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RISING TEMPS COULD CAUSE AS MANY AS 2,100 FATAL INJURIES PER YEAR



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by UPI | 13 Jan 2020 | 0

Jan. 13 (UPI) — If temperatures continue to climb as a result of climate change, hundreds more people in the United States are likely to succumb to fatal injuries.

Climate change will increase the prevalence of extreme heat, prolonged droughts and even air pollution, all of which will result in the loss of human life. But new research suggests rising temperatures will increase the number of fatal injuries that occur each year in the United States.

Scientists analyzed the number of fatalities that occurred in every county in every state except Hawaii and Alaska between 1980 and 2017, as well as unusual monthly temperature changes over the 38-year period.

The fatalities data included both unintentional deaths, transportation accidents, drownings and falls, and intentional deaths, homicides and suicides.

The new analysis, published this week in the journal *Nature Medicine*, showed significant increases in temperature were associated with deaths resulting from transport accidents, suicides, drownings and violence.

Researchers used the results of their analysis to project the number of additional fatal injuries likely to occur in the United States under two climate change scenarios, 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius of warming.

The models showed the increase in fatalities would be most likely to affect males between the ages 15 and 34, especially those living in California, Florida and Texas.

“These new results show how much climate change can affect young people,” senior study author Majid Ezzati, professor at Imperial College London’s Abdul Latif Jameel Institute for Disease and Emergency Analytics, said in a news release. “We need to respond to this threat with better preparedness in terms of emergency services, social support and health warnings.”

The latest research showed rising temperatures are likely to increase drowning and transport accidents because more people swim, drive and drink alcohol when the weather is warm.

Models showed a 1.5 degree Celsius increase in the global average temperature was associated with an annual increase of 1,600 fatal injuries, while a 2 degree increase produced an increase of 2,100 fatalities.

Though increases in violence and suicides wasn't as pronounced as drownings and transport accidents, the new research suggests higher temperatures are associated with increases in intentional fatalities.

Previous studies suggest heat increases mental distress in young people. Additionally, when the weather is warm, more people are outside and drinking alcohol, increasing the odds of violent confrontations.

"Our work highlights how deaths from injuries including assaults, suicides, transport and drowning deaths currently rise with warm temperature, and could also worsen by rising temperatures resulting from climate change, unless countered by social and health system infrastructure that mitigate these impacts," said lead study author Robbie Parks, researcher at Columbia University's Earth Institute.



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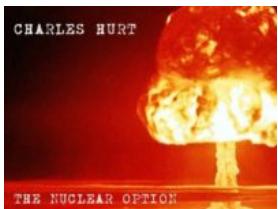
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