National and global responses to manage the health risks of climate change

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Future health risks will be determined by the interaction of the hazards created by a changing climate with the populations and regions exposed to those changes, and the underlying sensitivity and capacity of individuals and populations to prepare for and effectively manage changes in the magnitude and pattern of disease burdens. That is, interactions between climate change and demographic, socioeconomic, and other changes will determine the burden of climate-sensitive health outcomes. Adaptation to prepare for and manage these shifting disease burdens will take place from local to global scales.

The World Health Organization defined a climate-resilient health system as "one that is capable to anticipate, respond to, cope with, recover from, and adapt to climate-related shocks and stresses, so as to bring sustained improvements in population health, despite an unstable climate". To be climate-resilient, each building block of health systems at local to national scales also needs to be climate-resilient, including leadership and governance; health workforce; health information systems; essential medical products and technologies; service delivery; and financing. These building blocks need to function effectively in concert to build resilience, including through reducing vulnerabilities and inequities, and providing universal access to essential services, including health, education, safe water, and adequate nutrient dense food, in the context of managing an uncertain future. In addition, coordination and collaboration are required with health-determining sectors, including water, energy, agriculture, and urban planning, to ensure their adaptation and mitigation actions address inequities, and protect and promote health and well-being in a changing climate.

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