

Environmental behaviours and concerns, experience of climate change events, and wellbeing outcomes: a socio-spatial analysis of the UK Household Longitudinal Study.

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Introduction: The accelerated rise in global surface temperatures and the occurrence of extreme climate events, driven by the emission of greenhouse gases, present a formidable global threat. The global health community has officially recognised climate change as a public health emergency due to its immediate effects on health resulting from storms, floods, droughts, and wildfires, as well as indirect consequences like psychological stress. There is a suggestion that the influence of climate change is likely to intensify existing social and health inequalities in the UK. Notably, factors such as age, pre-existing medical conditions, and social deprivation have been identified as critical elements that heighten susceptibility to adverse health outcomes associated with climate change.

Methods: We aimed investigated the link between environmental concerns, behaviours (lifestyle environmentally friendly), residence in climate vulnerable (flood-affected or temperature-changing) areas, and subjective wellbeing. Analysing UK Household Longitudinal Study data (n:24,950, 16+), linked with flood (2010-18) and temperature change (2001-2020) spatial data, revealed environmental concerns varied by sociodemographic factors.

Results: Older and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups were most satisfied with their current behaviours. Reporting that one's lifestyle is environmentally friendly was associated with both higher life satisfaction and an increased likelihood of optimism, whereas indicating this could be improved was associated with worse subjective wellbeing and a reduced likelihood of life satisfaction. Residing in an area that had experienced a climate event was not associated with our wellbeing outcomes.

Conclusions: Mitigation strategies are required to support adverse wellbeing outcomes related to environmental concern.

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