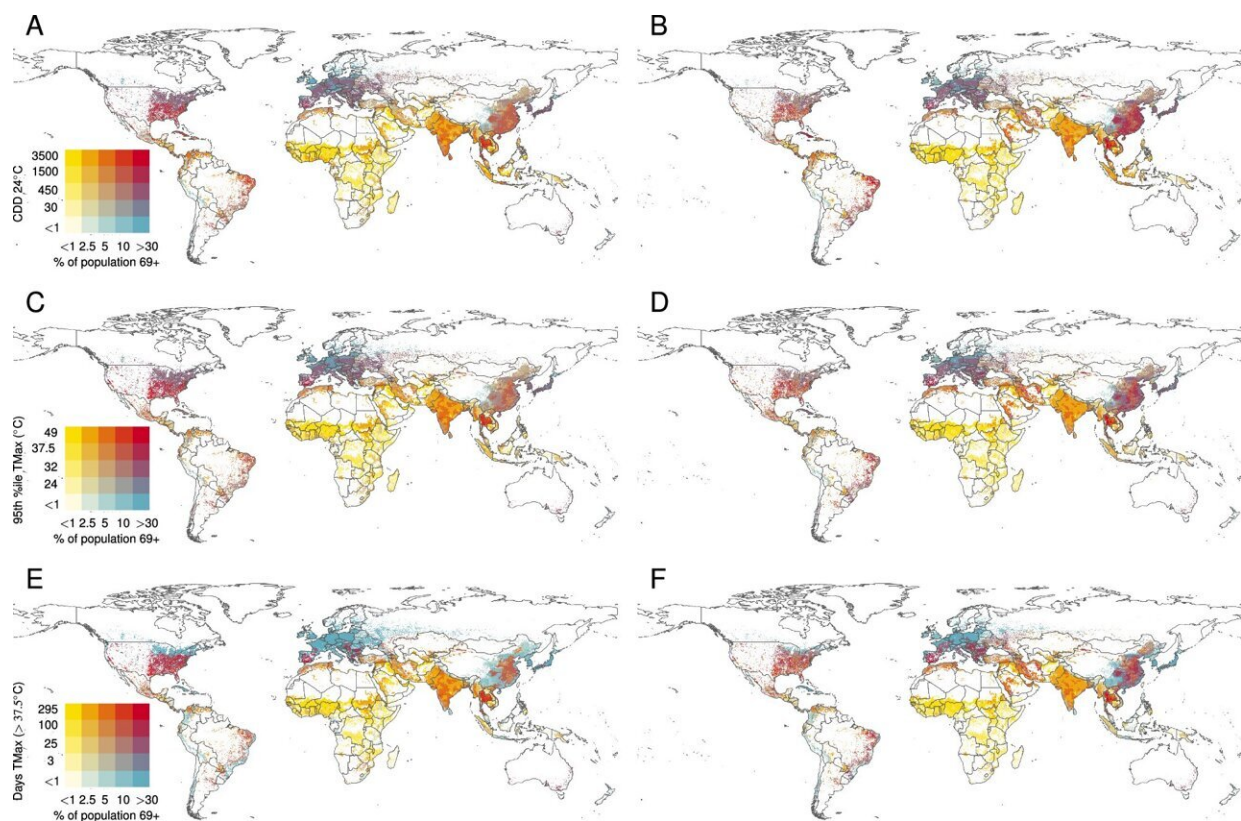


Up to 246 million older people may be exposed to heat risk by 2050 due to global warming

May 15 2024, by Bob Yirka



Global intersection of aging and heat exposure in the current climate (left column) and circa 2050, SSP2(45) (right column). A, B Proportion of population aged 69+ exposed to annual Cooling Degree Days (CDDs). C, D Annual temperatures corresponding to the 95th percentile of local extreme heat exposure (TMAX95). E, F Annual days with TMAX > 37.5°C. Credit: *Nature Communications* (2024). DOI: 10.1038/s41467-024-47197-5

A team of Earth and environmental scientists at the CMCC Foundation–Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change, working with a pair of colleagues from Boston University, has found evidence suggesting that as many as 246 million people around the globe may be at risk of heat exposure by 2050 due to global warming and an aging population.

In their [paper](#) published in the journal *Nature Communications*, the group describes how they used [climate models](#) to assess global hotspots and compared them with population projections for the same areas.

The planet is growing warmer due to man-made greenhouse gas emissions that make their way into the atmosphere. But not all parts of the planet will grow warmer to the same degree—some places, such as parts of Africa and Asia are expected to get hotter than other places.

Unfortunately, at the same time, the number of people over the age of 60 is growing as well—their numbers are expected to double by 2050, with a lot of them living in Asia and Africa—in countries where [air-conditioning](#) is rare.

In this new study, the research team noted that although a lot of research has been done to better understand the impact of extreme heat on [older people](#), little work has been done to find out how many of them may be at risk in the coming years. To find out, they looked at both climate and population models for the years leading up to 2050.

The climate models showed that the global average number of extremely hot days will grow from approximately 10 to 20 over the next 30 years. The researchers also found that those hot days will be hotter, depending on where they happen.

And the population models showed that approximately 23% of people

over age 69 will be living in parts of the world that will experience those dangerously high temperatures—that percentage is just 14% today.

Overall, the research team found that anywhere from 177 to 246 million people over the age of 69 may be living in places that will regularly see dangerously high temperatures by 2050, putting many of them at risk for exposure-related ailments or death.

More information: Giacomo Falchetta et al, Global projections of heat exposure of older adults, *Nature Communications* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41467-024-47197-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-47197-5)

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