Overview

Heat-related deaths among construction workers around the world and may be worsening as a result of climate change. The authors analyzed heat-related deaths in the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries from 1992 to 2016 to examine this type of death in relation to time, region, and temperature and to explore a possible association with climate change.

Key Findings

Construction workers, who compose 6% of the total workforce, accounted for 36% (n = 285) of all occupational heat-related deaths from 1992 to 2016 in the U.S. Increasing summer temperatures in the contiguous U.S. were associated with higher heat-related death rates, and the annual number of heat-related deaths in construction rose significantly over time.

Compared to all construction workers, a statistically significant elevated risk of heat-related death was found among Hispanics, in particular workers born in Mexico.

Cement masons were 10 times more likely to die from heat than the average construction worker; roofers and helpers were seven times more likely.

Effective workplace interventions (such as acclimatization, ready access to water, and rest breaks), enhanced surveillance, and improved regulations and enforcement should accompany broader efforts to combat global warming.

The construction industry can help reduce global warming through increased implementation of green building principles.

For more information, contact:
Xiuwen Sue Dong: Sdong@cpwr.com
See abstract: