



Global Climate Change and Public Health: 7 (Respiratory Medicine)

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Pulmonary physicians and scientists currently have minimal capacity to respond to climate change and its impacts on health. The extent to which climate change influences the prevalence and incidence of respiratory morbidity remains largely undefined. However, evidence is increasing that climate change does drive respiratory disease onset and exacerbation as a result of increased ambient and indoor air pollution, desertification, heat stress, wildfires, and the geographic and temporal spread of pollens, molds and infectious agents. Preliminary research has revealed climate change to have potentially direct and indirect adverse impacts on respiratory health. Published studies have linked climate change to increases in respiratory disease, including the following: changing pollen releases impacting asthma and allergic rhinitis, heat waves causing critical care-related diseases, climate driven air pollution increases, exacerbating asthma and COPD, desertification increasing particulate matter (PM) exposures, and climate related changes in food and water security impacting infectious respiratory disease through malnutrition (pneumonia, upper respiratory infections). High level ozone and ozone exposure has been linked to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, lung cancer, and acute lower respiratory infection.

Global Climate Change and Public Health is an important new volume based on the research, findings, and discussions of US and international experts on respiratory health and climate change. This volume addresses issues of major importance to respiratory health and fills a major gap in the current literature.

The ATS Climate Change and Respiratory Health Workshop was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on May 15, 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to address the threat to global respiratory health posed by climate change. The workshop was attended by domestic and international experts as well as representatives of international respiratory societies and key US federal agencies. Dr. Pinkerton and Dr. Rom, the editors of this title, were co-chairs of the Climate Change Workshop and Symposium.

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