

Environmental health: Safeguarding human well-being through sustainable practices.

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Introduction

Environmental health refers to the branch of public health that focuses on the interrelationships between people and their environment, promoting human health and well-being by fostering safe and sustainable surroundings. It encompasses the assessment and control of environmental factors—biological, chemical, and physical—that can potentially affect health. These factors include air and water pollution, toxic chemical exposures, waste management, climate change, and access to clean resources. With increasing industrialization and urbanization, maintaining environmental health has become a pressing global challenge, requiring collaborative efforts at both individual and institutional levels.[1].

One of the most pressing environmental health concerns is air pollution, which has been linked to numerous respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and volatile organic compounds released by vehicles and industries significantly degrade air quality, posing serious health risks. Prolonged exposure to polluted air is known to contribute to asthma, lung cancer, heart disease, and even neurodevelopmental issues in children. Tackling air pollution requires integrated policies promoting cleaner fuels, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainable urban planning. [2].

Water contamination remains another critical environmental health hazard. Unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, and inadequate hygiene are responsible for the spread of diseases such as

cholera, dysentery, and hepatitis A, especially in developing regions. Industrial effluents, agricultural runoff, and unregulated sewage disposal pollute freshwater sources, endangering human and ecological health. Ensuring access to safe water and sanitation is not only a fundamental human right but also a key strategy in preventing a wide range of waterborne diseases. [3].

Waste management plays a pivotal role in environmental health. Improper handling of household, industrial, and electronic waste results in the release of hazardous substances into the environment. Open dumping and burning of waste lead to soil and air contamination, with severe implications for both health and biodiversity. Promoting recycling, safe disposal methods, and waste segregation can minimize the environmental burden and reduce the associated health risks. Communities must be empowered with education and infrastructure to adopt sustainable waste management practices. [4].

Climate change has emerged as a long-term threat to environmental health, influencing the spread of infectious diseases, food security, and mental well-being. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events disrupt natural systems and increase the frequency of heat-related illnesses, vector-borne diseases, and natural disasters. Vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and low-income communities, bear the brunt of these impacts. Addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies is essential for protecting public health and preserving ecosystem integrity.[5].

Conclusion

Environmental health is an indispensable component of public health that demands urgent and sustained action. It highlights the importance of clean air, safe water, effective waste management, and climate resilience in protecting human life and promoting sustainable development. Governments, organizations, and individuals must work collectively to ensure environmental justice and create a healthier planet for current and future generations.

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