

Review of: "Are mental health dimensions included in disaster and climate change interventions in St. Lucia?"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In the paper "Are mental health dimensions included in disaster and climate change interventions in St. Lucia," the authors demonstrate that current public policy surrounding extreme weather events related to climate change does not address the increased mental health needs of populations adversely affected by climate-change related natural disasters. Specifically, they point out that only the latest (2022) report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) addressed mental health impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, and that efforts to mitigate negative mental health outcomes due to natural disasters have been limited to reactive initiatives.

In order to explore whether proactive intervention policies related to climate change are currently in place in St. Lucia--an island that is vulnerable to climate change--the authors undergo a review of all major national policy documents of St. Lucia. Through a web search, they identify six related documents. They then provided detailed information as to provisions for health in general and psychological health specifically within those six documents.

The authors then analyzed 218 projects implemented in St. Lucia related to climate change concerns since 2000. Of those 218 project, three were related to health, and none focused on mental health. They note that although they found reference to one project related to mental health, none of the government officials they contacted could confirm that the project had ever taken place.

As a result of their analysis, the authors conclude that although mental health is a key action area related to climate change, St. Lucia has not yet intergrated mental health provisions into its climate change policy.

I applaud the authors for shedding light on the lack of mental health provisions in St. Lucia's policies surrounding climate change. However, there are several issues related to this study, which I will now address.

1. **Lack of a "Limitations" section:** this paper lacks a section devoted to the limitations of the study. Although the authors do not overstate the scope of their project--they are very clear that St. Lucia is the only country studied--they also do not point out that St. Lucia might not represent the actions and activities of other countries impacted by climate change. They also do not report on nonresponse rates to their request for information from government officials, or whether there are policy documents for St. Lucia that have not been published to the Internet.
2. **Limitation of scope:** the authors limit their study to St. Lucia; however, there are many small nations that are similarly affected by climate change. It is unclear why they did not create a list of all such affected nations and then either review the policy for all of them or, if the work burden of doing that would be too great, create a random sample of the

nations to study.

3. **Format for survey:** To survey the government officials in charge of the policy documents they studied, the authors sent “a survey in the form of an excel sheet.” There are much more robust methods for providing surveys online, including platforms such as SurveyMonkey and Qualtrics, that allow the programming of skip patterns, quality checking of responses, and followup communications related to nonresponse. It is unclear why a more robust method for the survey was not used, given that these platforms have a “free” option available. At the very least, a Google Form could have been used to ease data entry for the respondents.

Overall, this study represents an important area of research and highlights the need to include mental health as a policy priority in government efforts to combat the effects of climate change. I encourage the authors of this document to collaborate with a statistician/survey methodologist in the future, so they can create a more representative picture of climate-change mental health policy across the globe.