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Implications of Anthropogenic Factors on Coastal Communities and Emerging Public Health Risks

Asfa Ashraf[1,2]*, Iqra Iqbal[3]

[1]Pacific Science Media, England, United Kingdom.
[2]Association of Applied Biomedical Sciences, Narowal, Pakistan.
[3]Department of Zoology, Government College Women University Sialkot, Pakistan.

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***Correspondence**

Asfa Ashraf
Email:
sundausnaeem@yahoo.com

Abstract:

Numerous anthropogenic activities have an impact on marine ecosystems, which have the potential to seriously harm biotic communities and habitats. Here, we review the literature on pathogen levels in coastal communities, and their potential for affecting human health. Public health is affected, both directly and indirectly, by physical, chemical and microbial pollution of the beach sand and coastal water resulting from human activities. Bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi that can cause infection or illness in humans may be naturally found in beach sands or introduced with people or water entering the beach environment. Pathogens can cause respiratory, gastrointestinal, and dermatological disorders in humans through direct skin-to-airborne and sand contact, accidental ingestion while swimming, and food chain transfer. Anthropogenic activities and climate change are likely to cause contaminants to be redistributed and to change uptake, toxicity, and degradation. In order to fully understand how anthropogenic activities affect marine ecosystems and emerging public health risks, a thorough analysis of the microbial communities must be undertaken.