



# Assessing Health System Preparedness for Heat-Related Morbidity during Extreme Heat Events in Niamey, Niger: A Research Protocol

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## Abstract

Extreme heat events are increasing across the Sahel, presenting a major public health threat. Niamey, Niger, is highly vulnerable, but systematic evidence on its health system's readiness to manage heat-related morbidity is lacking. Assessing current capacities and gaps is necessary to inform adaptation strategies. This protocol describes a study to assess the preparedness of Niamey's health system for heat-related illnesses during extreme heat events. Its objectives are to: 1) evaluate existing heat-health early warning systems and surveillance; 2) assess healthcare facility capacity and workforce knowledge; and 3) identify community awareness and coping mechanisms. A mixed-methods, cross-sectional design will be used. Quantitative data will be collected via structured surveys of healthcare facilities to assess infrastructure, supplies, and protocols. Qualitative data will be gathered through key informant interviews with health officials and focus group discussions with community members. A review of relevant policy documents will complement primary data collection. As a research protocol, no empirical findings are presented. The study anticipates producing a detailed mapping of preparedness levels, including the proportion of facilities lacking heat-specific protocols and key themes on systemic barriers to effective response. The study will generate a comprehensive evidence base on health system preparedness for extreme heat in Niamey. This constitutes a critical step towards informing policy and building resilience against this climate-sensitive health risk. Recommendations will target health policy makers and practitioners, focusing on strengthening early warning systems, developing clinical guidelines for heat-related illness, and implementing targeted community education programmes. heatwave, climate change, health systems strengthening, preparedness, Niger, Sahel, morbidity This protocol outlines a foundational study designed to address a significant evidence gap regarding health system preparedness for extreme heat in a high-risk, under-researched urban African setting.

**Keywords:** *Heatwaves, Health Systems Strengthening, Sahel, Climate Change Adaptation, Public Health Preparedness, Extreme Weather Events, Niger*

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