



Importance of Pediatricians in Child Health

Benhur Lee*

Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Aged Care, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

ABOUT THE STUDY

One of the most important risks to children's health in the twenty-first century is climate change. Any increase in global warming will have an impact on human health, primarily in a negative way, according to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. Direct (such as a rise in extreme weather occurrences) and indirect (such as air pollution) health consequences of climate change are both possible (e.g. increase in allergens). All population groups can be harmed by climate change, it is now well reported; nevertheless, children are seen as being particularly at risk. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), children under the age of five accounts for 88% of the global disease burden brought on by climate change. They are more likely to suffer health consequences from climate change because they will live longer and are more exposed per unit body weight than adults.

Children are also dependent on caregivers, particularly their parents. When considering communicating climate change health consequences for children and further behavioral change, it is critical to first study their parents' attitudes and behaviours. To protect children from the expected health consequences of climate change, parents must be aware of the health issues. The study's goal is to better identify existing knowledge and the needs of parents as a target group that needs to be informed. It has already been demonstrated that parents rely more on paediatricians for child health advice than on information obtained through media such as the internet, newspapers, and television. Young children and their parents, in particular, maintain regular contact with their paediatrician. In Germany, for example, at least 89% of all children (age 6) have annual ambulant contact with a paediatrician. As a result, we want to clarify which information channels are already used and investigate the role of paediatricians in informing parents about the health consequences of climate change.

According to the Health Action Process Approach (HAPA), risk perception can be a critical component of risk assessment that leads to intention generation, action, and, ultimately, behaviour change. Thus, one way for parents to change their behaviour is

to perceive a risk for their children. When the seriousness of the situation is highlighted and the expected consequences are depicted, the effect on the outcome is amplified. Understanding the factors that influence risk perception, on the other hand, is not easy. Environmental risks, such as those posed by climate change, differ from other types of risks. The effects are accompanied by uncertainty and, due to their complexity, are difficult to capture. The consequences of climate change are the result of many people's actions, not a single person's. Environmental behaviour necessitates the collaboration of many people.

In order to learn more about parents as child caregivers, we investigated: Are paediatricians viewed as a source of information for parents regarding climate change and health? What other channels are currently in use? Furthermore, we concentrated on factors that predict parental risk perception. We wanted to find out how much knowledge and personal relevance influence risk perception. We also investigated the risks that parents perceive for their child's health.

The study only included a small number of well-educated parents from a convenience sample. As a result, many demographic groups are excluded, and generalizability is difficult. Assuming that other demographic parent groups have a lower level of information and awareness, our study aims to close this gap by involving paediatricians more frequently and effectively. We identify opportunities for paediatricians to implement formats for informing parents about the expected consequences, as this is a problem that will not go away or weaken. It should be determined whether more parents can be reached through paediatricians, and how their knowledge, relevance estimation, and risk perception change when using a medical and trustworthy source as the primary source rather than the internet.

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of paediatricians in informing parents about the health consequences of climate change. Parents currently seek information primarily through the internet, but they believe they are under-informed. They see an increase in air pollutants and

Correspondence to: Benhur Lee, Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Aged Care, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, E-mail: benhurlee@msm.au

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UV-radiation as the primary threat to their children. Overall, the study supports the notion that parents are eager to learn about the health consequences of climate change (for their children). We recommend that paediatricians continue to work with families to educate them about the appearance and

prevention of these health consequences. It appears critical to not only provide knowledge, but also to strengthen the personal relevance of health for the individual child in order to ensure behaviour change.