Northeast Regional Heat Collaborative

Lowering Our Heat Advisory Threshold to Protect Public Health

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May 25, 2017
The Northeast Regional Heat Collaborative is working together to conduct research, improve the effectiveness of heat risk communication strategies, and protect public health.
NERHC Partners

● Rhode Island Department of Health

● New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

● Maine Department of Health and Human Services

● Vermont Department of Health

● Brown University: School of Public Health

● The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

● The National Weather Service
Heat is a major public health threat, even in New England.

In the US, more people die from extreme heat than all other extreme weather events combined.
At risk populations include:

- Older adults
- Children
- People of color
- Low income
- People with chronic diseases
- Those taking certain medications
- Outdoor workers/athletes
- Socially isolated individuals
- People without access to AC
Northeast Regional Heat Collabor

Examining the Impact of Heat Index on Emergency Department Visits and Deaths in the Northeast

Study Areas for Northeast Heat-Health Analysis
Research Questions

• How does heat index impact health?

• Are heat advisories optimal for protecting public health in the Northeast?

• What can state and local health agencies and other partners do to reduce risk?
Data

**Study Period**
- May 1-September 30
- RI (2005-2012); ME (2001-2010); & NH (2000-2009)

**Study Area**
- Towns within 10 miles of a NOAA weather station (ME, NH), and all of RI
- Population included 60% of ME, 66% of NH, and 100% of RI
  *(an estimated 2.7 million people)*

**Exposure**
- Daily maximum heat index

**Outcome**
- Counts of daily all-cause and heat-specific emergency department (ED) visits
- Counts of daily all-cause deaths
Results - All Cause ED Visits

Over one week following a day with a max HI of 95°F (as compared to 75°F)

- Risk for all cause ED visits increases by 7.5%*

- **784** excess all cause ED visits*

*Annually, during warm season (May-Sept)
Results- All Cause Deaths

Over one week following a day with a max HI of 95°F (as compared to 75°F)

• Risk of death increases by 5.1%*
• Excess deaths- 22*

*Annually, during warm season (May-Sept)
Results- Seasonal ED Impacts

Annual excess all-cause ED visits occurring in the Study Area:

➔ Between HI 90°F and 95°F- 1343/year*

➔ Between HI 95°F and 100°F- 552/year*

➔ At or above HI 100°F- 232/year*

*Annually, during warm season (May-Sept)

For more information: Environmental Research, Heat-related morbidity and mortality in New England: Evidence for local policy. 2017
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2017.02.005
Heat Advisory Policy

Previous National Weather Service Thresholds for New England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAT ADVISORY</th>
<th>HEAT WARNING</th>
<th>HEAT WAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100° - 104°F</td>
<td>105°F and above</td>
<td>3 consecutive days 90°F or higher</td>
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(daytime heat indices for 2 or more hours)

New Heat Advisory Threshold for New England
Forecast for heat index of at least 100°F to 104°F for any length of time or Heat index of 95°F to 99°F for two consecutive days
New Heat Advisory Policy

Eastern Region Heat Index Advisory Criteria

- KALKSTEIN PROCEDURES
- 95-99 F for 2 consecutive days or 100-104 F for any duration
- 100 F or more for 2 consecutive hours
- 105 F or more for 2 consecutive hours
- 110 F or more for 2 consecutive hours
Next Steps

Collaborate with our local NWS offices, news meteorologists, and public health partners to develop consistent, improved, and targeted heat risk communication strategies and toolkits for the New England region.
Thank you!

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