

Understanding population concerns about climate change-induced heat and the importance of green spaces in urban Côte d'Ivoire

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There is a very limited understanding of the potential effects of climate change-induced heat on the health of urban residents around the globe. While extreme heat events have been linked to increased mortality and morbidity of affected populations, the effects of more subtle and gradual increases in temperature that take place over decades remain to be fully understood. The current study assesses potential concerns on climate change-induced heat on the urban population in Cocody, a district of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and reports on their adaptive measures. A combined analysis of temperature data over a 40-year period (1973-2012) and 500 household interviews was conducted. Outcomes revealed that Cocody was experienced a significant increase in the maximum, minimum, and mean annual temperatures over four decades. Three different climate periods categorized as colder (1973-1986), normal (1987-2002) and hotter (2003-2012) were differentiated, suggesting a progressively increasing warming period. Residents acknowledged awareness of those changing climate conditions and claimed to experience heat-related symptoms, such as general discomfort, headache, sleeplessness and nervousness. To escape the heat, most people reported to stay at home and use fans and/or air conditioning, or they would visit refreshment bars or green spaces to relieve the discomfort experienced due to heat.