Editorial / *Editorial / Editorial*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.18359/rlbi.7586

Global Bioethics Issues: Forum on Health and Climate Change*

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From November 19 to 20, 2024, the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, will host the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research (GFBR), with the main theme of discussion centered around "ethical issues arising in health and climate change research."

The GFBR will specifically focus on the ethics of health and climate change research, including interventions at all levels to respond to the health impacts of climate change, with particular emphasis on low- and middle-income countries.

Research in this area often involves rigorous methods to generate data aimed at better understanding the effects of climate change on health, including the health of non-human aspects of the biosphere, and determining ways to better protect and promote both human and non-human health in the face of climate change. The interdependence of human and non-human health means that research on health and climate change is not limited to medical, health, or life sciences. Findings from research in areas not traditionally associated with healthcare, such as environmental science, entomology, veterinary sciences, and climatology, may also be relevant.

The GFBR will take a very broad approach to the concepts of health. The importance of indigenous perspectives and voices in climate change means that the GFBR will also include viewpoints and forms of knowledge that lie outside Western scientific traditions. Regarding the non-human aspects of the biosphere, this forum will focus on research addressing the interconnectedness of human and non-human health, rather than solely concentrating on studies focused exclusively on the non-human aspects of the biosphere (1).

Discussions on topics of great interest will be guided according to the following themes:

1) Anthropogenic Climate Change: This refers directly to long-term changes in the climate, including the increase in global surface temperatures and changes in weather patterns caused by human activity, primarily due to the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere. (2).

2) Mitigation and Adaptation: Mitigation refers to the measures taken to lessen the severity of the impact of climate change. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting and promoting existing natural carbon sinks such as forests and peatlands, and developing technologies to remove existing GHGs, primarily carbon dioxide, from the atmosphere. Adaptation refers to interventions designed to help people live better with the impacts of climate change (3).

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3) Research on the Ethics of Climate Change and Health: The field of research on climate change and health raises several direct and indirect ethical issues, including intragenerational and intergenerational justice, problems of collective action, respect for non-Western value systems, and the value of non-human aspects of the biosphere.

Finally, the guiding questions of the forum will be as follows:

Justice and equity in the research agenda

- How can the health and climate change research agenda meaningfully address the needs and interests of those most vulnerable to its impacts, who have traditionally lacked the power to influence global research agendas?
- How can the choice of research topic, including the location where the research is conducted, help build research capacity in regions and populations where it is underdeveloped?
- How can we address unequal representation and underrepresented voices and promote interdisciplinary approaches, including meaningful methods for power sharing and co-creation, when establishing the health and climate change research agenda?
- Regarding the benefits derived from research, how can we ensure that research is not extractive, transferring its benefits from the populations participating in the research to those in resource-rich regions or to those for whom the climate emergency is less immediate?
- How can health and climate change research achieve genuine and meaningful participation and co-creation?
- What types of tools, resources, or practices are needed to ensure that everyone participatingin or engaging with the research process can do so effectively?

Epistemic justice

- How can the ongoing effects of epistemic injustice—the systematic devaluation of certain forms of knowledge, knowledge producers, and knowledge transmitters—be addressed within the framework of the health and climate change research agenda?
- Should certain groups have special authority to set the research agenda due to specific knowledge, lived experience, or vulnerability to the effects of climate change?
- Colonialism has played a significant role in driving vulnerability to the health impacts of climate change. How should this be recognized and addressed in health and climate change research?
- How can grassroots perspectives be truly heard, rather than just mediated by leaders, elites, and intellectuals?
- How can research respond to the worldviews, needs, and interests of Indigenous peoples and local communities?

Research and climate

- How can the climate impact of health and climate change research be reduced?
- What obligations do researchers have toward research participants exposed to hazardous climate risks?

Incorporating the value of the non-human world

- How can we incorporate the value of non-human individuals, species, systems, and ecosystems into a plausible explanation of the social value of research on climate change and health?
- What types of non-human interests are morally relevant in decisions about the distribution

of benefits and harms in health and climate change research?

- How can we represent the interests of non-humans and possibly even the biosphere as a whole in any approach to participation in research?

Research involving multiple disciplines

- To what extent are existing ethical frameworks and approaches sufficient for the necessary interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research in this field?
- How can we ensure equal respect for all disciplinary and methodological approaches involved in research in this field?
- Do we need new guidelines or ethical frameworks for this research? What can we learn from the principles of UNESCO and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) regarding climate change in this respect? What can we learn from Indigenous ethical perspectives in this regard?

Research governance

- Are the criteria and procedures for overseeing research ethics adequate for the complex ethical challenges of research in the field of climate and health? What adaptations may be necessary?
- How can research governance better respect the interests and perspectives of Indigenous peoples and local communities? What changes and adaptations might be necessary? What opportunities exist for the co-creation of ethical oversight?
- How can we address the challenges posed by the governance of multidisciplinary research?
- What guidelines, procedures, and processes should be developed for researchers in anticipation of potentially catastrophic climate 'tipping points'? (4).

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