

Chapter 5

Resilience Nexus With Climate Change, Food Security, Mental Health, and Social Stability in a Changing World

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the intricate links between climate change, food security, mental health, and social stability. Key findings reveal that climate change disrupts food security by affecting availability, access, utilization, and stability, impacting regions and populations differently. Mental health is directly and indirectly influenced, leading to trauma, stress, and emotional consequences. Climate change contributes to social instability, and health risks, including conflict and migration due to resource scarcity. Vulnerable populations face unique challenges, necessitating tailored approaches. Improving research is crucial to understand better the complex relationships between climate change and mental health. A holistic approach integrating policy, public health, and global cooperation is essential to address the mental health and social stability implications of climate change for resilience. While mitigation remains vital, proactive adaptation strategies, inclusive of vulnerable populations, are key to reducing adverse impacts on well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change is causing significant disruptions in food security worldwide, affecting different regions and populations unequally. This impact is felt through various direct and indirect pathways, with consequences for the availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability of food systems. In response, climate-related food insecurity can lead to or worsen mental health issues by influencing the biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors (Ben Mohamed et al., 2022) that contribute to mental well-being. It's worth noting that these mental health effects of climate change and food insecurity can vary based on factors such as age, gender, and sociocultural context, and they often intersect with other forms of socioeconomic instability.

This paper delves into the intersection of climate change and mental health, specifically examining their impact on ecosystems and food security (Paquin & Falardeau, 2023). It commences by establishing a clear understanding of food security and then delving into the current and anticipated ramifications of climate change on natural systems and the essential components of food security.

It is imperative to acknowledge that climate change stands as one of the most significant health challenges in the 21st century (Zhong et al., 2018). Researchers increasingly recognize its potential to disrupt key factors influencing psychological well-being and overall health. This recognition emphasizes how closely and critically climate change, mental health, and well-being are related.

The social and emotional consequences of climate change on mental health are often elucidated through two primary causal pathways: direct and indirect. The direct impact encompasses the heightened frequency of occurrence and severity of acute or long-term extreme weather events like floods, cyclones, or temperature swings. These events can lead to immediate trauma due to loss of life, property damage, and the onset of acute psychological conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Indirectly, climate change can influence physical and mental health within societies by disrupting infrastructure, displacing communities, altering the sense of place, and reshaping social environments (Peng, 2019). These environmental transformations, combined with uncertainty about future risks, can trigger a spectrum of emotional responses, from distress and hopelessness to the emergence of clinical mental health disorders.

Climate change's repercussions on food security and ecosystems extend their impact on mental health through both direct and indirect routes that operate at various levels, from the global scale down to individual experiences (Jones et al., 2000). This intricate network of causation underscores the pressing need to address the nexus between climate change and mental health in our endeavors to safeguard well-being in a dynamic and evolving world.

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