

Climate Change and Health in Policies

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Abstract : Climate change is considered one of the biggest threats to human health of the 21st century. The link between climate change and health has received relatively little attention in the media, in research and in policy-making. A long term and broad overview of how health is represented in the legislation on climate change is missing in the legislative literature. It is unknown if or how the argument for health is referred in legal clauses addressing climate change, in national and European legislation. Integrating scientific based evidence into policies regarding the impacts of climate change on health could be a key step to inciting the political and societal changes necessary to decelerate global warming. This may also drive the implementation of new strategies to mitigate the consequences on health systems. To provide an overview of this issue, we are analyzing the Global Climate Legislation Database provided by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. This institution was established in 2008 at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The database consists of (updated as of 1st January 2015) legislations on climate change in 99 countries around the world. This tool offers relevant information about the state of climate related policies. We will use the database to systematically analyze the 829 identified legislations to identify how health is represented as a relevant aspect of climate change legislation. We are conducting explorative research of national and supranational legislations and anticipate health to be addressed in various forms. The goal is to highlight how often, in what specific terms, which aspects of health or health risks of climate change are mentioned in various legislations. The position and recurrence of the mention of health is also of importance. Data will be extracted with complete quotation of the sentence which mentions health, which will allow for second qualitative stage to analyze which aspects of health are represented and in what context. This study is part of an interdisciplinary project called 4CHealth that confronts results of the research done on scientific, political and press literature to better understand how the knowledge on climate change and health circulates within those different fields and whether and how it is translated to real world change.

Keywords : climate change, explorative research, health, policies

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