

Introduction

In 2004 the Department of Health and CatSalut implemented for first time an Action plan to prevent the effects of a heat wave on health (POCS) with the participation of Department of Social Welfare and Family, Department of Governance and Institutional Relations, Department of the Interior, Department of Enterprise and Labour, Meteorological Service of Catalonia, Integral Emergency Plan of Catalonia (PIUC), Medical Emergency Service (SEMSA), Catalan Health Service, Public Health Agency of Barcelona, Personal Services of Barcelona, Catalan Association of Municipalities and Regions, Federation of Municipalities of Catalonia, Board of Pharmaceutical Colleges of Catalonia, The Institute of Forensic medicine of Catalonia, Health and Social Consortium of Catalonia, Catalan union of Hospitals, Social Services Consortium of Barcelona and the Red Cross.

Objectives

The objectives of the Action plan to prevent the effects of a heat wave on health are essentially:

- To predict, as far in advance as possible with the technical media available, possible meteorological risk situations.
- To minimise the negative effects of a possible heat wave on the health of the population of Catalonia, particularly the most vulnerable people: the elderly - particularly those above the age of 75 years-, newborns, people with physical or psychic disabilities that limit their ability to look after themselves, people with chronic diseases, people that live alone, people with precarious social conditions, patients with medications that act on the central nervous system, people that do strenuous physical activity or who has to stay or do physical activity outdoors (including work activities), etc.
- To coordinate the measures and resources in Catalonia to address the possible heat wave.

Collecting daily temperatures

Since 1st June daily temperatures are collected and the forecasts of ten big cities in Catalonia: Barcelona, l'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Manresa, Mataró, Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Sabadell, Terrassa, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona.

This is complemented by the daily hospital mortality data, emergencies attended to, and patients admitted to four hospitals of Barcelona.

From the day 29 of August to 4 of September, no increase in the number of the deaths (mean = 66.57) has been observed comparing with data of the previous year (mean = 60.14). The temperatures collected during this week have not reached the warning threshold so the situation with regard to the prevention of a possible heat wave has been considered normal during these days. No increase in hospital mortality data has either been observed.

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