

Survey identifies learning opportunities related to health impacts of climate change

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An international survey of Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE) membership found that the majority of members—health professions schools and programs, including medical,

nursing, and public health—offer learning opportunities related to the health impacts of climate change, yet many also encountered challenges in instituting or developing curricula. The results of the survey provide a baseline assessment of the state of climate-health education internationally among health professions institutions. Results of the survey by Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health researchers appear in the journal *JAMA Network Open*.

The survey suggests there exist a range of educational offerings on [climate](#)-health, including sessions, courses, programs, or post-doctoral positions. Some schools have offered climate-[health education](#) for several years, some are just now adding content, and others do not include any content on the subject. While many schools are discussing adding climate-health educational offerings, there are still considerable gaps in offerings at many institutions as well as challenges that extend beyond the institutional level, such as political and funding priorities that might lead to lack of staff time and materials to support the training.

Conducted in 2017 and 2018, the survey was completed by 84 health professions institutions internationally. Among respondents, 63% offer climate-health education, most commonly as part of a required core course (76%). Sixty-one of 82 respondents (74%) reported additional climate-health offerings are under discussion, 42 of 59 (71%) encountered some challenges trying to institute the curriculum, and most have received a positive response to adding content mainly from students (39 of 58 (67%)), faculty (35 of 58 (60%)), and administration (23 of 58 (40%)).

The article's authors write that opportunities exist to facilitate the integration of climate-health curricula, such as working with students, faculty, and members of administration that are interested in this topic. In order to facilitate this integration, institutions can look to [online resources](#), groups, and networks to provide guidance and information to

develop curricula.

"We suggest that health professions schools include this content in their curricula and that awareness as well as [financial support](#), resources, and expertise increase to help in its uptake," write study authors Brittany Shea, MA, Kim Knowlton, DrPH, and Jeffrey Shaman, Ph.D. "Climate change may be affecting health in a variety of ways with increasing consequences. Health professionals, including those in [public health](#), nursing, and [medical services](#), should be educated on how to prevent, mitigate, and respond to factors associated with climate change that may be associated with health in a negative way."

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More information: Brittany Shea et al, Assessment of Climate-Health Curricula at International Health Professions Schools, *JAMA Network Open* (2020). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.6609](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.6609)

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