

# The hidden burden of pandemics, climate change and migration on mental health

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**COVID-19 has changed our idea of normal.** These unprecedented, stressful times affect us all – some of us more than others. Fear and anxiety over a little-known disease with a glimpse of hope for a vaccine sometime soon, global economic downturn, along with feelings of loneliness and emotional exhaustion due to lockdowns, can leave everyone mentally exhausted; vulnerable populations and migrants even more so.

**Related publications:** a) Parks & Thalheimer (2020). *The hidden burden of pandemics, climate change and migration on mental health.* <https://doi.org/10.25561/83126>. b) Thalheimer (2020). *How COVID-19 complicates the journey for climate migrants.* Via <https://blog.iiasa.ac.at/tag/population/?csrt=26877475225107416>.

## Aims and objectives

- **Conceptually** introduce how interactions between COVID-19, climate change and migration exacerbate mental health outcomes;
- Explain how research supports a **policy-forming process** through **case study** examples; and
- Identify provisional **recommendations** based on available evidence.

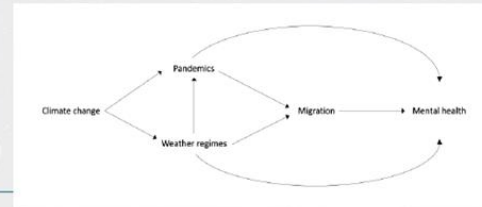


Figure 1: Conceptual framework expressed in a directed acyclic graph

## Who's 'burden' in the context of climate change?

- Disproportionate effects of adverse impacts of anthropogenic **climate change** → poor and vulnerable populations
- COVID-19 adds to an **already-complex world** of risk and compound events, e.g., wildfires, flooding and drought in California
- Strains on existing **social systems**, e.g., by interrupting migrants' low- and unstable-income streams adds pressure on existing **systems of care** at large scale.

## Recommendation: Integrated intervention approach

*COVID-19 acts as a risk multiplier and exacerbates already existing health disparities.*



Research and policy synergies through scenario analyses of cascading impacts to develop feasible intervention points;

Way forward through citizen science and data crowdsourcing, e.g. through mobile phone applications to inform anticipatory action;

Integrated intervention approach through free mental health support for all and the promotion of tele-therapy.