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Home / Editorials

Thu, Sep 15, 2016 - Page 9 News List

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# Global temperatures continue to rise, and we are all cooked

By Nick Kristof / NY Times News Service

One of US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's 100 wackiest ideas is that climate change is a hoax fabricated by China to harm the US.

"The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make US manufacturing uncompetitive," Trump once tweeted.

He later said, unconvincingly, that he had been kidding about China, but he has emphasized that he does not believe in climate change and would end serious efforts to prevent it.

That obstinacy confronts a new wave of research showing that climate change is much more harmful than we had imagined.

Until now, the focus has been on rising seas, more intense hurricanes, acidification of oceans, drought and crop failures. However, new studies are finding that some of the most important effects will be directly on our bodies and minds.

A clever new working paper by Park Ji-sung, a doctoral student in economics at Harvard University, compared the performances of New York City students on 4.6 million exams with the day's temperature.

## EXAM PRESSURE

Park found that students taking a New York State Regents exam on a 32.22oC day have a 12 percent greater chance of failing than when the temperature is 22.22oC.

The Regents exams help determine whether a student graduates and goes to college, and Park finds that when a student has the bad luck to have Regents exams fall on very hot days, he or she is slightly less likely to graduate on time.

Likewise, Park finds that when a school year has an unusual number of hot days, students do worse at the end of the year on their Regents exams, presumably because they have learned less. A school year with five extra days of temperatures greater than 26.67oC leads students to perform significantly worse on Regents exams.

The New York City students in Park's study do poorly on hot days even though the majority of city schools are air-conditioned (perhaps in part because the air-conditioning often barely works).

Imagine the consequences in hotter climates with less air-conditioning: The average Indian now endures about 33 days a year with temperatures greater than 32.22oC, and that is forecast to increase by as many as 100 days by 2100.

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"If students in New York public schools are being affected by heat stress, one can only imagine what it's like for a student in Delhi," Park said.

Heat affects our bodies as well as our minds: As temperatures rise, people die. In India, a rise of 1oC in average daily temperatures leads to a 10 percent increase in the annual mortality rate. Even a single extra hot day leads to a noticeable jump in mortality.

Even in the US, heat kills. A single day above 32.22oC increases the monthly mortality rate by more than 1 percent, according to research by Olivier Deschenes and other economists.

We just do not function as well when the mercury goes up. When the temperature rises above 29.44oC, Americans who work outside cut their time in the heat by about an hour. Even in auto factories, most presumably air-conditioned, a week of six days above 32.22oC reduces production by 8 percent.

### INCREASING VIOLENCE

Perhaps more startling, rising temperatures seem to cause more violence.

"The relationship is really clear," said Edward Miguel, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who has studied the issue.

"Extremes in climate lead to more violence, more killing, more war, more land riots in Brazil, more sectarian violence in India," he said. "It's pretty stunning how the relationship between climate and violence holds across the globe."

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