



New study reveals major impact of climate change on skin health worldwide

Descrizione

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More than 40% of countries worldwide have reported climate-related changes in the prevalence and/or severity of skin disease, with lower-income countries disproportionately affected, according to a major international study spanning 136 countries.

VIENNA, Sept. 30, 2026 /PRNewswire/ ??? The study, presented today at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2026, invited representatives from 194 World Health Organization (WHO) member countries to participate in the Global Access to Skin Health Observatory (SkinObservatory) study, a collaboration between the International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS) and L'Oréal Dermatological Beauty.

Data were collected from 136 countries spanning all four World Bank income groups. Overall, 42.6% reported changes in the prevalence and/or severity of skin disease due to climate change, with significant differences according to income level.

More than half of low-income (55.6%) and lower-middle-income countries (52.5%) reported climate-related changes in skin disease, compared with 43.8% of upper-middle-income and 28.3% of high-income countries.

Geographical differences were also substantial, with changes most frequently reported in the Western Pacific Region (64.7%), followed by the Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asian regions (60.0% each), compared with 16.1% in the European Region.

In the African Region, 42.9% of respondents were unsure about the impact of climate change on skin disease, highlighting potential gaps in surveillance and evidence.

Among the 58 countries reporting climate-associated effects on skin disease, 81.0% reported increases in heat rashes and 75.9% in inflammatory skin diseases. Changes in infectious diseases were reported in 62.1%, with half (50.0%) reporting changes in vector-borne diseases.

“The most important finding from our study is that climate change is already associated with negative impacts on skin disease, and these effects disproportionately burden lower-income settings,” said study author Dr Esther Freeman. “We often think about the effects of extreme weather on heatstroke, cardiovascular problems and respiratory diseases, but the skin is our front line to climate change.”

“Higher temperatures and humidity can increase sweating and skin irritation, while heat, air pollution and other environmental exposures may trigger or worsen inflammation. Shifts in temperature and rainfall can also affect the habitats of mosquitoes, ticks and other disease vectors, potentially allowing them to survive in places where they were previously uncommon.”

Looking ahead, the researchers call for stronger surveillance, education and locally tailored strategies, particularly in resource-limited settings.

“We need to start treating skin health as part of climate-health preparedness,” Dr Freeman concluded.

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