

Review of Published Articles on Climate Change and Health in Two Francophone Newspapers: 1990-2015

Authors : Mathieu Hemono, Sophie Puig-Malet, Patrick Zylberman, Avner Bar-Hen, Rainer Sauerborn, Stefanie Schütte, Niamh Herlihi, Antoine Flahault et Anneliese Depoux

Abstract : Since the IPCC released its first report in 1990, an increasing number of peer-reviewed publications have reported the health risks associated with climate change. Although there is a large body of evidence supporting the association between climate change and poor health outcomes, the media is inconsistent in the attention it pays to the subject matter. This study aims to analyze the modalities and rhetoric in the media concerning the impact of climate change on health in order to better understand its role in information dissemination. A review was conducted of articles published between 1990 and 2015 in the francophone newspapers Le Monde and Jeune Afrique. A detailed search strategy including specific climate and health terminology was used to search the newspapers' online databases. 1202 articles were identified as having referenced the terms climate change and health. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to narrow the search to articles referencing the effects of climate change on human health and 160 articles were included in the final analysis. Data was extracted and categorized to create a structured database allowing for further investigation and analysis. The review indicated that although 66% of the selected newspaper articles reference scientific evidence of the impact of climate change on human health, the focus on the topic is limited major political events or is circumstances relating to public health crises. Main findings also include that among the many direct and indirect health outcomes, infectious diseases are the main health outcome highlighted in association with climate change. Lastly, the articles suggest that while developed countries have caused most of the greenhouse effect, the global south is more immediately affected. Overall, the reviewed articles reinforce the need for international cooperation in finding a solution to mitigate the effects of climate change on health. The manner in which scientific results are communicated and disseminated, impact individual and collective perceptions of the topic in the public sphere and affect political will to shape policy. The results of this analysis will underline the modalities of the rhetoric of transparency and provide the basis for a perception study of media discourses. 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 changes and health circulates within those different fields and whether and how it is translated to real world change.

Keywords : climate change, health, health impacts, communication, media, rhetoric, awareness, Global South, Africa

Conference Title : ICECCHH 2016 : International Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Human Health

Conference Location : Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 12-13, 2016