

Study: Mortality rates higher in cold weather than hot

By Jane E. Brody, New York Times

Most of the Northern Hemisphere is now in the throes of the deadliest time of the year. Cold kills, and I don't mean just extreme cold and crippling blizzards. I mean ordinary winter cold, like that typically experienced, chronically or episodically, by people in every state but Hawaii from late fall through early spring.

While casualties resulting from heat waves receive wide publicity, deaths from bouts of extreme cold rarely do, and those resulting from ordinary winter weather warrant virtually no attention. Yet an international study covering 384 locations in 13 countries, including the United States, found that cold weather is responsible, directly or indirectly, for 20 times more deaths than hot weather.

Over time, milder winter temperatures are likely to result in fewer cold-related deaths., a benefit that could outweigh a smaller rise in heat-caused mortality. In winter in the United States, mortality is generally 10 percent to 15 percent higher than on typical summer days.

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