NUS scientists closely studying health impacts of climate change

New research programme to help tackle public health risks in climate crisis

Cheryl Tan

With temperatures continuing to soar globally due to climate change, scientists at the National University of Singapore (NUS) are now closely studying the impacts on human health, with a new research programme to be launched later in 2023.

Dr Kimberly Forneaux, a visiting scholar who will work closely with the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, stressed that healthcare professionals will need to understand the complex links between human health and the environment, given the current scale of the climate crisis.

This will help them to adequately address future public health risks, said Dr Forneaux, who will likely be heading the new programme, alongside Associate Professor Yani Reacher from the same school.

The World Health Organization has declared climate change to be the single biggest threat facing humanity.

Rising temperatures due to global warming are leading to increased heat stress, while air pollution arising from wildfires could increase one’s susceptibility to cancer and various cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Rising sea levels and coastal flooding could also bring about an onset of water-borne diseases.

“Climate change is a major threat to health,” said Dr Forneaux, who is a Senior Fulbright Fellow from the School of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego. “Climate change impacts on human health are wide-ranging, from influencing the number and severity of extreme weather events, to exacerbating infectious diseases and other public health risks.”

EVALUATE TECHNOLOGIES

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PROFESSOR TEO YK YING, dean of the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

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