

Governing Climate-Related Health Risks: A Comparative Analysis of International, EU, and National Legal Frameworks

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Background

Climate change has emerged as a critical determinant of public health, intensifying existing health risks and generating new challenges for legal and regulatory systems. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, air pollution, and the spread of climate-sensitive diseases increasingly threaten human life and health. These developments require a re-examination of how legal frameworks govern health protection in the context of climate change, particularly within medical law and public health regulation. The intersection of environmental governance and health law highlights the need for coherent legal responses that address both prevention and adaptation.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to analyze how climate-related health risks are governed across different legal orders and to assess the scope and effectiveness of state obligations in protecting public health. The study aims to compare international legal instruments, European Union regulatory approaches, and national legal frameworks, using Georgia as a case study, in order to identify gaps, best practices, and opportunities for legal harmonization.

Methods

The research employs doctrinal legal analysis combined with a comparative and systematic methodology. It examines international treaties, soft law instruments, EU legislation and

policy documents, and national laws and strategies relevant to climate change and health. Academic literature and policy reports are also analyzed to contextualize legal norms within broader public health governance.

Results

The analysis reveals a growing recognition of climate change as a public health issue at the international and EU levels, resulting in expanded positive state obligations related to prevention, preparedness, and healthcare system resilience. The EU demonstrates a more integrated governance model, while national frameworks, particularly in developing or transitioning legal systems, remain fragmented and sector-specific.

Conclusion

Effective governance of climate-related health risks requires integrated legal frameworks that bridge environmental law and medical law. Strengthening national systems through alignment with international and EU standards is essential to ensure robust protection of public health in the face of escalating climate challenges.

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