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Posted by u/eLife_AMA 7 hours ago

Science I am Robbie Parks, a PhD student looking into how climate change and extreme weather may be influencing the trends in mortality rates from year to year. AMA.

I'm a PhD student at the MRC-PHE Centre for Environment and Health, Imperial College London (ICL), UK. I'm the first author of a [recent study in eLife](#), which showed that young men in the US are more likely to die in summer, while older people are more at risk in winter regardless of the regional climate, which may have implications for climate change and future health. Ask me anything!

I'm interested in examining how climate change and extreme weather may be influencing the patterns and trends in mortality rates from year to year. My research includes building mathematical models both to analyse past trends of seasonality of human mortality and to forecast possible futures for climate change risk assessment. I work jointly with Professor Majid Ezzati at the School of Public Health and Professor Ralf Toumi in the Space and Atmospheric Physics group, both at ICL.

Our recent work involved analysing US death rates over a 37-year period. Our study, published in eLife last month, identified several distinct seasonal patterns relating to age, sex and disease, including higher summer deaths in young men. We also showed that this seasonality is similar across diverse climates with substantially different temperatures. We hope this work will help inform public health strategies to reduce deaths now and in the future. I'll be here to discuss these findings and answer questions about our research more broadly. You can read the full eLife paper [here](#), and use [the annotation tool](#) to make notes and discuss the work further. A plain-language summary is also available [here](#). AMA!

My proof: <https://twitter.com/imperialcollege/status/1060475810858045440>

You can also connect with me on Twitter: [@rmiparks](#)

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↑ [fiahhawt](#) 191 points · 5 hours ago · *edited 5 hours ago*

↓ Wouldn't an uptick in deaths among young males during the summer be the usual trend of men being more likely to do stupid shit that gets themselves killed? They just get out more and spend more time with other guys when the weather is nicer.

But on the topic of why the deaths occurred, unless they are caused by environmental exposure - heatstroke, hypothermia - how do you intend to argue that the environment killed them?

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↑ [-1KingKRo0l-](#) 87 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Exactly my thoughts. Summer tends to see more people doing more activities outside, and young men tend towards doing riskier things.

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 🔑 46 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Yes that sounds plausible.

I don't argue that the environment necessarily killed younger people. Warmer weather, however, can modulate behaviour too, which can cause more dangerous behaviour for younger people.

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↑ [terminalgravit](#) 32 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Isn't it also true that you're 20x more likely to die from cold than heat?

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↑ [snakesign](#) 11 points · 3 hours ago

↓ What? Like in general?

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↑ [hei_mailma](#) 3 points · 2 hours ago

↓ I don't argue that the environment necessarily killed younger people. Warmer weather, however, can modulate behaviour too, which can cause more dangerous behaviour for younger people.

To me, "dangerous behaviour" correlates with an active lifestyle. This leads to the following question questions:

a) Could warmer weather lead to less deaths in the future, as young people today sit inside less and therefore have a lower risk of things like heart disease in the future?

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↑ [Hudre](#) 34 points · 4 hours ago

↓ I know a lot of police officers and (especially in Canada) winter keeps crime at bay. Summer is when it peaks. Spring is when there are the most car accidents.

Fall is nice.

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↑ FullOfEels 6 points · 3 hours ago

↓ Everybody's dying in the summer, so we pray to God for a little more spring

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ Oskarikali 2 points · 2 hours ago · *edited 2 hours ago*

↓ Live in Canada, find it hard to believe that there are more car accidents in spring than winter. Maybe more serious car accidents, but in the winter months there are days when we have hundreds of car accidents reported, that never happens during the other seasons.

Edit - did a google search and found a pdf with number of traffic collisions in my province for 2015, the winter months have far more collisions but July had the most deaths. Number of accidents was around 15000 for January vs 9000 for July.

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↑ tolman8r 3 points · 2 hours ago

↓ May depend on your part of Canada, but doesn't spring thaw/refreeze lead to more slick ice? Then there's the times of year more likely to get tourists from farther south that may not understand driving conditions.

TLDR there's never *one* reason that accident trends increase, but they're often related.

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↑ Butthole_Alamo 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Crime spikes during heat waves

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ BearGrzz 16 points · 4 hours ago

↓ This. It's common knowledge in the medical community that as soon as October hits there will be an uptick in geriatric call volume, mostly because cold exacerbates most underlying illnesses and strains the immune system.

As far as the uptick in young male deaths during summer months, I don't think there is any way to attribute their deaths to global warming. If there was a cause of mortality wouldn't it not be gender discriminate? It's far more likely that you see an increase because it is warmer and people are more active, leading to an increase in traumatic injuries

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↑ exmormonphoenix 5 points · 1 hour ago

↓ It's the old ice cream sales rise with the homicide rate, therefore ice-cream should be regulated. The fact that this is basically his opening argument makes me less inclined to take what he says seriously and without bias.

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↑ [cirquedusammy](#) 3 points · 39 minutes ago

↓ Not OP, but have studied heat-related illness and death in Arizona. There is some truth to this but also presents a bias which is not always helpful in research. What we found was that there may be a significant burden of occupational-related illness and death associated with extreme summer heat which is/was potentially under-addressed and under-studied because many people working on public health policy are thinking about recreational heat exposure due to the same bias. Given a choice, people will tend to do outdoor activities when it is not extremely hot. People who work in outdoor professions, however, often do not get a choice of whether they expose themselves to extreme heat.

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↑ [Maga_Man_XLV](#) 4 points · 1 hour ago

↓ You can thank every leftist who upvoted without reading the study, for getting this to front page.

All this does is undermine legitimate climate concerns, and provides no new information.

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↑ [lonejoe](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Checking in from east north central, there is still plenty of stupid we can accomplish in the snowy winter months. In fact we are pretty good at finding ways to be stupid all year long.

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↑ [I_Kant_Spel](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago · *edited 1 hour ago*

↓ It could be because most of your stereotypical outdoor jobs are filled by men. I'm talking hands-on jobs where the projects are most active when the weather is warm. Jobs like roofers, construction workers, welders, shipyard workers, farmhands, DOT and roadwork, firefighters & rescue services, DoD projects, and so many others. These can all be inherently dangerous in nature due to summer induced risks that weather can bring including heatstroke, falls/slips/spills (rain), road accidents, tornado/hurricane, and other kinds of everyday workplace risks. So lots of the young male deaths could be attributed to workplace incidents along these lines plus the recent uptick in wildfires out West.

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↑ [modswillburninhell](#) 50 points · 6 hours ago

↓ where is the safest place to live?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 98 points · 6 hours ago

↓ I think the definition of 'safest' will vary from person to person. I wouldn't want to make the [ecological fallacy](#) of suggesting that one person's life will be a reflection of the statistical models which calculate risk of death and life expectancy.

The country with highest life expectancy in the world will change over time, and may [in the future be South Korea](#). But that doesn't mean just moving to South Korea will help

you.

The best advice I can give for things which you can control are to eat well, exercise regularly, sleep enough and fill your life with things you are challenged by but interested in.


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 [modswillburninhell](#) 29 points · 5 hours ago

 ok but which state is safest from natural disasters?


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 [Modest_Lion](#) 43 points · 5 hours ago

 Not a climate scientist, but the area around the Great Lakes in the US avoids major changes in climate due to the lake affect from the Great Lakes. Also low chance of wildfire, infrequent earthquakes and tornadoes, sometimes winters can be a pain though.


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 [orlicker](#) 16 points · 4 hours ago

 I'm from Erie County, PA. The snow alone chased me away from that desolate hell hole

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 [NORWAYISMYFAV](#) 3 points · 46 minutes ago


 I lived in Buffalo, I agree about the snow...

But I've always thought that living around Lake Erie or Lake Ontario would be the best place to live if we were facing an ecological crisis. Lots of fresh water, higher than average temps (so if we see lots of warming it'll be more comfortable than if we saw lots of warming and were living in Kentucky or something), and enough trees and shit to produce clean air.

I'm no expert but that's just what I've gathered from my own observations. So as of now I wouldn't want to live anywhere near there, bc snow and generally shitty winters. But I would want to live there if climate change ever became a deadly serious problem.


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 [orlicker](#) 2 points · 43 minutes ago

 Agreed. I'm in Pittsburgh now. Less snow, same tress, more hills. It's a lot different but there are similarities. Hello northern neighbor! Ever have ramen at that momo joint? Heard it was supposed to be pretty good

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 [TweakedNipple](#) 7 points · 4 hours ago

 Will the explosion in ticks and lyme disease caused by climate change be considered a natural disaster?

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 [Modest_Lion](#) 2 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Good point. I haven't personally been around it, but I guess there is a lot of pest control cases in the Midwest

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↑ TILwhofarted 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Minnesota.

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↑ NoBSforGma 3 points · 6 hours ago

↓ In addition to changes that have been written about - rising seas, for instance - I find that the weather in the country where I live is just more intense the past few years. Hotter hot days, much more rain during rainy times, big winds at unusual times of year... etc. Maybe the best strategy is to become as independent as possible and think about how you can cope with the changes in one's area rather than move somewhere else.

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↑ Mdizzle29 14 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Where I live, in California, we don't worry about the fires, because the mudslides just put 'em out. As for the earthquakes, well, let's just say you don't burn to death when you're swallowed up by a large crack in the ground.

So, I feel perfectly safe.

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↑ NoBSforGma 2 points · 4 hours ago

↓ I live in a country of volcanoes and earthquakes. All I can do is have a mental plan of what to do if it gets bad. Smallish earthquakes (knock the books off a shelf) are pretty common and the volcano where I live is currently asleep so I am hoping for the best. For me, the real problems would be water and electric if there is a bad earthquake. Or internet outage if there is a serious world-wide problem. I've given some thought to solutions for both of those and am moving forward with a simple "plan." No, it doesn't involve a bunker or a year's worth of food. My biggest worry is: toilet paper! Haha. On the other hand, I do have a lot of books...

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↑ sekai-31 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ Do you live in the UK because same.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ NoBSforGma 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ No, I live in Costa Rica.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ JimDerby 9 points · 6 hours ago

↓ New England has very few natural disasters.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Troppin](#) 9 points · 6 hours ago

↓ The boring places.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Liam_Neesons_Oscar](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Montana?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Skow1379](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

↓ In the US, it's the Midwest. No doubt. More North the better. Sure, it's cold as hell, but you can prepare and dress for snow and cold.

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↑ [Durkano](#) 4 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Nope, it's tornado city in the midwest

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [ilovenotohio](#) 5 points · 5 hours ago

↓ If we all live in hobbit holes, tornados can't get us!

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Skow1379](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Have any of you ever been to the Midwest at all? Lol

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [ilovenotohio](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

↓ I live in Ohio, and am from near a town that was leveled once and almost another time 30 years later by tornados. So....yes...

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↑ [wylithethecoyote641](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

↓ Zenia? That was bad.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [ilovenotohio](#) 2 points · 3 hours ago

↓ Xenia. But yeah. Near there.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Skow1379](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ Okay well I live in upper Wisconsin. This has to be one of the safest areas in the country. We get very cold weather because of lake Superior and a lot of snow, but that's it. Nothing else. Ever.

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↑ [Skow1379](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

↓ What? I live in the upper Midwest. We haven't had a tornado anywhere near us in almost 100 years.

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↑ [bomber991](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ Texas is colored green, so Texas.

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↑ [Julsbo](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

↓ Ireland might be a candidate? We don't have a lot of natural disasters, comparatively speaking

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↑ [Slamsonitex](#) 86 points · 6 hours ago

↓ If someone were to argue against you about the detriment of climate change, what are 2-3 studies you would recommend them to read to convince them?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  123 points · 6 hours ago

↓ The Skeptical Science website has an excellent guide of how to respond to climate skeptics:

<https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php>

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↑ [MeeSoOrnery](#) 6 points · 1 hour ago

↓ There are a couple there that should be reconsidered. Al Gore really did exaggerate sea level rise with his movie. The IPCC is consensus for sea rise is an order of magnitude less that he states.

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↑ [Sr_Bagel](#) 7 points · 3 hours ago

↓ Oh my gosh, I have been looking for this, thank you thank you thank you.

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↑ [SeamusAndAryasDad](#) 7 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Well, that was a depressing read. Good resource though.

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↑ [dipdipderp](#) 5 points · 3 hours ago

↓ If you want another one find the IPCC special report released this year on limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 Celsius. They have a pretty accessible summary on there (I'd link but hate mobile).

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↑ [Hobbiesandinterestz](#) 7 points · 2 hours ago

↓ From the ipcc report:

The report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require "rapid and far-reaching" transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities. Global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2)


would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050. This means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO2 from the air.

1.5C rise is already catastrophic, as in threatening the world order and our way of life catastrophic. So far no country has the targets needed set out in the IPCC report.

Every top post every day on every News site should be about climate change right now. Instead it's fucking Trump and his delusional ramblings. Incels and insecure old-fucks destroyed humanity.

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 [nei_mailma](#) 2 points · 2 hours ago


 What if someone were to argue too strongly for the detriment of climate change. What (serious) study would you recommend for them to worry less about climate change?

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 [banable_blamable](#) 20 points · 5 hours ago

 How could you ever attribute increasing mortality to global warming? There's so many cofounders that I can't even begin to consider it. What analysis did you use?

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 [DontAskQuestionsDude](#) 3 points · 1 hour ago

 This right here is why im so very against the media bias on the issue. This seems like a funding campaign to some arbitrary variable, mistaken correlations, and unchecked maths. Hasn't it just been a week since they've published that the maths around atmospheric and sea level tempature varations and rises that were so off that without a doubt people were simply ignoring the issue to avoid admitting mistakes. Listen, im not denying anything, but if none of us were skeptical, id be more concerned. this stuff is starting to go so unchecked that we have organizers and organizations that are pocketing money without providing tangible evidence of progress nor significance.



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 [HasStupidQuestions](#) 8 points · 6 hours ago

 What datasets did you use and what, if any, adjustments did you make? What are the shortcomings of datasets used in your studies?

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 [eLife_AMA](#)  5 points · 5 hours ago

 You can find the data locations online via the paper in the 'Figures and data' section at the bottom:

<https://elifesciences.org/articles/35500>

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↑ [cersei_and_jaime](#) 6 points · 6 hours ago

↓ How is your data broken down by type of death? Also, are you counting deaths related to catastrophic weather events (such as the fires in California, or hurricanes)? Or are you only analyzing correlation at this point?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  6 points · 5 hours ago


↓ Data is broken down into cause of death by the [ICD-9 and ICD-10 coding](#) from the individual death records.

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↑ [8Reai](#) 6 points · 6 hours ago

↓ We hear a lot about the rising temperatures of our Earth, but what about the cold winters? I live north of the snowiest city in the US and we have consistently been getting over 180 inches of snow per year for the past five years. Only a couple of times did this occur in the 2000s. We are getting longer and hotter summers and longer and colder winters. Is the cold winters due to climate change and the warming of the Earth? And if so, what steps do we need to take in order to fight this change?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  13 points · 5 hours ago

↓ [There is evidence](#) that climate change is creating more unsettled, at times colder, winter, yes.

Climate change is a difficult issue. We need changes in our lifestyle, but we also need strong government action. Joining civil society groups and petitioning government is an excellent way to help convince them. Contact your local representatives and seeing what s/he thinks for example will be a good start.

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↑ [ThereIsNoTri](#) 4 points · 6 hours ago

↓ It's seems like there are many confounding factors for this type of analysis - building code changes, food availability and cost, human migration. What did you adjust for? How?

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↑ [marglar990](#) 4 points · 6 hours ago

↓ Have you found any correlation between climate change and the overall physical health of American citizens in relation to mortality rates?

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[SUND3VIL](#) 19 points · 5 hours ago

⬆ I briefly looked into the study. There's nothing there. No correlation between climate change, seasonality of deaths and cause of death was determined. The title is clickbait. The reviewers pretty much blasted the inclusion of climate change and a lack of inclusion of it in the study.

I don't even think the outcomes are surprising. Old people die during the winter and young men die from injuries during the summer. No shit. Crime goes up in the summer as well. Is it because people like stealing more in the summer or because it's warm outside.

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⬆ [scottys_blunt](#) 10 points · 3 hours ago

⬇ Shhh, OP doesnt want to lose their grant.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

⬆ [marglar990](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

⬇ ah see yeah should have looked myself before asking

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

⬆ [throwaway__official](#) 5 points · 3 hours ago

⬇ Why focus on the US as a European research group? Is this funding based or is data just easier to acquire from the US.

Also, what sort of data analysis architecture are you working with? I'm looking at starting up work with biochemical information and may be writing needed scripts myself. I know basic R and a good bit more Python, but I'm curious what you use and what your background is.

Thanks!

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⬆ [WhatTheFuckKanye](#) 12 points · 6 hours ago

⬇ So, how long do we have on Earth?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

⬆ [eLife_AMA](#) 20 points · 5 hours ago

⬇ Well there's no Planet B so hopefully a long time.

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⬆ [theendisneah](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

⬇ Any correlation being made to mortality through increased violence catalyzed by hot temperatures?

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⬆ [eLife_AMA](#) 4 points · 5 hours ago

⬇ A good paper here for a start:

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/341/6151/1235367>

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↑ [desert_dame](#) 4 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Are you aware that the “here hold my beer” crowd is very active in the summertime and fairly dormant in the winter huddled around their TVs? In the USA???

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↑ [iswamwithwhales](#) 9 points · 6 hours ago

↓ I recently started medical school after working as a designer, dealing with chiefly with climate change topics (some practical and applied, some purely artistic and museum based). So I first want to thank you for doing this research, this is genuinely inspiring. You're showing me just how possible it is to do research in this area!

What I see a lot in my public health classes is an important and massive focus on nutrition. Nutrition particularly, is very much connected to climate change issues, yet I've never heard a single word about climate and environmental problems in my curriculum. For example, we continuously get often get presented ideal and balanced nutritional profiles that don't take into account the environmental consequences of that food.

Where do you think does this inability by the medical world at large to take climate change into account lie, and how could we approach integrating it more?

What other diseases and threats to human health can we expect with more warming?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  10 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Thank you for your interest in and inspiration from my research.

There is a growing appreciation of the need to module nutrition to aid the fight against climate change. A good study recently came out in the [Lancet Planetary Health journal](#). There are others also.

You can find a good start on threats to human health [in this paper](#).

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↑ [Nuraghe15](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ One of the core issues is that public health taught in medical school often had a bias towards the individual. I was amazed by the extend of this bias when I quit medicine to pursue my passion for public health. Truly a different world.

When you look at nutrition at the population-level (for example as part of global health or health policy courses), external factors are the main concern. So that's the moment environment, agricultural funding, even infrastructure pops up.

If you're really interested in public health issues like these, you should often look outside of your medicine courses. There's lots of online courses and some universities offer (almost) free access to other courses, especially if it's in the same faculty (not always the case for medicine and public health, unfortunately).

The catch though: courses differ greatly depending on where you are. In the US, public health courses tend to be very close to social sciences or very close to clinical medicine.

In Europe/Asia you'll often find more balanced courses and in Africa/Asia application of public health knowledge is often covered too, contrary too most western courses.

Hope this helps you find something!

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2 more replies

↑ [Oh_god_not_you](#) 2 points · 6 hours ago

↓ Are you focusing more on third world (terrible terminology I know but it gets a complicated point across in as few as words as possible) countries or are you including mortality in the industrialized 1st world nations as well? If you are I'm curious how you are eliminating other factors that are specific to the change in the industrialized 1st world?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  2 points · 5 hours ago


↓ You can control for confounding factors such as income etc. in the type of analysis that I do.

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↑ [kyotofly](#) 2 points · 6 hours ago · *edited 6 hours ago*

↓ Do you believe a change in location could cause change to a person physically? For example let's say a person from Nigeria moves to Switzerland at the age of 2 and spends the rest of their life there, would they develop physical changes opposed to Nigerians who have lived in their home country their whole life?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#)  5 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Yes absolutely. While genetics (or nature) will explain a good deal of variation around the world, your environment (or nurture) also has a massive part to play in your health outcomes. Classic nature vs. nurture debate.

There are also interactions between your genes and the environment, in a field of study called [epigenetics](#).

So yes.

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↑ [Reeddddit](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Did you go to Antarctica to study? If so, what?

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↑ [StefVC](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Is there a question you hoped/expected to be asked that has yet to happen? If so, please ask and reply it!

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ I am greatly enjoying all the questions being asked.

I invite more to be asked, though!

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↑ [CasinoMagic](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Do you account for confounding variables like income or wealth?

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↑ [iceman-ny](#) 2 points · 2 hours ago

↓ I am 64 yr and live in northern NY. Are my chances of survival better now that the weather is a little warmer? I don't think I could make it with 1000 feet of ice over NY like during the ice age.

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↑ [CnnFactCheck](#) 2 points · 2 hours ago

↓ How do you see the approaching Maunder Minimum ice age affecting climate change?

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↑ [EgaySports](#) 5 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Will paying a climate tax to Al Gore solve all of my "climate change" problems?

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↑ [MartyVanB](#) 3 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Checked out your Twitter. You are REALLY "woke". How much does this affect your research?

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↑ [parginocx](#) 6 points · 6 hours ago

↓ Mr. Parks,

How much blowback does a Scientist in the UK get if they say anything in opposition to Global Warming theory ?

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↑ [Grimreq](#) 3 points · 6 hours ago

↓ I often see healthier looking people in colder climates. But also know there are high substance abuse and suicide rates. Does your research shed any light on this?

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↑ **eLife_AMA** 7 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Societies adapt to their local climate. There is evidence that those living in colder climates are affected less by seasonal variation than those living in more temperature climates in Europe:

<https://academic.oup.com/jpubhealth/article/38/4/806/2966950>

Intentional deaths have also been linked to increasing temperatures over time:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0222-x>

A lot about substance abuse and suicide rates, however, will depend on the specific country and community you are examining. Comparing northern Sweden to Siberia, for example, will have many different confounding factors such as income, availability of substances etc.

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↑ **NobleCeltic** 3 points · 39 minutes ago

↓ As a meteorologist, this just sounds like wasted time, money, and resources on something that will not help anyone later. The majority of the world does not care how or when people die unless it directly affects them or their lives, more so if it's weather/climate related.

Since weather changes so frequently, only following typical seasonal patterns that shift based on location throughout the year, how exactly would pinpointing why or how a particular group of people die because of climate change help anyone?

There are better and more important aspects to spend time and money on when it comes to atmospheric research.

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↑ **Historian1066** 4 points · 6 hours ago

↓ What is the most effective way to fight climate change? For example, if I won \$1billion in the lottery and wanted to use it to reduce the problem of climate change as much as possible, would it be better to invest in renewable energy or preserving a rainforest?

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↑ **solaceFromSolitude** 10 points · 5 hours ago

↓ How do you know to what extent climate change is caused by any human activity? Is it 1%? 5%? 0.001%? 25%?

We must know this number to even begin to find a policy to counter the effects. If our contribution is below 1%, wasting resources on policy will prevent resources being used to do other, more useful things. For instance, cleaning up the oceans, preserving habitat for animals or any other measure you can think of in environmentalism.

People really need to look at this from an economic perspective. Every dollar invested is a dollar that can not go anywhere else. This may reduce overall quality of life for both humans as well as animals. We can only make the correct trade-off if we have the correct information at hand and as of now, we simply do not.

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 13 points · 6 hours ago

↓ I would suggest that civil society puts pressure on governments to act on climate change as soon as possible.

Both of your suggestions are essential. I would only say that I would tend to avoid geoengineering solutions.

💬 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ [Historian1066](#) 12 points · 5 hours ago

↓ I appreciate your answer and work but I'm hoping for something more concrete than lobbying my government to address the problem. If I wanted to start addressing the problem now, what are some steps that I can take?

💬 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Re8jv24](#) 3 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Why would you avoid geoengineering solutions? It seems to be getting a lot of hype. Is it because it's mostly short term solutions?

💬 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

[1 more reply](#)

[1 more reply](#)

↑ [LePervertedGentleman](#) 2 points · 6 hours ago

↓ Lobbying for a carbon tax.

💬 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [reid8470](#) 3 points · 1 hour ago

↓ To anyone who might not understand why a carbon tax can be a good idea (if done properly), think about it this way:

When you burn coal for energy, there are a number of negative factors involved in the mining, transportation, and emissions. These factors have all sorts of different effects, so to name a few potential negative externalities:

1. Watershed and groundwater pollution that increases the risk of health issues in people (which means an increased cost of healthcare and loss of workplace productivity) and wildlife (poses risks to ecosystem sustainability and can translate to contaminated food).
2. Destruction or disturbance of habitats that can result in adverse effects on ecosystem sustainability.
3. Ocean acidification that poses a severe risk to marine ecosystems, particularly via coral and shellfish, and changes in plankton species prominence and distribution, with both of these primary effects posing serious risks to overall marine food webs that a large portion of the world depends on as a food source.
4. Air pollution that leads to global warming which in turn causes climate change that is expected to expand the risk and severity of droughts, heavy rainfall, tropical storms, etc. (and in certain areas is already observably having these negative effects).

5. Air pollution (both via climate change and in the direct form of soot and ozone) resulting in substantially decreased crop yields that make land use less efficient.
6. Air pollution (in the direct sense of particulates) increasing the risk of health issues in people (which, similar to watershed & groundwater pollution, leads to increased health cost, loss of workplace productivity, etc.).

There are other unlisted factors as well. The main point is *all of these negative effects cost us money, and they largely aren't reflected in the price we pay for coal and other fossil fuels*. Worse yet, they often don't immediately cost us money, but instead place the bulk of the cost on future generations, so when we burn fossil fuels now, we're essentially stealing money from future generations.

A carbon tax seeks to more responsibly price a portion of the negative effects of fossil fuels (focusing on CO₂, methane, HFC, and PFC emissions). With the "true" cost of burning fossil fuels assessed, a carbon tax would make their price reflect that true cost so our economy can function more sustainably and responsibly instead of stealing from future generations to make a quick buck today.


Still, it can't be stressed enough that carbon taxes need to be done very carefully, because if they're not precise and adaptable enough, they can cause negative effects that can outweigh the positives of accurately-priced emissions.

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 [mannjon](#) 5 points · 3 hours ago

 Personally, I think the results are nonconclusive with your original premise because we can not count out people's own political bias and how it personally effects them.


I am neither denying nor refuting any global climate findings here, but merely suggesting that the human condition might have an effect that was not fully taken into consideration.

For argument's sake, the "alarmists" might be more prone to get depressed about this type of information whereas a "denier" might be more inclined to ignore it and not let it affect their life at all.



I'd be curious to have your opinion as if you think pre-conceived bias may play some part here?

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 [Wrestle4Ever](#) 4 points · 5 hours ago

 Climate has been changing constantly, sometimes even drastically, for millions of years, and yet we've survived. Just a few days ago I stumbled upon this article about 536 being the worst year in recorded history, and read that about 10,000 years ago a large portion of mankind has been killed due to lightning storms and radiation (JRE podcast with professor Robert Schoch). How can we be so sure it's bad and because of us, if much worse had happened, long before modern technology?

 [Reply](#) [Share](#) [Report](#) [Save](#) [Give gold](#)

 [eLife_AMA](#)  6 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Because climate change is causing changes at a far faster rate than society can cope with.

🗨 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ mhotopp 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ you are a very tolerant person not to have ended that with "you dolt"

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

[1 more reply](#)

↑ RedSocks157 2 points · 1 hour ago

↓ Looking at your Twitter, I find it impossible to believe that you are an unbiased researcher. Your study shows no evidence at all that "climate change" has anything to do with mortality rates, yet you haven't said a peep about that. Something tells me your little crusade has nothing to do with scientific data and everything to do with politics.

Anyways, my question: the data shows that most of the pollution in recent years is being produced by China. Why aren't climate activists pushing for China to make changes, instead of wasting their time on stupid shit like putting people in jail for having plastic straws?

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↑ TheLoveBoat 4 points · 1 hour ago

↓ Why do you insist in peddling fake news nonsense like global warming? There is literally zero evidence for it and the planet has actually been cooling over the last two decades.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ stantonisland 3 points · 6 hours ago

↓ How do you stay positive spending so much time on a depressing topic especially when so many people in power completely discredit all of your work?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ eLife_AMA 31 points · 6 hours ago

↓ Some people in power may discredit my research. However, there is a large and growing majority of civil society and in fact those in power in most countries who accept the scientific method.

Climate change is no longer Climate change and the risks it poses to health is well-documented in thousands of papers.

I believe that opinion will change to lay on the side of science.

🗨 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ dlmcleo1 1 point · 6 hours ago

↓ What is your opinion on the study recently issued by the IPCC, essentially giving us a 2030 deadline for corrective action?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold



desmobob 3 points · 3 hours ago

https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/11/14/scientists-acknowledge-key-errors-study-how-fast-oceans-are-warming/?utm_term=.2d0d7d7779d0

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2 more replies



eLife_AMA 14 points · 6 hours ago



I think we need radical action. There is no doubt. Major changes in legislation and societal behaviour are going to be necessary. It is possible, but we need global unity in this time of crisis.

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Spanholz 10 points · 6 hours ago



In conclusion: We are doomed.

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fitterr 3 points · 5 hours ago



I think we need radical action.

How do you feel about [earthstrike](#)?

Reply Share Report Save Give gold



Riki1996 2 points · 6 hours ago



What do you think about people switching from fuel cars to electric cars?would that cause more or less pollution according to you?

Reply Share Report Save Give gold



eLife_AMA 8 points · 6 hours ago



In the mid-term (next couple of decades) societies around the world will need to decarbonise and increase renewable energy usage. Electric cars are only as clean as the energy which supplies them. While electric cars will reduce pollution in cities, increasing health, if the source of the electricity is from fossil fuels, they will stay make a significant contribution to anthropogenic climate change.

There is also evidence that production of electric cars (especially batteries) contributes to greenhouse gases, but much less than over a comparable diesel car's lifetime.

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920916307933>)

BUT there is no doubt that electric cars are part of the future of transport. Also part of the future will need to be changes in behaviour and increased usage of mass transit. That requires a lot of infrastructure planning and investment. Further, we will need investment in renewable energy that will power electric cars.

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2 more replies




Chtorr 3 points · 6 hours ago



What is the scariest thing you have found in your research?

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 **eLife_AMA**  9 points · 6 hours ago


 I try to stay dispassionate when I carry out my research, as I think it helps to perform scientific analysis.


However, I cannot pretend that I have not found anything that concerns me about the future of health under climate change. In particular, I have concerns about the increase in injury deaths, including suicides and transport deaths, under the onset of climate change.

A great paper by Marshall Burke et al. [here](#) is a good start.



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 **Jamides** 1 point · 6 hours ago

 How does your work be considered into policy? What does a policy that reduces death, based on your recent work, look like?

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 **eLife_AMA**  2 points · 5 hours ago


 More attention being paid to older people during winter. There is a lot of attention already, but the past 40 years or so have not seen any large decrease in the relative difference between summer and winter mortality for the oldest age groups. People are living longer and older people need to maintain their quality of life.


If you have older relatives, stay in communication and visit them more often. From a government point of view, more investment is always needed for social care.

You can see that evidence in my paper here:

<https://elifesciences.org/articles/35500>


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 **karmagetcha** 1 point · 6 hours ago

 Have you looked at your results by developing vs. developed countries? If so, was there a significant difference? I imagine you might have to control for the difference in life expectancy (but not sure how)?

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 **eLife_AMA**  4 points · 5 hours ago

 No but it is something I'd be interested in looking into. The difficulty with some Low and Middle Income Countries is the availability of high-quality health data.

What I do know if those most vulnerable to climate change live in the poorest countries:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate3322>

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↑ [memedealer22](#) 1 point · 6 hours ago

↓ I know the trend in recent years so for places to get warmer but are there any outliers where it's getting colder?

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↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 5 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Not on a climate-scale length of time (30-year averages).

Something to be well-aware of, though, is that one cold winter does not mean climate change and global warming isn't real. In fact, because of warming temperatures, the [polar vortex](#) may be disrupting locations and causing colder, more unsettled weather.

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↑ [RuDy_XDD27](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ Hey Robbie. I have 2 questions for you

Do you think humans will wait until every bit of non renewable energy is gone?

Are energy sources like solar and wind really leaving a smaller carbon footprint?

Thanks in advance

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 4 points · 5 hours ago

↓ *Do you think humans will wait until every bit of non renewable energy is gone?*

I hope not as that would be a disaster.

Are energy sources like solar and wind really leaving a smaller carbon footprint?

[Most certainly.](#)

🗨 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ [Skow1379](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ Do you consider all extreme weather related to climate change?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [eLife_AMA](#) 2 points · 5 hours ago

↓ Any one extreme weather event would be difficult to attribute to climate change.

However, there is an increasing trend in extreme weather events, such as heat waves and cyclones, which have been analysed and attributed to climate change.

🗨 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ [poisonoustreefrog](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ We hear a lot about solutions for pollution and social/economic behavior, but what do you feel about land use decisions and the quality of land and water in regard to cultural adaptation? How much of a role does the actual land management, vegetation cover, and conditions of natural resources have in combating climate change, structurally biologically as well as socially (in terms of exposure, education, experience etc)?

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↑ [Silvershadedragon](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ What is the real worst case scenario predicts for 10, 25 and 50 years from now?

The current reports seem waaaaaayyy to mild but everything seems to be point in to the extreme worst case

2. What is the best place to move if you want snow in the winter and temps below 70 in summer?

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↑ [KarlHunguss](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ What % of climate change do you attribute to human activity? 2%? 50%? 100%?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [DickButtCheese](#) 2 points · 3 hours ago

↓ Not OP but climate change is pretty centered on the premise that its human caused.

There can be small variations in climate over a period of time, but generally speaking, the trend in increased temperatures and CO2 emissions directly correlates to the birth of industrialization.

Source: Robbins et al.

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[6 more replies](#)

↑ [internetuser707](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ Does the hot air kill us?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [onedoesnotsimplyfart](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ There's a hot post on [r/documentaries](#) about companies trashing water and air. What do you want to say about about it? How to fight it?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [sonofcroesus](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ What is your opinion of Steve McIntyre's critiques of the work of Mann, Briffa et. al?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [miketurco](#) 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ That sounds like something really difficult to study, but kudos to you for taking on something of that magnitude.

Could you please provide a summary, in plain English, that's easy to understand. I did poke through your paper, but hey, a lot of big words! Also, do you have a chart or something that shows how many people died, at what age, as a direct result of global warming? Thanks

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↑ Jham130 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ What's growing on your lip?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ LibertyAndDonuts 1 point · 5 hours ago

↓ If the seasonality is similar, regardless of the climate, how do you tie climate change into this?

How did you select the climate groups? I would think that Alabama and Mississippi would share a similar climate. Virginia does not have a similar climate to Florida. The grouping with Hawaii includes states with different climates.

The confounding factor that most concerns me, and wasn't included in the analysis, was sunshine. That would affect depression, rates of cancer, outdoor activities (accidents), crime victimization, etc. I understand that makes the study far more complicated, but I suspect it's a significant factor.

Any plans to analyze microclimates? For example, the rainy side of a Hawaiian island versus the dryer side.

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↑ O_Deoradhain 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ Would you recommend getting into Sustainable Energy Engineering as a career path?

I've always liked the idea, cared about the future and I believe it's one of the biggest, if not the biggest problem we face in the future.

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↑ Mjkenney08 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ and, is it?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ BrownJeezus603 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ What do you think is the easiest way to convince a climate change skeptic that they are wrong?

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↑ eLife_AMA 2 points · 4 hours ago

↓ Good evidence should always defeat lack of evidence or bad evidence.

Skeptical Science is a good start:

<https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php>

🗨 Reply Share Save Edit ...

↑ randomfofandum 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ are climate related deaths they lowest they have ever been?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [steboy](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ Simple question: how fucked is we?

🗨️ Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [jamedz](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ IC represent! How far into the PhD are you?

🗨️ Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [jbod78](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ Are you incorporating GIS into your analysis, and if so, how? If not, why not?

🗨️ Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [mmmooorriiii](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

↓ hello. so ~the fact that colonists from the european colonies developed of a international system of slavery, and the related industrial revolution put the momentum behind petroleum extraction and therefore climate change, is something that, when recognized, causes one to notice that the populations affected by climate change First and Worst are usually poor people and communities with less or no white folks... the very ancestors of the communities who are NOT responsible for initiating the processes of climate change. Those most protected at this time are the wealthy, usually, white people and other class/hierarchal dominant populations globally.

How can a mass Recognition of the violences caused in the name of whiteness contribute to using the moments we have left as a fulcrum? tl;dr ...

How does addressing Climate Change REQUIRE us to address racism?

climate change affects us all to some degree (do you like my pun) but-

Environmental Racism promises that those with least responsibility in causing the violence are faced with most of the burdens of SURVIVING it.

thank you for doing this AMA today

(ps also what do you think about Man Bear Pig)

🗨️ Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [DickButtCheese](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

↓ Developing countries (with the same marginalized groups you mentioned) tend to use more environmentally unfriendly resources in their development than developed countries (like the United States, most of Europe, etc.). So, while slavery did contribute to the beginning of climate change, we've all got a hand in it now.

So, while that small distinction is true, I still completely agree with your argument.

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[bee_vomit](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

What response to your findings would you like to see from policy-makers?

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[Dan0Astronaut](#) 1 point · 4 hours ago

How many years approximately until mortality rates are significantly, 2:1 ratio or higher, than birth rates?

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[honolublu](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

Can Geotechnical Climate Engineering AKA Geoengineering be modeled to ascribe effects on human mortality rates? Can it be practically modeled at all, without real-world experimental data, other than volcanic activity?

I feel like I'm alone in the pro-climate legislation (US) camp that thinks that at this point, any realistic climate bill or multinational agreement needs to also have funding for geoenvironmental research and arming us with the technology to achieve greenhouse effect interruption on a worldwide scale. Also known as the 'break glass in case of emergency' option.

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[olegreggg](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

What are your opinions of Dr Partrick Moore ?

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[Gr33nFir350](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

When temperatures start rising and starts to kill people, how will I die? Starvation, burning

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[ScAerOn](#) 1 point · 3 hours ago

I read some headline comparing climate change to a Texas-sized meteor. I'm guessing it's wildly inaccurate, but is there anything we can compare the effects of climate change to?

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[13DeForestAve](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

I wonder the effects on mortality are when the temperatur rises 9/10 of a degree centigrade as it did in the first half of 1900s. What is "predicted" number of premature deaths in this very real scenario?

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[SpaceMiser](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

Did you ever hear of the Dog Days of Summer?

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↑ [ganyoo](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Hey Robbie, I actually met you when I was doing a UROP this summer. You mentioned Al Gore may have done more damage to climate change by making it a partisan issue and I found this pretty interesting. Have you looked at this idea any more and is this something you could quantify?

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↑ [liamemsa](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ It's increasing them, right? This seems like an easy thesis.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [otterom](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Man, I'm too lazy to read the whole thing, but I just started getting into wavelets recently. Do you have any more info on that?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [JerkRag69](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ What extent of climate change is human caused?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Prinz_](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ Hasn't something similar to this been done?

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0222-x>

Care to comment?

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↑ [nosidamad](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ There are hundreds (if not thousands) of people in university and government researching climate change and health. The research is, by design, similar...

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↑ [joesbagofdonuts](#) 1 point · 2 hours ago

↓ How many variables you tracking?

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Atworkbutnotworking1](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ How and where did you get the death record data needed to complete this study? Was it current data or a subset of older data? Also, thank you for your hard work and research.

🗨 Reply Share Report Save Give gold

↑ [Atworkbutnotworking1](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓

Sorry- should have read more into your research. So you used death records up to 2016- why not more recent records? And, from what I know of these kinds of records, how on Earth could you afford so many records? It costs a lot of money per record, and you reviewed such a massive amount.

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↑ [LeatherTownInc](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ Do you utilize remote sensing data for any of your work?

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↑ [shivas877](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ What would be your strongest reply to someone saying "i don't believe in climate change, it's been the same here in my city" ?

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↑ [OjosDeBrujo](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ What facts can I arm myself with when I am confronted by climate change deniers?

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↑ [gvbridgewater](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ Slightly off topic, feel free to skip. I am interested in entering the academic field of climate change - how has your experience been? Is funding hard to get for a PhD as it's not a money making field?

 **Reply** **Share** **Report** **Save** **Give gold**

↑ [Worldwide_Pants](#) 1 point · 1 hour ago

↓ Have you looked at tying your data with the Actuaries Climate Index? In addition, do you think this could have viable applications in the life insurance industry?

Link: <http://actuariesclimateindex.org/home/>

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↑ [Giorgionesque](#) 1 point · 20 minutes ago

- ↓
1. What if climate change made the planet better, rather than worse? Is this a possibility worth countenancing?
 2. Where does all this stuff we're putting into the environment actually come from?
 3. Isn't there a fixed amount of (say) carbon on the planet? And I've heard of something called the 'carbon cycle'? How, if there is a fixed amount of any element, substance or chemical, can it cause bad things to happen?
 4. The world population in 1900 was 1.9 billion. It is 7.2 billion today. How much of a carbon sink do people represent?

Thanks Robbie. I look forward to your answers.

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↑ [electricrockets](#) 1 point · 10 minutes ago

↓ How did you decide how to group up the states into the regions you chose? I'm not quite sure if I've seen the states clumped together in this way before and am wondering if there is a specific trait you looked for for each region?

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↑ [gmoneydoinwork](#) 1 point · 8 minutes ago

↓ how does it feel to waste your life's work?!

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↑ [captaincool31](#) 1 point · 8 minutes ago

↓ So you're looking at data that could tell us if "climate change" is causing an increase in deaths per year? Wouldn't this be better tracked and more accurate by decade?

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↑ [KnocDown](#) 1 point · 7 minutes ago

↓ Most of the attention seems to be going to fires, floods and hurricanes, but has there been a noticeable trend in deadly tornadoes influenced by climate change?

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