



SYMPOSIUM ON IMPACT OF CLIMATE EXTREMES ON HUMAN HEALTH

ECSC2019-03-KIANI



AUGUST 18, 2022

CLIMATEXPERTS, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN
ASIA-PACIFIC NETWORK FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH, JAPAN



Summary of the Symposium

The one-day symposium on “Impact of Climate Extremes on Human Health ” under the APN project ECSC2019-03-Kiani was organized in collaboration with National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, Pakistan. The major objectives of this symposium were to bring the climate and health experts together in a consultative meeting where the current alarming health impacts of climate change in Pakistan were discussed. The symposium was attended by dignitaries from National Institute of Health (NIH), Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Pakistan Association of Private Medical and Dental Institutes (PAMI), public health experts and climate scientists.

Foremostly, Ms. Rida Sehar Kiani, the project lead expressed gratitude to all the guests for their presence and gave a brief overview of the project – giving the attendees a brief overview of APN and the project ECSC2019-03-Kiani highlighting the progress of the project. She explained how media communication has played a better role in information dissemination of the scientific research findings of climate change in Pakistan.



The symposium furthered with address of the event Chief Guest. Executive Director – NIH, Major General Professor Dr. Aamir Ikram spoke as the presiding chief guest of the event and stressing upon the importance of interdisciplinary collaborative research among the fields of public health and climate change. ED NIH shared his personal experiences as an occupational health and safety expert and pointed that climate extremes such as heat waves, monstrous monsoons, extreme dry days, also pose a serious health and safety threat at workplaces. He said that education and training of medical and public health experts in regards to health impacts of climate extremes will reduce the OHS threats of climate change. He then discussed the example of dried-up Baluchistan regions due to heat wave of May this year, and said that Cholera outbreak currently on Baluchistan is closely related to the climate extreme i.e., this recent heat wave. “Consecutive extreme dry days significantly dried up the water reservoirs in the already water scarce areas of Baluchistan. This led people to consume marshy and puddly water. Most of the community living in such water scarce areas is destitute and lack proper

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water filtration and treatment facilities. Thus, they consumed dirty water directly from the marshes and puddles which put them at high risk of Cholera infection and ultimately led to a dangerous cholera outbreak. So, to sum this all up we can easily say that Heat waves not only brought heat strokes as a health impact but a cholera outbreak as well. Hence it is an urgent need of time that medical and climate scientists exchange experiences and we move towards adaptation and mitigation strategies. To materialize this, I shall ensure that NIH plays its role wherever necessary.”

Dr. Shaukat Ali from GCISC then discussed the technicalities of climate change with the attendees. He shared how climate change is causing the spatial shift in the monsoon precipitation in UIB of Pakistan and what it means in terms of food security and public health.



He further discussed the climate extremes and future hotspot cities. Dr. Shaukat told the audience about the alarming impacts of climate change on dengue in Pakistan.

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Dr. Hamza from NIH shared how the outreach teams from NIH have been on field gathering data regarding epidemics that had been worsened due to climate extremes like drought in several areas of Balochistan, Pakistan. He added that there is serious need for collaboration on producing public health advisories in the light of climate change because the country is already faced with these challenges.

Dr. Riaz Shahbaz Janjua – Chairman of HBS Medical and Dental College and General Secretary of PAMI was then invited to share his views. He shared that as much as there is need to advance the pace of producing research, there is also a need to monitor the authenticity and credibility of the produced research. He said that interdisciplinary collaboration can only be successful when the research data is authentic, credible and when the results lead to concrete practical action in the form of government initiatives for adaptation and mitigation. He agreed that capacity building of health experts and proper dissemination of information can lead the government to develop better policies, advisories, adaptation and mitigation plans. He then pledged that HBS Medical and Dental College and PAMI will fully cooperate and support the capacity building and joint research ventures among climate change and public health experts.



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Dr. Mubashir from PIMS then spoke about the need for meetings like the subject symposium to further the collaboration between public health institutes and climate change experts. He added that it is great that institutional heads like ED NIH, President PMA and General Secretary PAMI understand the gravity of the public health risks posed by climate change. He then invited the President of Pakistan Medical Association as the guest of honor for the event to share his valuable views.



Dr. Akhtar Ali Bandeshah – President PMA said that being an accomplished cardiologist he can easily solve intricate issues of the heart but the grave issue like climate change and its intricacies are still somewhat alien to him and many of the doctors like him. Pakistan Medical Association’s President discussing the example of recent heatwave of Pakistan said that heat strokes elevate the health risks of already vulnerable communities like people with heart diseases, elderly and children. “Pakistan has had a history of Heat stroke induced deaths during each heatwave. Another reason of increasing rate of heart diseases in Pakistan is Air Pollution, and air pollution I understand is elevated when proper mitigation measures are not in place. Both these examples show that there is not only the need for capacity building of medical experts in terms of climate change but the findings from academia of both sectors urgently need to reach the Policy makers for making sustainable adaptation and mitigation policies. For that matter I as the President of PMA ensure my complete support and collaboration”.



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He pledged complete support of PMA with NIH and climate experts so that capacity building trainings, seminars and other such efforts may be done to bring public health experts on the same page regarding climate change education and understanding.



Then Dr. Ramesh Kumar from Health Sciences Academy, NIH was invited to share the progress of collaboration between climate change experts and HSA's public health experts. Dr. Ramesh shared that students in HSA have researched the impact of climate change on dengue, COVID and pollen allergy in collaboration with climate change scientists. Further researches on several other issues are soon to proceed however there is a sincere need to take the results of these researches seriously on the part of government. He added that these results need to be translated into concrete action plans for the future and pledged that the collaboration currently ongoing will remain continual.



Dr. Hamza then added a vote of thanks while closing the symposium.