synchronize learning across global to local heat-health related activities.

GHHIN will facilitate the creation of a common framework that can be used as appropriate by members in their own work, to help connect local efforts and learning into the global dialogue. It is a voluntary member-based initiative with a light-touch governance process initially supported by the WHO/WMO and US NOAA, and driven forward through inputs from other key partners.

Exposure to rising temperatures is a globally occurring phenomenon, however, the impacts are hyper-local due to socioeconomic, political, place-based and physiological vulnerability. This underlies the need for greater collaboration and sharing of information about how local extreme heat risks are being managed, and points to many benefits which can be gained from harmonized information and sharing of experiences. For example, confusion can arise about the seriousness of a heat wave and when action is needed, and what action should be taken -- simply because a political boundary results in vastly different approaches being taken to respond to the same event, as a result of different information being used and different thresholds for action set. Efforts to simply enhance information and experience sharing, linking the local into a global discourse, we believe can result in improved public health interventions and societal benefits.

Many professionals from diverse domains worldwide realize the severity of this issue and are taking important steps to conduct studies, develop local responses, or develop tools to predict heat exposures – yet there is no convergence on the key scientific questions that need to be answered, no unified voice within the health community of what heat exposure risks consist of, no consensus on the standard variables and measurements which are most important, little translation of local good practices to new audiences, and no mechanism to audit and track progress in terms of science, technology, and practice. Without an organized mechanism to assist these efforts to learn from each other, collective progress to-date has been uneven around the world.

We believe the Global Heat Health Information Network (GHHIN) can help members in their own work by facilitating shared learning and accelerating improvements in the global capacity to prepare for and respond to extreme heat. This document describes the history and justification for establishing the Global Heat Health Information Network, and outlines its proposed strategic priorities and institutional arrangements. The First Meeting of the GHHIN planned for mid-2017 will seek to validate and set in motion key activities to achieve GHHIN’s common Agenda. GHHIN addresses a two-fold problem – first the need to rapidly scale up efforts to manage the complex human health risks introduced by extreme and increasing ambient heat; and secondly the need to harmonize and improve information and opportunity sharing across the burgeoning local communities of health professionals, decision makers and scientists motivated to address this issue.

Other resources:

<https://drive.google.com/a/wmo.int/file/d/0B1XLKZH_lT5OTXNkTy12LUF1TkE/view?usp=sharing>

<https://drive.google.com/a/wmo.int/file/d/0B1XLKZH_lT5Obi1iazdPR0JHRjg/view?usp=sharing>