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## Impacts of climatic changes on the Mediterranean population: public health aspects

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The Mediterranean Basin is undergoing a warming trend with longer and warmer summers, an increase in the frequency and the severity of heat waves, changes in precipitation patterns and a reduction in rainfall amounts. This populated region is characterized by significant gaps in the socio-economic levels, parallel with population growth and migration, increased water demand and forest fires risk. Consequently, the vulnerability of the Mediterranean population to human health risks increases significantly as a result of climate change.

Climatic changes impact the health of the Mediterranean population directly through extreme heat, drought or storms, or indirectly by changes in water availability, food provision and quality, air pollution and other stressors. The main health effects are related to extreme weather events, changes in the distribution of climate-sensitive diseases (such as West Nile virus, chikungunya and zika) and changes in environmental and social conditions. The poorer countries, particularly in North Africa and the Levant, are at highest risk. Climate change affects the vulnerable sectors of the region, including an increasingly older population, with a larger percentage of those with chronic diseases, as well as poor people and migrants, which are therefore more susceptible to the effects of extreme temperatures. For those populations, a better surveillance and control systems are especially needed parallel with adaptation plans that become ever more imperative. In order to achieve these goals, it is essential to define indicators of vulnerability and exposure based on health impact assessment, as well as indicators that will promote adaptation planning and resilience for health risk management. In view of the climatic projections and the vulnerability of Mediterranean countries, such indicators will contribute to correct preparedness at the regional and national levels.