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Climate Change May Translate Into More Fatal Injuries



By Amy Norton
HealthDay Reporter

MONDAY, Jan. 13, 2020 (HealthDay News)

-- If climate change continues unabated, the United States should prepare for an increase in deaths from injuries, a new study claims.

Looking at data on injury deaths and temperature over 38 years, researchers found a correlation between unusually high temperatures and increased rates of death from a range of causes -- traffic accidents, drownings, assault and **suicide**.

The researchers predict that in an "anomalously warm year" -- 1.5 degrees Celsius (or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above the long-term average -- the United States could see an additional 1,600 deaths from injuries. Boys and men between the ages of 15 and 64 would account for most of that increase.

The fact that climate change affects human health is not news. But the focus

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[heart and lung disease](#), said lead researcher Robbie Parks, who conducted the research at University College London.

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"The association between rising temperatures and injuries has, until now, been less explored and understood," said Parks, who is now with Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York City.

There are various reasons that global warming would affect injury death rates, according to the researchers. During warm weather, people tend to be out on the roads more, drink more [alcohol](#), and be less skilled in their driving -- all of which increase the odds of accidents.

Similarly, drownings become more common, while rates of assault tend to rise -- possibly, research suggests, because people have more face-to-face interaction, and because heat can fuel anger and distress.

Why would young and middle-aged males be most affected? Two reasons,

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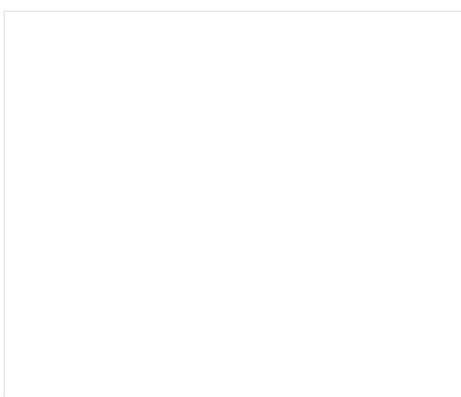
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on certain risks -- such as **drowning** -- is greater for men than for women.

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The findings, published online Jan. 13 in *Nature Medicine*, include projections for the future. But the relevance is immediate, Parks noted.

"Anomalous temperatures are occurring all the time," he said, "with varying warm anomalies evident throughout most years -- especially recently."

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