

<http://somatosphere.net/2014/09/new-series-climate-change-and-health.html>

## New series: Climate change and health

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[Climate change](#) and human health is a topic of growing popularity and urgency in the public health community. In its [draft twelfth working program](#) the WHO repeatedly links climate change to negative health impacts, and the [working group II report](#) of the 5th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment report dedicates a chapter to the effects of climate change on health.

Despite these high-level engagements with the issue, it is worth slowing down and examining the conceptual challenges associated with climate change. For example, assigning value and credibility to the mere existence of anthropogenic climate change is often a political act. [Debates](#) about the “truth” of extreme climate change and its causes abound in media reports. International negotiations are long and frustratingly slow. After years of stalling the [White House](#) has only recently developed an action plan.

And we shouldn't forget that climate-related disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, people living in poverty, near rivers and oceans, in densely populated urban areas. The term, “[climate justice](#)” has been coined to illustrate this fundamental imbalance between those contributing to climate change and those being affected by changes first. But then again, we might ask: who defines vulnerability, when qualitative studies have shown, for instance, that [not all older people](#) think of themselves as particularly at risk? Risk perception always matters in health, [and it matters](#) in climate change research, too. These questions lend themselves to anthropological inquiry.

How will we conceptualize sudden effects like floods resulting from a generally slow and gradual phenomenon like anthropogenic climate change? Can there be any research into climate and health without a transdisciplinary research team? Who frames global responsibility discourses? What role does the body play in climate anthropology?

This series aims at starting a discussion on the connections between climate change and human health from interdisciplinary perspectives. To start us off, [Merrill Singer](#) summarizes the links between climatic changes

and health from a “planetary health” perspective.

**AMA citation**

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