



Using Google Trends to Detect Episodes of Dangerously Hot Weather

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Heat stress represents a major public health challenge that is likely to grow considerably as climate warming continues. Accordingly, heat-health early warning systems are starting to be developed to increase societal resilience against hot weather. However, such measures require the identification of heat thresholds for triggering an appropriate emergency response, which will be challenging in the absence of appropriately detailed and high-resolution medical records. We address this challenge here by using Google Trends to identify periods of societally-impactful hot weather from the last decade. In our preliminary assessment, we show that searches of heat-related health concerns consistently coincide with deadly heatwaves across a range of countries. Our results therefore highlight the vast potential of internet searches to inform rapid response emergency planning – particularly in the Global South – where limited monitoring of health impacts may otherwise challenge such adaptation.