

## Documents

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**CLIMATE ANXIETY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CLIMATE ANXIETY IN MALAYSIAN YOUTH AND THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

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**Abstract**

Young people bear the heaviest burden of the climate crisis, but not all aspects of their rights have been considered in the environment and public health governance framework. With evidence primarily collected from Western countries, this poses a challenge to understanding climate anxiety and its effects on the Asian region. Addressing this gap, this study investigated climate anxiety among young people in Malaysia and its relationship with perceived government responses. We surveyed 150 youth aged 19 to 25, collecting data on climate change worry, climate-related emotions, negative thoughts about climate change, negative beliefs about government responses, feelings of betrayal and reassurance by the government, and negative functioning impact. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and regression analyses were conducted for data analysis. Participants reported high climate anxiety, with more than 60% being afraid, powerless, guilty, helpless, and sad. Many reported negative thoughts about climate change and rated government responses to climate change negatively. Those with high levels of worry had higher negative thoughts, greater deterioration of daily functioning capability, stronger feelings of betrayal, and are less likely to feel reassured by the government. Those who have negative thoughts about climate change reported more beliefs about the inadequacy of governmental responses. Both negative thoughts about climate change and negative functional impact significantly predict feelings of betrayal by the government. This study highlights the need to acknowledge the distressing impact of climate change on young people and for the government to validate their concerns by taking serious action on the climate crisis. © (2023), (Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association). All Rights Reserved.

**Author Keywords**

Climate anxiety; Climate change; Government responses; Public health; Young people

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