

Editorial

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HEAT STROKE IN PAKISTAN AND ITS DEVASTATING PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

Over the last two decades, the incidence of heat-related mortality among individuals aged 65 and above has risen by 50%. In 2018 alone, the global toll of extreme heat exposure led to the tragic loss of 296,000 lives. Heat stroke, a life-threatening condition resulting from prolonged exposure to high temperatures, has become a growing concern in Pakistan. With scorching summers and the impacts of climate change, the country has witnessed a significant increase in heat stroke cases, posing a severe threat to public health. Vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, young children, outdoor laborers, and those with pre-existing health conditions, are particularly at risk. The lack of awareness, limited access to healthcare facilities, and inadequate infrastructure further exacerbate the problem. The rise in temperatures and the prevalence of heat stroke have transformed this issue into a public health crisis. Immediate health complications, including organ failure and death, are a direct consequence of heat stroke. Moreover, long-term health problems such as cardiovascular disorders and respiratory illnesses can persist even after recovery. The economic burden resulting from hospitalizations, loss of productivity, and increased healthcare expenditure adds to the gravity of the situation. Addressing the heat stroke epidemic requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. Public awareness campaigns should be initiated to educate individuals on preventive measures, emphasizing the importance of hydration, appropriate clothing, and recognizing early signs of heat stroke. Additionally, the establishment of cooling centers in densely populated areas and low-income neighborhoods can provide relief to those lacking access to air conditioning. Furthermore, employers must prioritize the safety and well-being of outdoor workers by implementing protective measures and offering regular breaks in shaded areas. Adequate training and awareness among employers and workers about heat stress and the need for proper rest and hydration can significantly reduce the risk.

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