

The Vulnerability of Indigenous Health to Climate Change: A Case Study of Uganda's Batwa Pygmies

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The potential impacts of climate change on human health in sub-Saharan Africa are wide-ranging, complex, and largely adverse. Indigenous peoples are considered to be at heightened risk given their relatively poor health outcomes, marginal social status, and resource-based livelihoods; however, little attention has been given to these most vulnerable of the vulnerable. This paper contributes to this gap by taking a bottom-up approach to assessing the vulnerability of health to climate change in two Batwa Pygmy communities in rural Uganda. Rapid Rural Appraisal and PhotoVoice field methods complemented by qualitative data analysis were used to identify key climate-sensitive, community-identified health outcomes, describe determinants of sensitivity at multiples scales, and assess adaptive capacity of Batwa health systems. The findings stress the importance of human drivers of vulnerability and the need to address social determinants of health in order to reduce the potential disease burden of climate change.

