

Review report

Final title: Climate change, disability, and physical and rehabilitation medicine: A call for inclusive health action

Title at submission: Climate change, disability, and physical and rehabilitation medicine: A call for inclusive health action



Reviewer C: Anika Tasnim, ORCID: 0000-0002-4983-0086

Overview

This review article examines climate change's disproportionate health impacts on people with disabilities (PwD), emphasizing vulnerabilities like physiological risks and access barriers. It advocates for Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) professionals' pivotal role in functional restoration, emergency response, education, and policy advocacy to build inclusive, resilient health systems. It's a timely, well-structured call to action with strong references, but could benefit from more empirical data on interventions. It is well-referenced call for disability-inclusive climate action, highlighting critical gaps in current frameworks.

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Publication history

Received: 4 Oct 2025
Accepted: 11 Dec 2025
Published online: 15 Dec 2025

Responsible editor

Tahniyah Haq
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Reviewer

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Keywords

climate change, rehabilitation, disability, health, people with disability

Funding

None

Ethical approval

Not applicable

Trial registration number

Not applicable

1. Comment Appropriateness of the Title.

The title is appropriate. It accurately captures the manuscript's core focus on climate change's disproportionate effects on people with disabilities, the role of physical and rehabilitation medicine, and the call for inclusive health strategies.

Response Thank you

2. Comment Completeness and accuracy of the Abstract.

Abstract is complete, summarizing background, methods, results, conclusion, and keywords effectively. Accurate, with key facts matching manuscript and current sources. No discrepancies found.

Response Thank you

3. Comment Clarity and appropriateness of the Objective(s).

Objectives clear: elaborate intersection of climate change and disability, explore impacts on PwD, emphasize PRM role. Appropriate: timely for review article.

Response Thank you

4. Comment Clarity of the rationale for conducting the study is given in the Introduction section.

Rationale in Introduction is clear. It establishes climate change as health emergency, details impacts, highlights PwD vulnerabilities and oversight, justifies review for inclusive action via PRM. Well-supported by citations.

Response Thank you

5. Comment The Methods are described in sufficient details so that the study can be reproduced. Whether ethical concerns have been well described.

Methods insufficient for reproduction. The narrative review lacks details on literature search strategy, databases, inclusion/exclusion criteria. Ethical concerns well described: discloses prior work, no conflicts, no funding, data availability.

Response We appreciate your point. As this article is a commentary and narrative in nature, building on our previously published review, we were not able to provide a detailed methods section in this manuscript. The intent of this piece is to synthesise and contextualise the earlier findings rather than replicate the full methodological reporting. Thank you.

6. Comment Clarity and appropriateness of the Design to achieve the objective(s).

Design clear as narrative review synthesizing literature and expert views. Appropriate for objec-

Response Thank you

7. Comment Appropriate and thorough description of the Statistical methods.

No statistical methods described or needed; appropriate for narrative review synthesizing litera-

Response

8. Comment Quality, clarity and appropriateness of the Table(s).

No tables present in the manuscript

Response

- 9. Comment** Quality, clarity and appropriateness of the Figure(s), if any.
Figure 1 effectively illustrates the complex and multifaceted health impacts of climate change on people with disabilities, highlighting key vulnerabilities such as exacerbated pre-existing conditions, increased risk of injuries, mental health challenges, and socio-economic disadvantages. The diagram is well-organized, making it clear how various climate-related disasters (e.g., extreme heat, air pollution) contribute to these health risks. However, the figure could benefit from clearer visual differentiation between the different categories of vulnerabilities, such as physical, psychological, and socio-economic, to enhance its clarity and accessibility for a broader audience.
- Response** Thank you for the suggestion. However, we believe that the vulnerabilities described are generally consistent across all types of climate-related events.
- 10. Comment** Major redundancy between text and tables/figures in the Results section.
Figure 1 redundantly summarizes health impacts from "Health consequences of climate change" section (lines 76-113) and PwD vulnerabilities from "Impact of climate change on PwD" section (lines 119-164).
- Response** We agree; however, an additional illustrated version of the text may attract more attention and be more visually engaging.
- 11. Comment** Pertinence of the Discussion section whether it justify the main message of the manuscript without repeating the results.
The manuscript lacks a labeled "Discussion" section, but "The way forward" (lines 221-256) serves this role. It justifies the main message (PRM's pivotal role in climate-resilient, disability-inclusive health systems) by proposing strategic actions and a roadmap, building on prior themes without directly repeating results. Minor overlaps with introduction/conclusion exist but are contextual.
- Response** Please see our response to #5.
- 12. Comment** Whether Strength(s) and Limitation(s) are well described.
No, strengths and limitations of the manuscript are not described
- Response** This is not applicable.
- 13. Comment** Whether the Conclusion of the manuscript is supported by the data.
Yes, the conclusion is supported by the synthesized literature, expert perspectives, and cited references, though as a narrative review, it relies on existing evidence rather than new empirical data.
- Response** Thank you
- 14. Comment** Whether the manuscript is supported by appropriate and up-to-date References.
No, references are appropriate but not up-to-date, missing key 2024-2025 publications like the 2025 Lancet Countdown and Global Disability Inclusion Report.
- Response**
- Responsible editor: Tahniyah Haq, ORCID: 0000-0002-0863-0619**
- 15. Comment** Please use the elaboration at the first mention of "PWD" in line 23 of the abstract.
- Response** Thank you this is now corrected.
- 16. Comment** Please omit "(also commentary)" in line 28.
- Response** Thank you, this is now removed
- 17. Comment** In the result section of the abstract, please include comments on all three aims of the review, not just the part on PRM.
- Response** Further to your suggestion, we have modified the result section.
- 18. Comment** Will you consider adding PRM and PwD, not just disability, as keywords?
- Response** Thank you, PwD is added
- 19. Comment** Please give separate references for the statements under "Physiological vulnerabilities, Physical susceptibility, Barriers to healthcare access, Socioeconomic disadvantage, and Disruption of support systems". Include all these headings as a subsection under "Impact of climate change on PwD".
- Response** These information are generalised from all these references.
- 20. Comment** Please give separate references for the statements under "Clinical care and functional restoration, Enhance adaptive capacity and resilience". Again, these and similar paragraphs can be presented as subsections under "Role of physical and rehabilitation medicine (PRM) professionals".
- Response** We do not agree and think current format is appropriate.
- 21. Comment** The "the following strategic actions...." mentioned in line 226 should be presented as subsections under the heading "The way forward" professionals".
- Response** All strategic actions described below should be listed under the subheadings. This is now corrected.
- 22. Comment** The figure given in the review is very similar to the one published by Amatya B and Khan F 2023. Due to copyright issues, it is better to omit the figure.
- Response** This is new figure created for this article. Please note, our previous manuscript doesn't have any figures.

23. **Comment** There are also some similarities to the article mentioned in reference 6. For example, both articles begin by defining climate change and talking about its economic impact. The subheadings and structure are also very similar. Please reduce this similarity to increase the originality of the review.
- Response** As this article is a commentary and narrative in nature, building on our previously published review (ref# 6). This is expected. We have disclosed this as a conflict of interest. Thank you.
24. **Comment** Please check the review to make sure all statements are supported by references where needed, and that the references are correct.
- Response** This is correct and checked
25. **Comment** The journal follows the ICMJE criteria for authorship, where each author should fulfil each criterion. FK did not fulfil criterion (a) in line 282. Please correct this.
- Response** This is now corrected. Thank you.
26. **Comment** Review and commentary are 2 separate categories in this journal. A review is an article with a word limit of 3000 words, whereas a commentary has a word limit of 600 words (details on the website). Please commit to any one category. If you submit this as a review, please improve the methodology section to include the literature search strategy, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria, as suggested by both reviewers.
- Response** Thank you. We would like to clarify again that the submitted manuscript (with personal invitation from Prof Taslim Uddin) is a narrative position article that builds on our previously published narrative reviews. As a narrative position article, it does not—and cannot include a formal methodology section with a structured literature search, inclusion/exclusion criteria, or database strategy. Its purpose is conceptual and strategic, drawing on expert experience, existing global mandates, and published narrative work rather than employing systematic review methodology. Given the nature, purpose, and scope of this manuscript, we confirm that it aligns most closely with the Journal's Review (Narrative) category, as it exceeds the scope of a 600-word commentary but remains a conceptual, narrative synthesis intended to inform academic and policy direction.
27. **Comment** Please include the 2025 Lancet Countdown and Global Disability Inclusion Report as suggested by Reviewer C in comment number 14.
- Response** Please note that this report was not published during the preparation of this article. This reference is now added accordingly.
28. **Comment** Although there is no figure in your 2023 publication, the contents and message of the table and this figure are mostly the same. Please modify the figure so that it is remarkably different from the 2023 table. Otherwise, you can omit it as the information has already been discussed in the text.
- Response** We acknowledge that the concepts presented in the current table/figure are aligned with those discussed in our previous publication. We have now changed the key titles and have clearly referenced the source and included a full disclosure statement to ensure transparency and adherence to ethical publication standards. Also, as the format, structure, and presentation of the current figure are substantially different, we believe its