Risk Management of Extreme Heat
...during the COVID19 Pandemic

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Webinar: Preparing for Hot Weather during COVID-19
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Hot weather takes lives every year.

Risk conditions amplified and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, are the precursors of a preventable disaster.
2020 will be a hot year

GLOBAL TEMPERATURE RISE


2015–2019
• Warmest five-year period
There will be heatwaves in areas affected by COVID-19

- Heat season starts earlier and lasts longer.
- Heatwaves are hotter, last longer, more frequent.
- May 2020 - Eastern Mediterranean experiencing earliest heatwave in over 150 years.
Those at risk to hot weather are NOW even more vulnerable

- Overlapping vulnerable populations
- Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19
- Social isolation and physical distancing
- Concentrated at risk locations: Urban heat islands, informal settlements
- Risk perceptions reduce health seeking behaviour

Populations vulnerable to both heat stress and COVID-19

- Older people (>65 years and especially >85 years).
- People with underlying health conditions:
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Pulmonary disease
  - Kidney disease
  - Diabetes / obesity
- Mental health issues (psychiatric disorders, depression)
- Essential workers who work outdoors during the hottest times of the day or who work in places that are not temperature controlled.
- Health workers and auxiliaries wearing personal protective equipment
- Pregnant women
- People living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities, especially without adequate cooling and ventilation.
- People who are marginalized and isolated (experiencing homelessness, migrants with language barriers, old people living alone) and those with low income or inadequate housing, including informal settlements.
- People on medication: some medication for the diseases listed above impair thermoregulation. The impact of treatment for COVID-19 is currently unknown but should be monitored to assess any additional vulnerability.
- People who are currently managing COVID-19 at home (i.e. febrile), or who have been recently discharged from hospital for treatment with COVID-19, which can be associated with acute kidney injury.
Public health toolkit for heat action is restricted due to the pandemic

Heat action plans need modifications
Interventions may be:
- more difficult to implement
- potentially more expensive
- potentially less effective

This includes:
• Cooling centers
• social outreach / door-to-door
• heat advisories and messaging
• fans and cooling
Health systems resilience is limited – and vulnerable to shocks

- Financial and human resources focused on COVID (and limited)
- Ambulatory service capacity
- Reduced volunteer pool
- PPEs increase heat stress for essential workers
Local ad-hoc decisions / lack of coordination to manage both COVID-19 and extreme heat

Local creativity and innovative solutions are paramount – but…

Ad-hoc and misalignment in decision-making can lose public trust and create confusion about what is safe and what to do

Can happen when decentralized decision-making + limited technical guidance
Extreme Heat and COVID-19 Information Series

Technical Brief
15 Q&As

• Cross-cutting issues
• Issues for health workers and facilities
• Issues for city authorities and heat action planners

• Checklists
  • Heat Action Planners
  • Family Doctors (soon)
• Examples of good practice

www.ghhin.org/heat-and-covid-19
GHHIN is a voluntary network of experts from many disciplines and many countries - all concerned that we need to be increasing the capacity of our communities to be safe and healthy in a warmer future.

#HEATHEALTH
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Q&A Series: General Considerations and Evidence

- Vulnerable populations
- Seasonality and weather
- Ozone, heat and COVID-19

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Which people are the most vulnerable to both heat stress and COVID-19?

All people can potentially fall ill to both heat stress and COVID-19 if exposed. Especially vulnerable groups include people who:
- are over 65, or pregnant;
- have underlying health conditions;
- are on medications that impair thermoregulation;
- have or are recovering from COVID-19;
- work outdoors or in hot indoor spaces;
- have to wear personal protective equipment at work;
- live in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or prison;
- have low incomes or are marginalized or isolated.

(updated 22 May 2020)
Q&A Series: Issues for health workers and facilities

- PPE and heat stress
- Health workers and heat stress
- Fever vs. Heat stress

**How can health workers and other responders manage heat stress while wearing personal protective equipment?**

There are three ways to reduce heat stress while wearing PPE:
1. Start cool
2. Reduce rises in body core temperature at work
3. Improve thermal tolerance through acclimatization and fitness

(updated 22 May 2020)
Q&A Series: Issues for city authorities and heat action planners

• Air conditioning and ventilation
• Low-tech cooling options
• Communications and outreach
• Outdoor cool spaces
• Informal settlements
• Social services
• Cooling centres
Heat Action Planning Checklist

Checklist for local and national authorities coordinating heatwave preparedness and response measures, including ideas for how to modify heat preparedness actions in the context of COVID-19.

- Vulnerable groups
- Coordination
- Household cooling options
- Public Communication
- Utilities
- Outdoor Public Spaces
- Cooling Centres
- Work force

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Action Focus

Protecting health systems:
Keep avoidable cases out of health system. Protect health workers.

Protecting at-risk communities:
Special measures to communicate, and reach most vulnerable

Keep heat prevention available with creative and clear modifications for COVID-19 and heat safety
Registration opening soon

Heat Health Dialogues  July 28-29

3 hour sessions including panel discussions on the state of the science, emerging issues with audience discussion and break out sessions.

28 July 2020
Heat in the City

29 July 2020
Heat in the Workplace
Heat Health Masterclasses

2 June 2020
Setting operational thresholds for Heat Early Warning Systems

16 June 2020
Innovating in urban planning and governance for heat health

30 June 2020
Economic valuation of heat-health impacts and interventions

21 July 2020
Developing an effective Heat Health Action Plan (HHAP) for your city
Thank you

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Knowledge Broker

Member-driven forum

Go-to resource hub

Not a funding or grant-making mechanism