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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE: WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

Conference: HUMAN SIDE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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UN issues call for action over 'catastrophe of climate change'



Climate change is hitting food production, IPCC warns

Behind the story:

Climate change will cost more than we thought, experts say



Major UN report on climate change says the world must act now to avoid a 'catastrophe of climate change'.

• View a comment

Climate change is hitting food production, IPCC warns

Widespread temperature increases, all kinds of crop and pasture prices higher, scientists conclude in brief... Last updated 07 March 2014

• View a comment

Greenhouse gas rise 'will boost crop yield'

Rising greenhouse gas emissions may result in better harvests in some areas, but the benefits are likely to be outweighed by the damage to many other crops.

• View a comment

Don't care about climate change? What about the health of children?

Climate change Comment is free

There are four specific reasons children are more vulnerable to global warming than adults, a new report by Doctors for the Environment Australia has found



Fiona Stanley and Sallie Forrester

Wednesday 10 June 2015 02:20 BST

Comments 107

Save for later

Doctors are concerned Australian children are already suffering health effects from increasing temperatures, including dehydration, heatstroke, foodborne and insect-borne disease. Photograph: Romeo Horacio/Reuters

Climate change is not just an urgent environmental issue; it is having a devastating effect on health.

'El Niño' será uno de los peores desde 1950 por el cambio climático

La Organización Meteorológica Mundial advisa de que tendrá su periodo de mayor intensidad entre octubre y enero

El Niño pone en alerta a las costas latinoamericanas del Pacífico

ISABEL SACCO | Ginebra | 2 SEPT 2015 - 16:14 CEST

7.717 83

Archivado en: Fenómeno El Niño Cambio climático Problemas ambientales Meteorología Medio ambiente



REUTERS - LIVE

El cambio climático ha creado condiciones sin precedentes para el actual fenómeno de El Niño, que tendrá su periodo de mayor intensidad entre octubre y enero, según dijeron hoy expertos de la Organización Meteorológica Mundial (OMM).

Las predicciones del calentamiento de la superficie del mar en las zonas central y oriental del Pacífico tropical apuntan a que El Niño que está en desarrollo probablemente será uno de los cuatro más fuertes desde 1950. Los anteriores más potentes fueron los registrados en los periodos entre 1972/1973-1982/1983 y 1997/1998.



Introduction

- ✓ Climate change (CC) has been acknowledged as an environmental and public health concern that constitute a serious threat to people in all countries.
- ✓ CC is associated with an increase of adverse weather events - frequency, intensity and duration- which can cause significant economic and social costs.

Introduction

- ✓ Health consequences of CC will occur through direct and indirect routes, and as a result of interactions with other environmental and social factors.



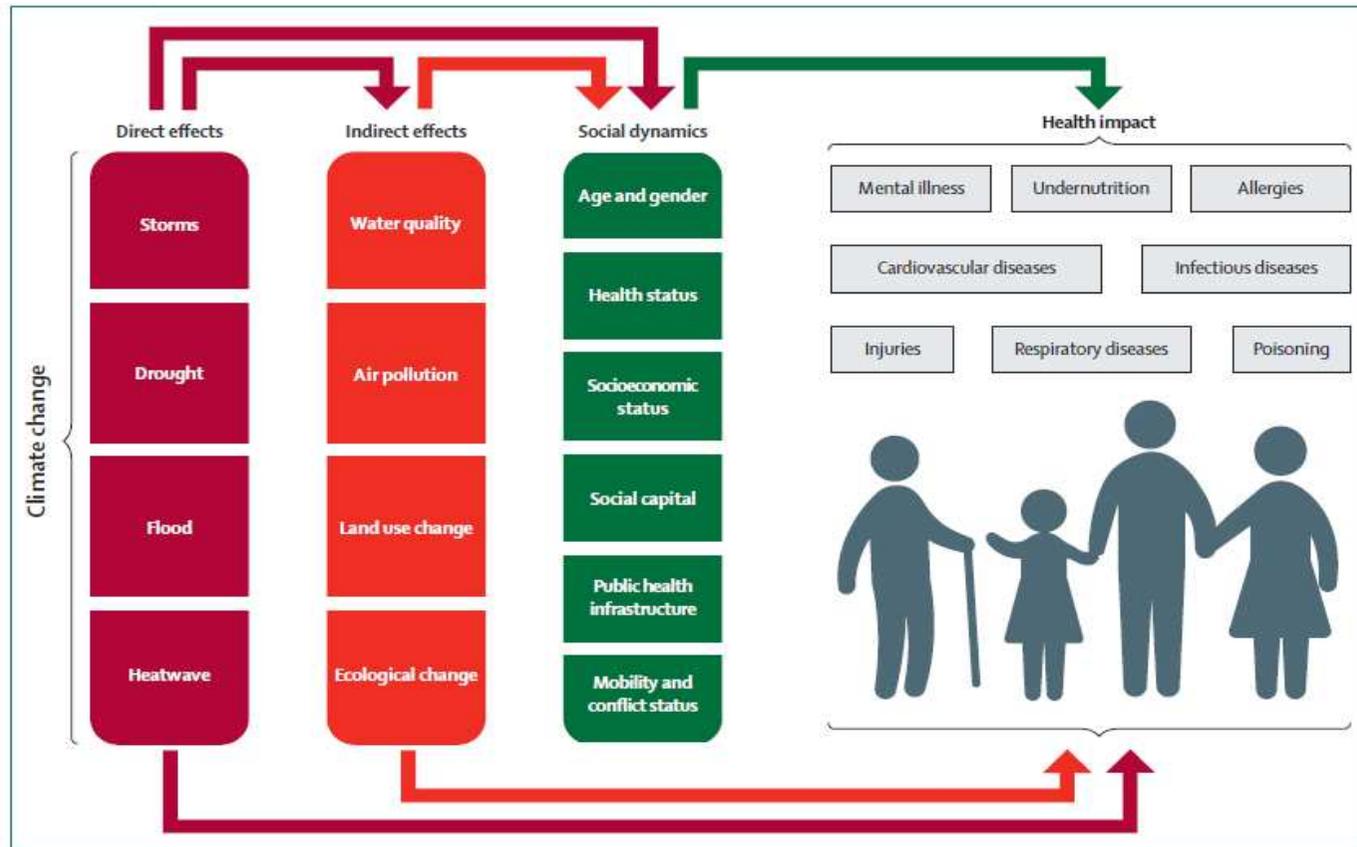


Figure 2: The direct and indirect effects of climate change on health and wellbeing
 There are complex interactions between both causes and effects. Ecological processes, such as impacts on biodiversity and changes in disease vectors, and social dynamics, can amplify these risks. Social responses also ameliorate some risks through adaptive actions.

The Lancet commissions (2015). Health and climate change: policy responses to protect health.



World Health
Organization

What factors might contribute to increase **violence** after disaster?

- ✓ Stress and feeling of powerlessness due to bereavement, loss of property and loss of livelihood.
- ✓ Mental health problems [PSTD]
- ✓ Scarcity of basic provisions
- ✓ Destruction of social networks
- ✓ Breakdown of law enforcement
- ✓ Cessation of violence prevention and social programmes
- ✓ Disruptions to the economy

Gender & climate change



- ✓ Climate change will disproportionately affect women, marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Vulnerability is rooted in social relationships determined by gender, ethnicity, class, age and disability (Ariyabandu, 2003).
- ✓ Gender is a significant determinant of women's vulnerability, rooted in unequal power relationships between women and men (Wiest et al., 1994).

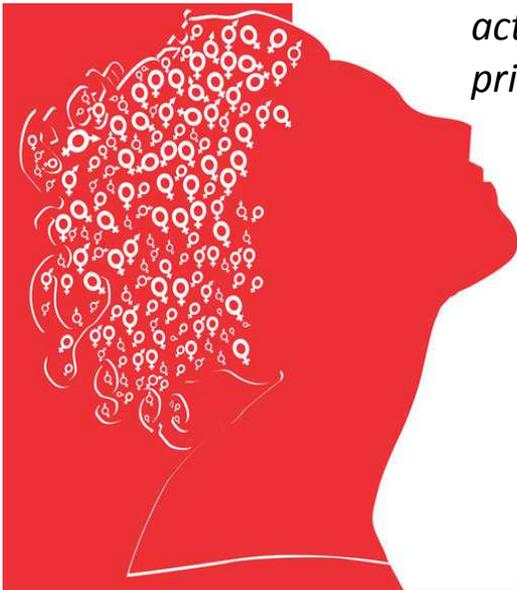
The neglect of gender aspect -disaster vulnerability- has implications for humanitarian assistant (Enarson & Morrow, 1997; UNISC, 2006)

Violence against women (VAW)

VAW is one of a common form of violence that refers to types of harmful behaviors directed at women and girls.

According to United Nations (UN) (1994):

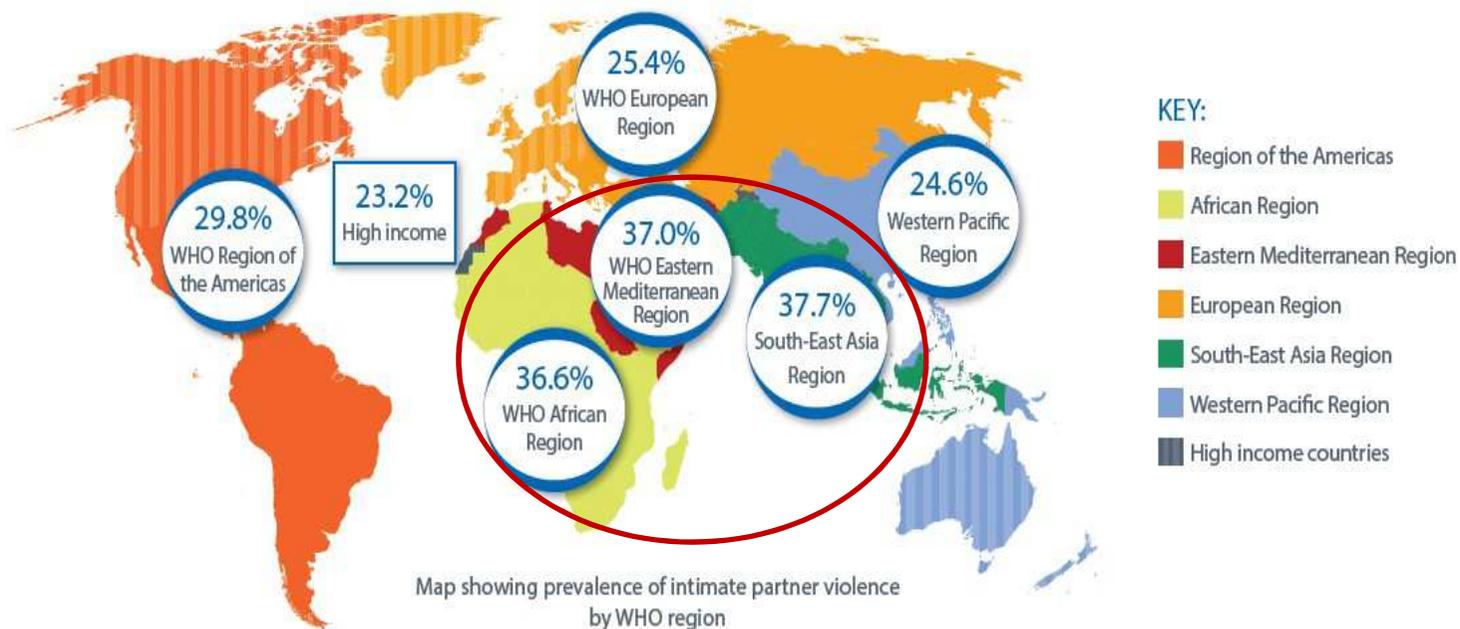
VAW is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, sexual or mental harm or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private.



PREVALENCE →

1 in 3 women

throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner



Source. WHO(2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.



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OBJETIVE

To map the scientific literature related to the linkages between CC and the exposure of women to VAW episodes.

Methods

Databases

Databases

- 4 databases were selected: Medline, Web of science, Science Direct and ProQuest.

Period

- Studies published between 2005 to 2015

Limits

- HUMANS used as a filter.
- Languages: Spanish and English were selected.



Methods

Search strategy



FILTER CLIMATE CHANGE

a) Medical Subject Headings [MeSH]: "Climate Change", "Greenhouse Effect", "Global Warming"

b) Keywords: Drought, flood, extreme weather, heat waves, environmental hazards, water scarcity, water insecurity.

FILTER RELATED TO VAW

a) Medical Subject Headings [MeSH]: "Domestic violence", "Spouse abuse", "battered women"

b) Keywords: "Intimate Partner Violence", "Violence against women", "Domestic violence", "Sexual abuse", "sexual violence", "Sexual harassment", "Spouse abuse", "battered women", "gender violence", "gender based violence".

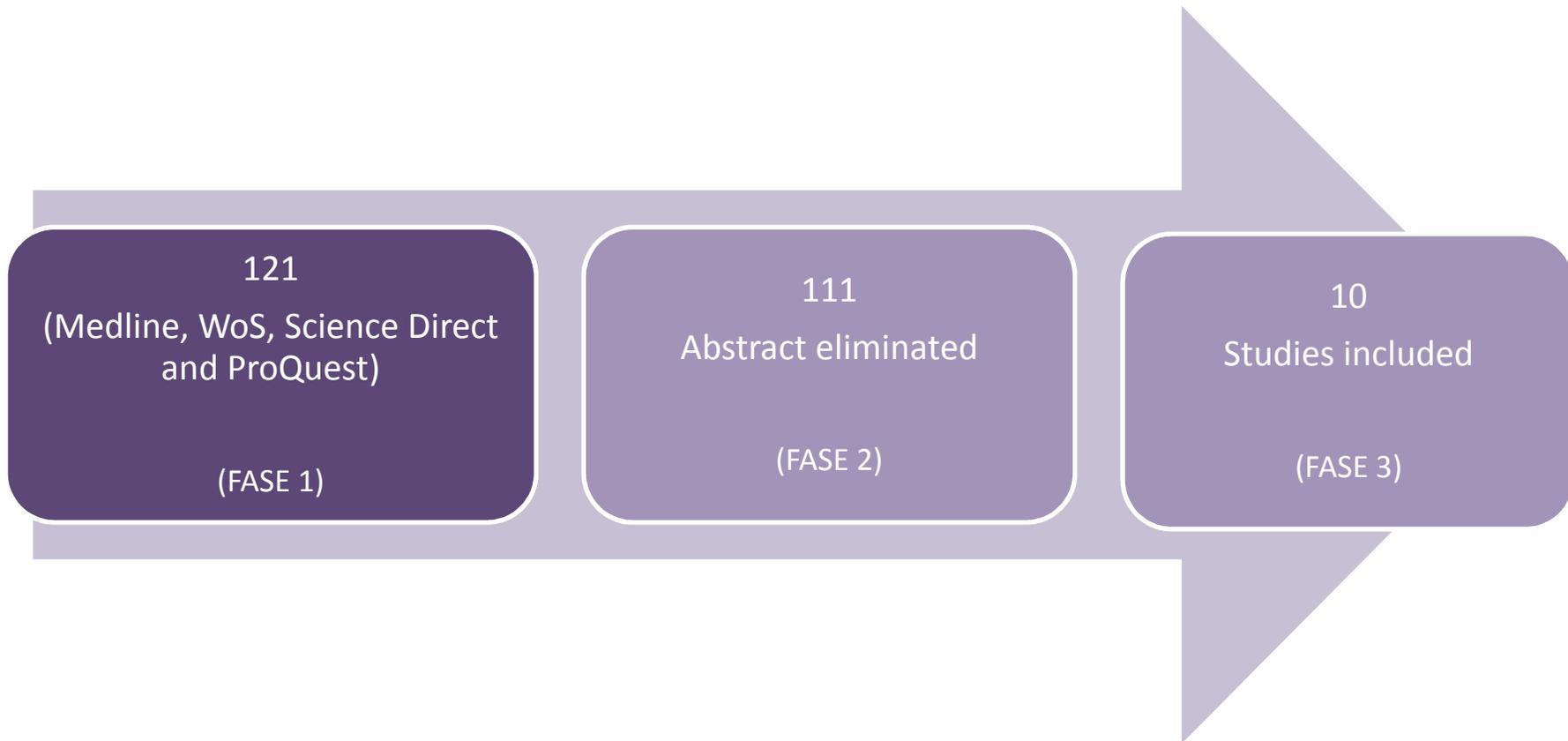


Methods

Exclusion Criteria

- ✓ Studies with not focus on any type of violence.
- ✓ Type of publications: editorials, letters to editors, commentaries, reviews, reports.
- ✓ Articles without abstracts
- ✓ Duplicated articles

RESULTS



Most of the studies have a qualitative desing (N=8)
The majority of the studies from Africa and Western Pacific.

FLOODS

N=5

Harrasment, sexual assaults, Intimate partner violence and increase of child marriage

- ✓ Lack of sanitation and privacy. A little access to clean water for bathing or personal «female hygiene».
- ✓ Harrasment and sexual violence episodes are exacerbated during floods.
- ✓ Marriage of young girls is increasing as a results of CC.
- ✓ During floods there was greater pressure on husbands to provide for their families (Financial hardship).



Girl's concern about harrasment during flood disaster:

«[...] some unknown boy woulds were roaming around in their noukas [boats] and harassed the girls around here. I once heard that a girl was walking along when these boys on a boat came up and tried to grab her [...]»

A young girl reported an abuse by her husband during a disaster:

«He beat me because I asked him for a bazzar money. He hasn't boughth anything for the last two days so I asked him for money to buy food and he beat me»



WATER SCARCITY: Droughts

N=1

Intimate partner violence (IPV)

- Non availability of water resulted in men having no work to do in the villages.
- As a results of interviews, participants recognized that the absense of work means no income which led men to frustration and alcohol addiction.
- Women participants mentioned that the alcoholism also disturbs the family peace because of the IPV incidents.

HURRICANES & Post Tsunamis

N=4



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Sexual Violence, Rape, Harrasment, Child marriage

Domestic violence was considered to be most prevalent form of violence against women - Post disaster-. [4 of 5 participants -both sexes-]

During the interview of participant (women's association) said: «[...] our group had received over double the number of referrals for domestic violence support services during and after the tsumani [...]»

Girls and women in affected areas [hurricanes] were subjected to rape, sexual abuse and harrasment: «[...] People don't want to talk about it but it is happening» [woman, shelter]

«[...] Soon after tsunami there was an increase in marriages of young women and girls [...] men quickly sought to replace their wives, sometimes they marrying girls of 13 years [...]» (women's association leader)

Glacial earthquakes can generate far more powerful tsunamis than undersea earthquakes with similar magnitude (McGuire B, 2010)



Conclusion

- ✓ The lack of studies addressing the relationship between violence against women and climate change shown that there is a need to address this issues. VAW seems to be a huge concerns in recent studies.
- ✓ The evidence shown that women and girls faced difficult conditions during and after extreme weather events.



Conclusion

- ✓ VAW is a public health and human rights issues that is already prevalent in many countries. The exposition to a climate related events seems to exacerbate the exposure of women to any type of violence.
- ✓ Gender, age and socioeconomic conditions of women seems to shape their life experiences in a context of climate change.
- ✓ There is a need of future researches (quantitative & qualitative) addressing this issues.



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