

Climate change and youth mental health

A brief review of the evidence



Direct mental health impact

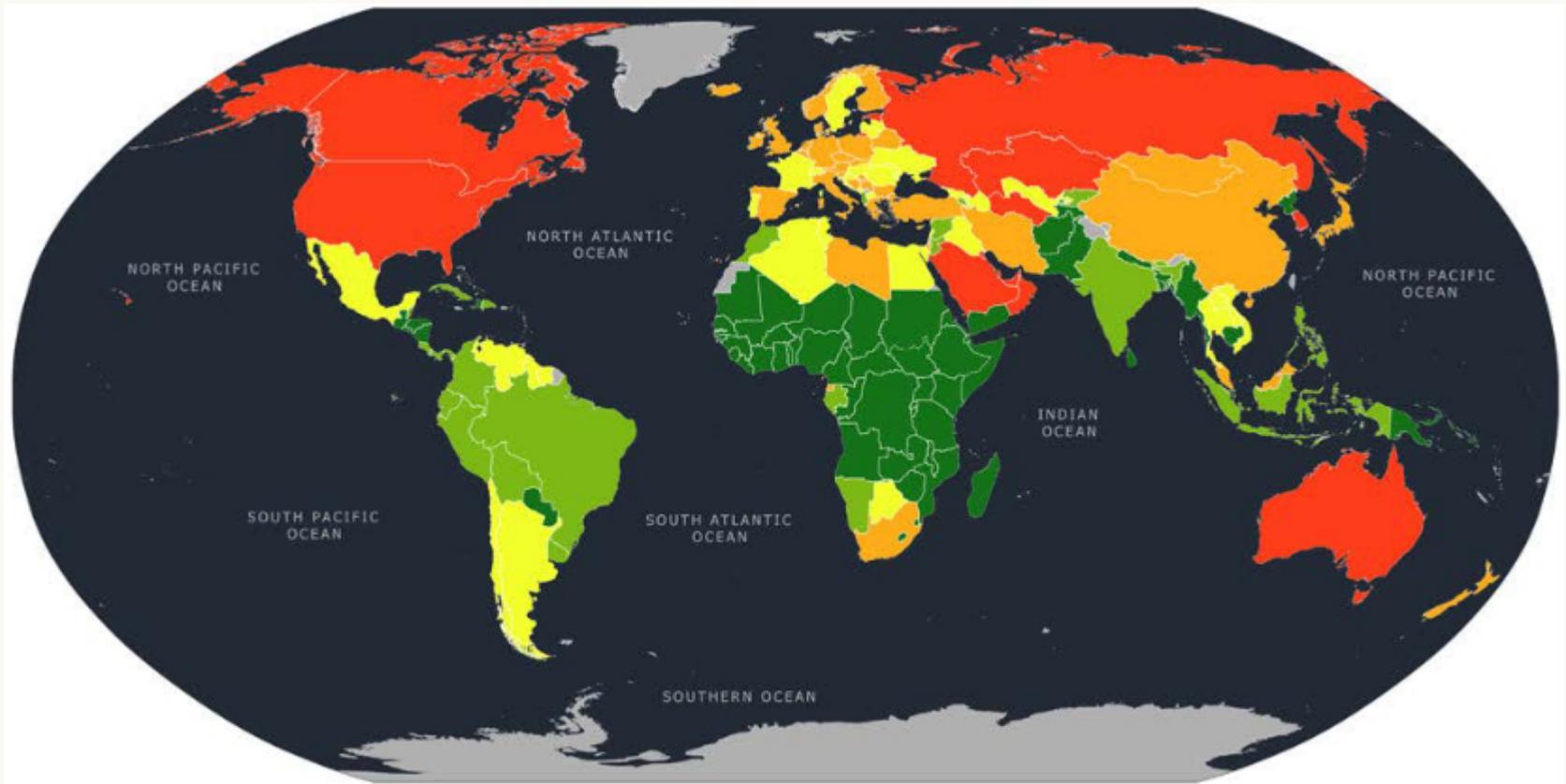
The already-substantial burden of mental distress is being (and will continue to be) increased by climate change

- Adverse climate events cause PTSD, depression, anxiety, stress, loss, grief, sadness
 - Are more prevalent than physical injury
 - Exacerbate existing illness or susceptibilities
 - Have long-term effects, and disrupt social and economic activity
- Effective responses depend on effective health systems and networks

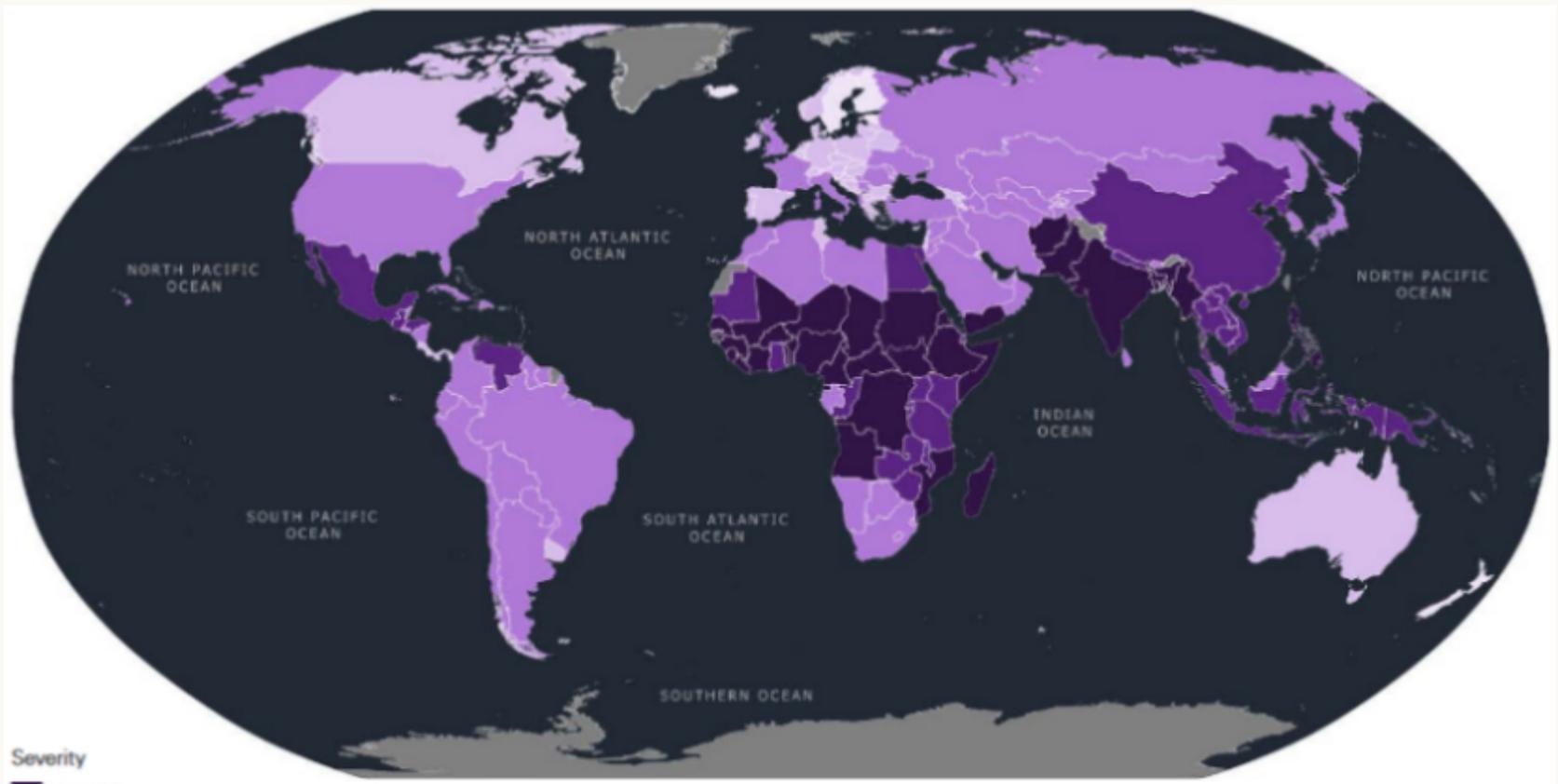
These effects are under-represented in climate impact analyses or mitigation plans.

Kelman 2021, Lawrance 2021, Sharpe 2021.

A question of justice



A question of justice



Indirect effects (including “eco-anxiety”)

Young people are increasingly reporting experiences of depression, anxiety and grief in relation to climate change

- Concern and empathy for others; loss, grief, uncertainty
- Anger, loss of trust in leaders
- Danger of over-pathologising: this is a rational response

Individual and group action on climate change may support and improve mental health

- Meaning-focused coping associated with less negative emotion and more life satisfaction

Baudon 2021, Ramadan 2021

Opportunities

We can improve mental health and tackle the climate crisis at the same time

- Engagement with environmental projects
- Co-produced with local networks
- Building resilience and mitigating impact
- Helping YP to find support and encouraging them to take action
- Taking action ourselves!

Baudon 2021, Lawrance 2021, Patrick 2021, Unicef 2021

Summary

1. Invest in effective, local networks and systems
2. Deploy valid and useful measures of impact
3. Meaning- focused coping for eco-anxiety

Cautions

- Risk of over-pathologising
- Siloed evidence, grey literature

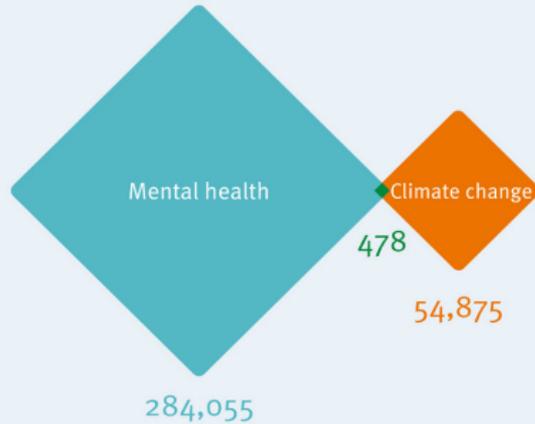
Research silos

Articles that mention: ■ Mental health ■ Climate change ■ Mental health and climate change

Knowledge

The number of articles published between 2011 – 2021 in

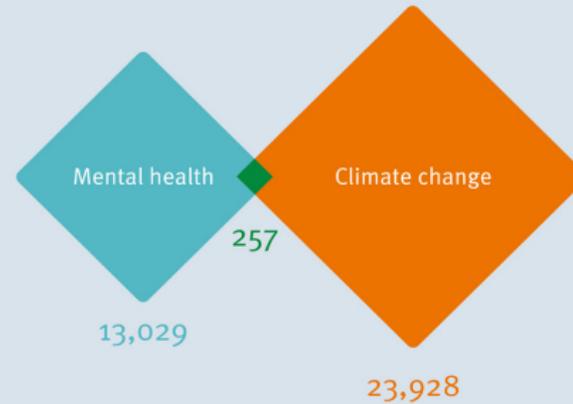
PubMed



Awareness

The number of articles published between 2011 – 2021 in

The New York Times



Brief bibliography

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