

PCW11



Climate Change in the Arctic: Impact on the Health of Indigenous and Worker Communities

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Duration: full day

Background and significance: Research on climate change in the Arctic is crucial for developing effective public health policies, especially for native communities and for workers in the polar region. Because there has been a dramatic rise in sea levels in the Arctic in the recent past, our intent is to share the state-of-the-art epidemiology on this issue. Our pre-conference workshop is aimed at sharing with colleagues, students, and health policy leaders concerned with environmental management some of the health and safety risks from climate change among the nations of Canada, US, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Iceland, and Greenland focusing on rising water issues.

Significance: The workshop will examine several examples from the Fulbright Arctic Initiative research and from other studies. We will also discuss how to successfully share epidemiology methods and findings with local communities and with governmental decision-makers.

Content: The workshop will be structured to highlight the scientific skills needed for health determination, including an emphasis on exposure sciences, epidemiology, and medicine, with a focus on pediatric and adult health as well as psychological impacts. Specific examples will be presented on adolescent suicide risks among indigenous communities; the perceptions of increasing hazard from rising ocean levels and workplace air hazards with attention on oil and gas extraction and mining; snowmobile injury prevention; how environmental leadership of the native villages have grappled with needing to relocate their whole settlements; and discussion about effective corporations and their workers have coped when presented with the severity of threats to health. We will emphasize effective communication with communities, governments and with responsible corporations leading to effective responses that produced improved public health. We hope the workshop will encourage the development of new curricula for international Arctic health and safety, tailored to the needs of indigenous communities and of professionals in environmental health

Interest for the workshop

Climate change is difficult to detect for both scientists and the general public. However, rising sea levels in the Arctic and melting polar ice are very clear to many indigenous communities as well as to industrial operations. Our Workshop will address the current studies of adults and children from these polar settings and focus on workers as well. We will address the psychological impacts of climate change among residents of Canada, US, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Iceland, and Greenland. Our workshop will address the methodological aspects of epidemiology studies among the northern nations.

Participants number: 40