REACT
Resilient & Equitable Health Workforce to Address Climate Threats

Background

The climate crisis is a global health threat. Heatwaves, drought, floods, and landslides cause substantial morbidity and mortality, either directly or indirectly through infectious diseases, respiratory illnesses and food insecurity. The health workforce plays a critical role in care, treatment, and building climate-resilient communities, yet evidence suggests that resilience among health workers is inadequate, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Resilient and Equitable Health Workforce to Address Climate Threats (REACT) is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)-funded study which aims to to help health workers in Nepal and Zimbabwe improve how they and their health facilities react to the impacts of climate crisis by strengthening their responsiveness against the health impacts of climate crisis.

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) in the UK, Centre for Sexual Health, HIV and AIDS Research (CeSHHAR) in Zimbabwe, and HERD International in Nepal will collaborate with health workers, managers, and policymakers to improve how the health workforce reacts to the worsening climate crisis.

Objectives

- To assess preparedness and capacities of health system actors to respond to climate crisis-related health impacts
- To co-create context sensitive and gender equitable interventions to improve health workforce resilience to climate-related health impacts
- To pilot the co-created interventions and evaluate them for equity, feasibility, effectiveness, costs, sustainability and scalability
- To promote uptake of learning on climate crisis and health among health systems actors and researchers

Study implementation sites

Ghorahi Sub-metropolitan City and **Chandannath Municipality** of Nepal, and **Mount Darwin District** and **Harare Local Authority** in Zimbabwe.

Methods

This study begins with formative research, which includes scoping reviews, policy analysis, qualitative studies, and surveys to establish a baseline at the four study sites. Based on these findings, REACT will engage with stakeholders to co-create interventions aimed at building resilience to the climate crisis among health workers. The interventions will be piloted and refined through participatory action research and analysis, culminating in an end-line survey to assess the impact of the interventions. Evidence collected throughout the project will be shared with policymakers, health workers, and local communities to promote and encourage the use of research evidence to inform policy and decisions. REACT will also support researchers and partner organization members with relevant training and other capacity building activities.

"We are seeing increasing instances of malnutrition, respiratory illnesses, maternal and newborn complications, heat-related deaths, and diseases such as malaria, and the situation will worsen. We need health systems that can withstand these challenges, and health workers are a vital part of that response. They have access to and are trusted by their communities, which is why REACT is working with them to find ways to meet the crisis we all face."

Professor Joanna Raven, REACT co-lead, LSTM