“PERSPECTIVE”

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The environment and human health

Abstract
The health of human populations is intimately linked to the integrity of ecosystems that are home to living beings. Our current development generates socio unacceptable health and environmental. The United Nations and World Health Organization have supported programs such as 21st Century Agenda and Health for all who seek to meet basic needs and ethical principles. Their implementation requires new skills practice eco health for the establishment of healthy and viable.

Health and well-being
"The concern for human health is one of the best reasons to study the effects of global climate change. The combined impact of climate change on the physical environment, ecosystems, economy and society are reflected in health. Health, which requires the physical, mental and social, is a critical factor in the quality of life. That is why health and health services are vital for the people. The health care sector and Social Services employs more people, and spending on services should be consistent.

One can say that the strong seasonal variability in the incidence of infectious diseases and the recurrence of seasonal trends in mortality show a fundamental relationship between health and climate. The monthly number of deaths generally reaches a minimum in August, and then began a rally that lasts until January, when a maximum is reached, after which it fell back during the spring and summer. Number of deaths in winter is due to pneumonia, which suggests that seasonal variations in climate and weather have an effect on the incidence of respiratory infections. Similarly, the number of deaths from heart attacks and strokes varies considerably from one season to another, but peaked in summer and winter.

You can see another manifestation of the close link between climate and human health impacts of extreme weather events and weather disasters. Floods, drought, storms and other natural disasters to climate may affect the health and welfare by causing an increased risk of injuries, diseases, disorders due to stress and death. In recent years, the consequences of flooding from up to 2008 in some regions of the world region of the world have illustrated this fact clearly unfortunate.

Trends with regard to diseases and deaths attributable to air pollution, extreme weather events, allergies to respiratory diseases, water-borne diseases and food and vector-borne diseases of all reflect the correlation between climatic factors and weather and the health and well-being. That is why there is concern that climate change of the magnitude required by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (ie an increase of 1.4 to 5.8 °C the average temperature in the Earth's surface), during the present century, has significant consequences in the health sector and health care. In fact, both climate models that assessments of the vulnerability of the environment and resources by region and climate anomalies which have occurred in recent years across the world indicate that climate change could complicate the maintenance of health and well-being of people in the future.

We distinguish the potential effects of climate change are direct (eg. The variation of morbidity and mortality due to temperature) of those who are indirect (eg. Changing the range diseases transmitted by rodents and other vectors). The impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population, including seniors, people with physical disabilities, the poor and children, are particularly disturbing. Considering that rural residents, who may have to travel over
longer distances than urban residents to obtain care, as well as groups living from hunting and fishing (e.g. Some aboriginal communities), could be further affected. In general, the effects on health will depend on the nature of climate change, exposure to these changes and our ability to limit that exposure. Although in the literature dealing with climate change it is particularly important negative impact of this phenomenon on human health, we can also expect some positive effects, such as a decrease in illness and death caused by the intense cold. Some fundamental questions regarding the health and climate change are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Potential effects of change and climate variability on people's health

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Impacts and adaptation to climate change related
Although people are generally deemed suitable for average conditions, extreme weather events, some of which exceed our current response capabilities, continue to put to the test. Some worry that climate change may in future make such events more frequent and further reduces our ability to cope. In fact, any environmental or socio-economic change will have an additional stress on the health system, which is already grappling with many difficulties. Strategies to reduce negative impacts of climate change to health are essential. To decide what avenues are most suitable for adaptation, it is necessary to assess vulnerability and adaptive capacity across regions, communities and population groups.

This analysis provides an overview of the potential serious effects of climate change on the health and well-being, and highlights some actions already undertaken to improve understanding of the effects of this phenomenon on the population and gather data for the developing adaptation strategies.

1. What links between health and environment?

The relationship between human health and the environment a top priority at a time when disasters and pandemics announced are continuing to multiply. While infectious diseases of previous centuries had been relatively well controlled, or limited, warnings about the proliferation of sources of contamination are again raised. Global warming leads to a relocation of the vectors of transmission, thus extending the potential sources of bacterial or viral infection.

Natural disasters in recent decades caused significant migration of people who find themselves homeless and without food. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that up to 24% of current diseases in the world can be attributed to environmental degradation. And in the case of diseases among children under five years, an unhealthy environment is considered as one of the major risk factors.

Urban air pollution increases the prevalence of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. The severity of environmental threats to health is made clear, moreover, in the progression of diseases of the inhabitants of rich countries: cancer and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases have doubled. Pandemics announced, such as might be associated with the avian flu or that could result from the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the incidence of disease resulting from ingestion of food unfit for consumption, fish contaminated with mercury, beef infected with "mad cow disease (Creutzfeldt Jakob disease), heavy metals in baby foods, are examples of imbalances resulting complex relationships created by the lifestyles and production methods to meet the needs of living beings.

Indeed, even as a proportion of humanity is suffering from malnutrition, obesity and diabetes are endemic in the rich countries. Several toxic chemicals in water, air, land, homes and food, can induce neural changes that limit the capacity of child development, as is the case for exposure to lead, risk of lead poisoning. The current studies also demonstrate that many carcinogens are found in cosmetics and hygiene of the body, some of which are associated with breast cancer and prostate cancer.

Chapter 6 of Agenda 21st century (A21) on the Protection and Promotion of Health confirms the close link between health and the environment and the gravity of the health problems of the environment caused by development inadequate.
Studies on the deformation of anatomical parts in amphibian populations in wetlands support the hypothesis of the impact of chemicals, toxic species development. Epidemiological studies should be undertaken to demonstrate the effect of toxic substances on developing foetuses and the overall health of human beings.

However, many signals derive social and environmental health can not fail to alert the scientific community, politicians and human communities in general. Not only the quality of life of human beings is at stake, but also the ecological chain, itself in its entirety, finding that force to review the anthropocentric conception of development. This way of thinking obscures the fact that human health is intimately linked to the capacity of ecosystems to perform their functions of regulating the processes of life and reproduction of species on earth.

2. Public Opinion face of environmental issues

The beginnings of the awareness of world public opinion and political impact of the environment on public health probably go back to the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. But it was not until the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, while an official record of the meeting, the A21 dedicated the whole chapter 6 to the protection and promotion of health, which the process of implementation of concrete solutions.

Ten years later, at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, a research consortium is created, comprising the United States and WHO to identify the body of scientific knowledge of the impacts of the environment on human health. Indeed, despite the presence of many toxic substances in the environment and the human body, the empirical and epidemiological data that demonstrate the links are still relatively recent, or even ignored.

Agenda 21st century local (LA 21), seen as a tool for planning sustainable development (SD) is a useful tool to introduce the concerns of the links between environment and human health. Local authorities will then have the opportunity to ask their views on the quality of the ecosystems that surround them and make findings in relation to the health of surrounding populations.

The ecosystem is understood here as the relationship between species and with the biophysical components of the environments that surround them. "Ecosystem" is a term that includes all living beings in a common area, which are interacting with each other and with the various factors surrounding communities. It may be a city, a municipality, a neighbourhood, a street, a swamp, a bank, a watershed, a wooded, park, a school, a building. The environment is made up of all the factors that interact to ensure the health and well-being of living beings, human and nonhuman, which occupy a common territory.

3. The World Health Organization and evolution of the concept of health

Long defined by its opposite, health took a completely different direction with the definition assigned to it by the Preamble to the Constitution in 1946, entered into force in 1948:

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1946).
International conferences on health organized under the auspices of WHO will develop the concept of health throughout the world. The Alma-Ata Conference held at Kazikstan in 1978 will be the first to introduce the principle of the right to health. It gives rise to an international strategy which aims to influence policies and programs to give every citizen the opportunity to live productive lives in the social and economic.

The action strategies developed to achieve the goal of Health for all, promulgated by the Declaration of Alma-Ata, were discussed and adopted at the International Conference in Ottawa in 1986. This implies addressing the health status of first addressing all the factors which, upstream, affecting the health of citizens, and give special attention to categories people most vulnerable, including children, women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and immigrants.

These are the policies of all sectors of life that determine the conditions, including housing, transportation, income level, social network, education, proximity to care, which become the focus. Health promotion, which targets all of the determinants of health, seen as the most suited to deal with the real causes of health inequalities and reduce the gap in life expectancy between people with means and those who do not.

This approach to health is more holistic and integrated, because it takes into account social and health, environmental, economic, cultural and political. In this context, health inequalities are an important indicator. In addition to the genetic characteristics, health status results from a set of determinants that induce or limit choices. It is primarily up to them that should address the public health. The assumption that the WHO supports the interdependence between the factors health, environment and development, is in the same direction. But despite this fact, Article 6.39 of the A21 (Chapter 6) states that:

"Measures against pollution and protection of health have rarely kept pace with economic progress" (UN, 1992).

4. What is the role of mobilizing all stakeholders in a new approach to environmental health?

To achieve this new health / environment, mobilization of professionals, but also policy makers and a wide variety of stakeholders from the membership, is also necessary. Section 6D of the A21 (Chapter 6), which addresses the health of urban populations, argues that environmental pollution in urban areas has resulted in significant morbidity and excessive mortality. The statement of principles suggests that urbanization is associated with destructive effects of the living resources and, moreover, necessary for sustainable development,

"Many factors affect the health of populations do not fall within the health sector. Improving health therefore requires a coordinated management at all levels, health, business, religious groups, social institutions, educational institutions and the public in general " (UN, 1992).

As for activities to be conducted in public health, it is recommended that:

"[To] adopt or strengthen, at the commune level, and other local communities, “supporting strategies which emphasize participation rather than on assistance and create an environment conducive to health” (UN, 1992).
5. The Health for All program of the World Health Organization

For a quarter of a century, programs and initiatives put forward by the United Nations (UN) agencies and their affiliates, including WHO, United Nations Environment (UNEP) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP), adopt a global perspective, which is integrated in the health, development and the environment.

Recently Initiative Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Millennium Project on poverty and hunger, the Health for All WHO jointly support the aims and resources that involve the intersection of fields of activities, those of the integrity of ecosystems, food security, equity in health to make a DD. Sets environmental and social consequences of such complexity necessarily require an interlocking intersectional considerations conclusions about the scale of impacts, assessing and monitoring environmental and social health and a necessary matching between local knowledge and local expertise of the particular occupational. Provisions of a similar nature are required at local level to successfully implement these principles systematically in the territories belonging.

6. What conditions and what approach to healthy communities and sustainable?

The LA21 offers the opportunity to work for harmonious coexistence between human settlements and natural environments. Indeed, one of the basic conditions for success in the establishment of healthy and sustainable is the adoption of an integrated and comprehensive approach where all living beings have health conditions and satisfaction of needs. Several tools were developed in this direction, but they share the common goal of achieving a DD.

The LA21 is one of the environmental approaches, while others take the health and well-being as a framework. That the initiators of projects from health, environment, community or politics, or "New Urbanism", the goal is similar, setting up the conditions for a DD, in a given territory and from a variety of stakeholders and cultures who share a living environment.

- An ethical approach in this area requires that we take into account the following dimensions:
  - Social justice and equity;
  - The adoption of a development concept that takes into account the carrying capacity of ecosystems;
  - a local and territorial;
  - Multiple partnerships and diversified;
  - Recognition of the determinants that create health inequalities and maintain a divide between rich and poor;

Political commitment and community

6.a) 'health and quality of life ':
People, protecting their health and improving their quality of life are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;

6.b) "Social equity and solidarity":
Development activities must be undertaken in a spirit of intra-and intergenerational equity and ethics and social solidarity.
7. Eco and health: what relevance?

The adoption of ethical values as the basis of the development requires an awareness of social and health impacts and environmental factors that are currently in play globally. Even as economic forces push towards globalization of markets, and would like to see the disappearance of public services to the private sector, citizens' representation and community involvement are needed more than ever to introduce and maintain access democratic health care.

In addition, new skills are needed to assume the roles and assume the science involved in the citizenship paradigm shift to create healthy and sustainable. The A21L, Article 6.45 states that the lack of skilled resources is a major obstacle to the protection of health against the risks to the environment and that training should cover the environmental and health at all levels, high schools, universities to public information.

RESOURCES:

1. World Health Organization:
   http://www.who.int
2. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome:
3. Creutzfeldt Jakob disease:
5. The Preamble to the Constitution of WHO in 1946, entered into force in 1948:
   http://policy.who.int/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?hitsperheading=on&infobase=basicen&record=%7b2%7d&softpage=document42
6. The Alma-Ata Conference, held in Kazakhstan in 1978:
   http://www.euro.who.int/AboutWHO/Policy/20010827_1?language=French
7. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP):
   http://www.unep.org
8. United Nations Development Program (UNDP):
   http://www.undp.org
9. The United Nations (UN):
   http://www.un.org
10. The New Urbanism:
    http://www.reseau-ipam.org/article.php3?id_article=703
11. Section 6.39 of the A21 (Chapter 6):
12. The A21L, Article 6.45