

# PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY



SPOR Evidence Alliance  
Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research

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Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research

**SPOR**  
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## Knowledge, Perceptions, and Attitudes of People with Chronic Conditions and their Healthcare Providers on the Impact of Climate Change on Chronic Conditions in Canada

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### Summary

This scoping review looked at what Healthcare professionals (HCPs) and people with chronic conditions perceptions, knowledge, and/ or attitudes about how climate change affects health. Only three studies were found—all of which focused on HCPs. While many HCPs are concerned about climate change's impact on their patients' health, most don't feel well-informed or equipped to support patients. No studies looked at the perspectives of people living with chronic conditions in Canada.

### What does this mean?

There isn't enough research to draw any strong conclusions. More information is needed to understand the knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes of both HCPs and people with chronic conditions. Future work should prioritize hearing directly from people living with chronic conditions, as their voices and experiences are missing from current research. Future work should also track intersectionality and factors that further heighten risk and exposure to climate change effects, such as structural inequities and environmental injustices. These steps are key to improving care and creating effective supports in a changing climate.

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### What is the current situation?

Climate change significantly impacts public health, especially for people with chronic conditions, by increasing risks like heat stress, respiratory issues, vector-borne diseases, and disrupting access to care. Those with chronic illnesses are more vulnerable due to their ongoing healthcare needs and increased sensitivity to environmental and mental stressors. Marginalized communities face even greater risks due to existing health inequities.

HCPs play a key role in recognizing these impacts, informing patients, and adapting care. Efforts such as national guidelines and climate and health educational programs aim to support HCPs in this role. However, **there is limited understanding of Canadian HCPs' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes** toward climate change and chronic disease.

### What questions did we aim to answer in our research?

- 1) What are Canadian **people with chronic conditions'** perceptions, knowledge, and/ or attitudes of the impacts of climate change on their conditions?
- 2) What are Canadian **HCPs'** perceptions, knowledge, and/ or attitudes of the impacts of climate change on people with chronic health conditions?

### How did we approach these questions?

We conducted a **scoping review**, searching studies from 2010 to 2024 to explore the knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes of Canadian HCPs and people living with chronic conditions on the health impacts of climate change on chronic conditions.

### What answers did we find from our research?

We found **only three studies**, all focused on HCPs. While concerns about the impact of climate change on patient health showed mixed results across studies, there was a consistent understanding that climate change negatively affects persons with chronic conditions. Knowledge of climate change among HCPs was also mixed, with two out of three studies reporting that less than half of participants felt adequately informed to support patients.

### How confident are we in these findings?

There are clear **knowledge gaps**, and with so few studies, **our confidence is limited**. More research is needed to better understand the perspectives of both HCPs and persons living with chronic conditions.