

THE DAILY CALLER

Report: Global Warming Could Be A Boon For Public Health

By Michael Bastasch

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Fears that global warming will lead to more people dying from extreme heat are overblown and misleading, according to a new [study](#) published on Wednesday.

Global warming could actually be a boon for public health, as a warmer climate would spur innovation in technologies to help people deal with the heat, says the study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

“Rising heat is not a one way street to more heat-related illness,” said Chip Knappenberger, a researcher with the libertarian Cato Institute and co-author of the study, in an accompanying press release. “What happens instead, is that people take adaptive measures to protect themselves, measures which ultimately result in fewer heat-related deaths.”

Heat-related deaths have been on the decline in major cities across the U.S. and Europe, despite average global temperatures having risen 0.8 degrees Celsius in the last century. This is because innovations, like air conditioning and medical advances, have helped people to keep cool even when the planet was warming.

Knappenberger, along with Cato science director Patrick Michaels and climate blogger Anthony Watts, look at adaptive measures taken in Stockholm, Sweden during the 20th century. They conclude that way fewer people are currently dying of heat waves than during the early part of last century.

The article is in response to a [study](#) published last October in Nature Climate Change by Swedish scientists claiming that global warming has increased heat-related mortality.

The Swedish study claims that twice as many people have been killed by extreme heat from 1980 to 2009 than would have died if global warming was not occurring.

“A changing climate is increasing the frequency, intensity, duration and spatial extent of heat waves,” Swedish scientists wrote last year. “These changes are associated with increased human mortality during heat extremes.”

“Mortality from heat extremes in 1980–2009 was double what would have occurred without climate change,” write Swedish scientists. “Although temperature shifted towards warmer temperatures in the winter season, cold extremes occurred more frequently, contributing to a small increase of mortality during the winter months. No evidence was found for adaptation over 1980–2009.”

Knappenberger, Michaels and Watts disagree, saying that Sweden is adapting to warmer weather. Better air conditioning, medical practices and building practices have combined with more community awareness about the dangers of heat waves to make Stockholm more resilient in the face of extreme heat.

“As a result of the combination of all the adaptive measures that have taken place over the course of the 20th century in Stockholm, on average, people currently die in heat waves at a rate four times less than they did during the beginning of the 20th century,” said Knappenberger. “The effect of adaptation overwhelms the effect of an increase in the number of heat waves.”

“As heat waves become more common, the better adapted to them the population becomes,” Michaels said.