

The Health and Wellbeing Co-benefits of Policies and Programs to Address Climate Change in Urban Areas: A Scoping Review

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Background

Targeting health and wellbeing co-benefits (i.e., unintended benefits) of climate policy can capitalise on the dual opportunity for climate action and population health, but co-benefits are often not routinely integrated into policy design or evaluation.¹⁻³

Aims: to identify and assess literature that examines the health and wellbeing co-benefits of climate action in urban areas and to identify potential co-benefits that could be incorporated into policy or programme evaluation.

Method

Scoping literature review, searched 27/9/2023 in three databases (Scopus, PubMed and Web of Science).

572 screened → Final *n* = 39

Results

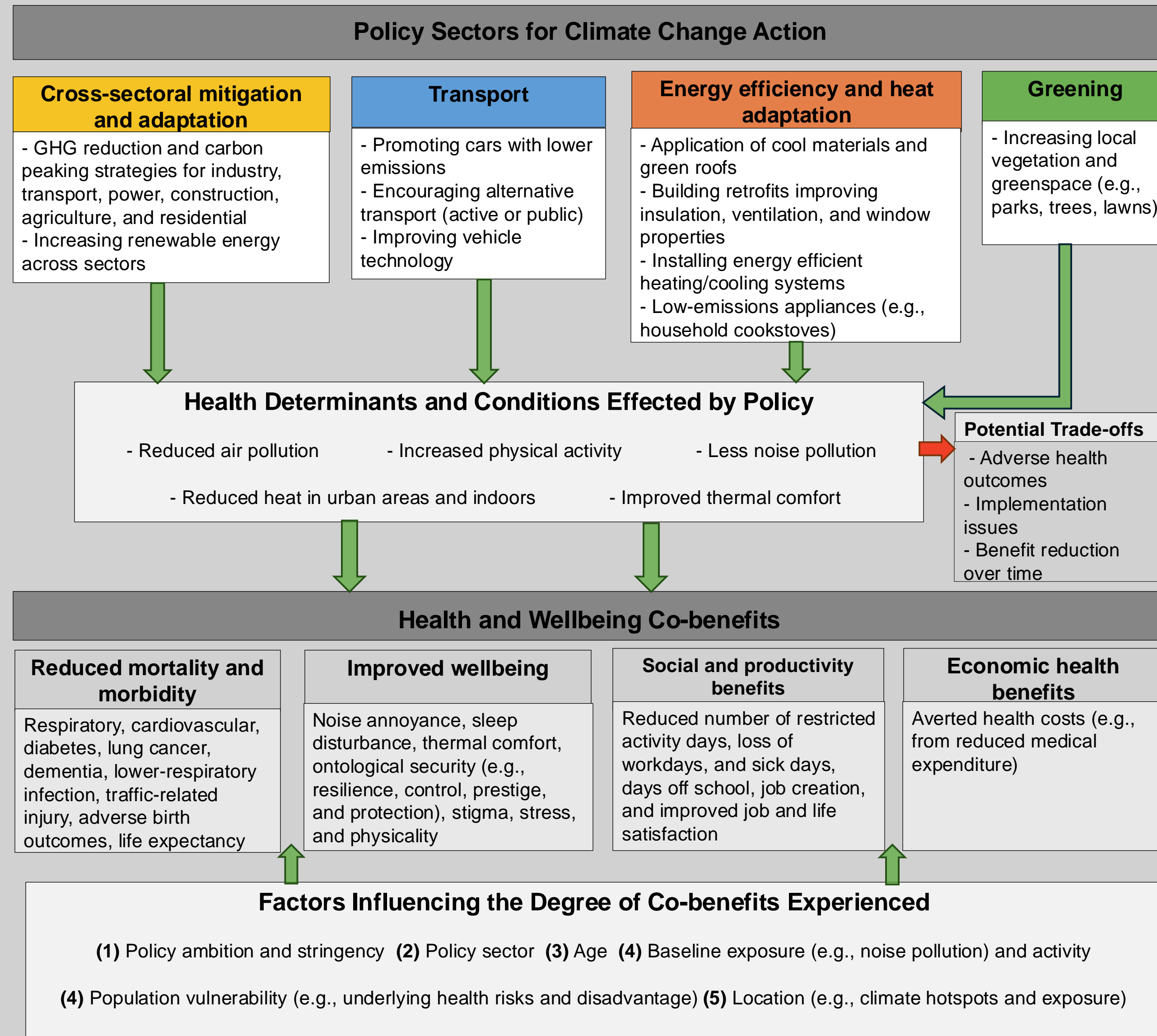
All 39 studies identified positive health and wellbeing co-benefits, with the majority focusing on transport policies and cross-sectoral mitigation and adaptation. Co-benefits ranged from reduced or avoided mortality and morbidity to social and economic health benefits.

The degree of co-benefits differed according to the policies themselves; the policy sector; and vulnerability, demographic and/or geographic factors.

Nine studies identified negative trade-offs of climate action but only eight studies evaluated implemented rather than hypothetical policy.

Conclusion

This review adds to existing literature in support of the value and importance of assessing health and wellbeing co-benefits of climate action; particularly in incentivising more ambitious and cost-effective climate policy and promoting health equity by maximising co-benefits and minimising trade-offs for vulnerable groups. It also highlights the importance of further research evaluating implemented policy to assess the degree of co-benefits and potential trade-offs in 'real-world' contexts.



References: (1) Jennings, N., Fecht, D., & Matteis, S. (2020). Mapping the co-benefits of climate change action to issues of public concern in the UK: a narrative review. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 4(9), 424-433; (2) Sharifi, A., Pathak, M., Joshi, C., & He, B.-J. (2021). A systematic review of the health co-benefits of urban climate change adaptation. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 74, 103190; (3) Thurston, G. D., De Matteis, S., Murray, K., Scheelbeek, P., Scovronick, N., Budolfson, M., . . . Vineis, P. (2018). Maximizing the Public Health Benefits from Climate Action. *Environmental Science and Technology*, 52(7), 3852-3853.



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