

# Environmental hazards and human health

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Environmental hazards and human health Environmental hazards are responsible for as much as quarter of the burden of diseases worldwide and more than one third in pediatric cases. The illness rate is higher in developing countries while non communicable illnesses like Cardio vascular diseases and cancers, allergies are more in developed nations. (World Health Organization, 2011) There are four categories of human environmental hazards. They are as follows: Physical Biological Chemical Cultural Physical hazards: Natural hazards are inevitable and unstoppable like earthquake, flood, hurricanes, tornados, tsunami, winter storms, volcano, landslide, etc. These hazards do affect ecological environment but after the event, the ecosystem can regenerate and habitat is restored. Global warming is causing changes in the average worldwide temperatures affecting atmosphere and oceans. This results in Ozone layer depletion which increases direct exposure to high UV radiation and can cause skin cancers (DR Communities, 2006). Environmental factors such as inadequate infrastructure can attribute more to road traffic accidents (Grobicki, 2008). Work place hazard, industrial accidents and radiation injuries contribute almost 44 % of such injuries due to environment. (World Health Organization, 2006) Biological hazards: Biological hazards consist of infection due to bacteria, viruses and other pathogenic organisms. Most common is diarrhea due to unsafe drinking water and poor hygiene. These diseases can be contagious and cause epidemics such as malaria, dengue fever, cholera, and chikungunya which are rampant in case of floods. More examples are meningitis, influenza and recently emerging diseases like swine flu, etc. (Grobicki, 2008). Biological hazards also include molds and fungi found in moist habituated areas when there is poor moisture ventilation and can cause asthma. (Center for disease <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-hazards-and-human-health/>

control and prevention, 2010). Chemical hazards: Chemical risks are higher in particular areas such as industrial zone. Most of the heavy metals which are used in many of the industrial or agriculture compounds and frequently discharged along with the waste are toxic. E. g. mercury is toxic to brain while arsenic may cause cancer. Also, small amount of lead released in air from vehicles, in water from water pipes or lead based paints can be responsible for neuro dysfunction. (World Resource Institute) Some hazards are air borne like atmospheric carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide. Carbon Monoxide is found in combustion fumes produced by cars or truck, small gasoline engines, gas ranges and heating systems. Inhalation of this gas results in sudden illness and death. (Center for disease control and prevention, 2009). Another common but serious health issue is lower respiratory tract infections especially Asthma caused by environmental triggering factors like dust mite, tobacco smoke, outdoor air pollution, pollens and cockroach allergen. (Center for disease control and prevention, 2010). Cultural Hazard: These are the hazards to human health due to their own life style choices, habits diet/nutrition, criminal activities, etc. For example smoking habit is not only injurious to the person who is smoking but also harmful to other people inhaling the smoke through passive smoking. (The Lancet. com, 2010) The serious side effect of smoking is lung cancers. Another example is obesity. Over eating and lack of physical activities can lead to very serious diseases like diabetes, hypertension and further heart diseases. Well maintained environments and healthy environment practices can prevent much of these environmental risks and nearly 13 million deaths could be prevented per year by making environment healthier. (World Health Organization, 2011). References Center for disease control and prevention <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-hazards-and-human-health/>

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