



Contribution ID: 217

Type: Oral presentation

## **“Heat is a danger to my health even though I said I am used to it”: Qualitative insights of heat among Community Health Workers and Promoters in Kenya**

*Monday, October 13, 2025 5:55 PM (15 minutes)*

Climate change is one of the most prominent environmental and health challenges of the 21st century. Variations in extreme temperature and weather events are intensifying occupational heat exposure and placing workers at increasing risk of heat-related illness (HRIs) and injury. Healthcare workers especially those in resource-limited, community-based, or mobile settings face significant occupational risks from rising temperatures, yet these challenges remain largely overlooked and insufficiently studied. This qualitative study based on semi-structured face-to-face interviews explores the experiences of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Health Promoters (CHPs) in Kenya, examining how extreme heat affects their personal health, livelihoods, and the delivery of community-based health services. We conducted 41 in-depth interviews with CHWs and CHPs in Mombasa and Tana River counties. Data was managed using NVivo 14 and analysed drawing on tenets of reflexive thematic analysis. We identified a pattern of intersecting vulnerabilities shaped by economic inequality, work conditions, health disparities, climate variability, and gender. We also found that these overlapping factors not only shape the daily experiences of CHWs and CHPs but also constrains their resilience and effectiveness of community health service delivery. Our findings highlight the urgent need for climate-resilient health systems that not only improve the working conditions or protect CHWs and CHPs from extreme heat but also address the structural inequalities such as economic disparities and the challenges of gendered burdens that heighten their vulnerability. By incorporating intersectional approaches to policy and intervention design, our research calls for a more inclusive, equitable response to climate change within the health sector, ensuring that CHWs and CHPs are supported, valued, and equipped to continue their essential work in the face of a changing climate.

### **Keywords**

Climate change; Occupational heat exposure; Heat-related illness; Community health workers; Community health promoters; Intersecting vulnerabilities

### **Registration ID**

42

### **Professional Status of the Speaker**

PhD Student

### **Junior Scientist Status**

Yes, I am a Junior Scientist.

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**Session Classification:** Session 4: Climate Change & Health

**Track Classification:** Climate Change & Health