



Evaluating the use of verbal probability expressions to communicate likelihood information in IPCC reports

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prescribes that the communication of risk and uncertainty information pertaining to scientific reports, model predictions etc. be communicated with a set of 7 likelihood expressions. These range from “Extremely likely” (intended to communicate a likelihood of greater than 99%) through “As likely as not” (33-66%) to “Extremely unlikely” (less than 1%). Psychological research has investigated the degree to which these expressions are interpreted as intended by the IPCC, both within and across cultures. I will present a selection of this research and demonstrate some problems associated with communicating likelihoods in this way, as well as suggesting some potential improvements.