Research Proposal Summary

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Outdoor construction workers in Basra work through summers in which shade temperatures regularly pass 48 °C. The work–rest guidelines that employers can draw on, based on the wet-bulb globe temperature (WBGT), were developed largely in cooler or wealthier settings, and they assume shade, drinking water and regular breaks. Very few studies have measured how much heat strain workers on Iraqi sites actually experience, or tested which changes to the working day are both protective and affordable for small contractors. This project asks two questions: how much heat strain do outdoor construction workers in Basra experience under current schedules, and which practical changes to the timing of work and rest reduce it?

The study will use mixed methods over two summers. In the first, 60 workers at four sites will wear heart-rate monitors, from which core body temperature will be estimated, while WBGT is logged on each site every 15 minutes. In the second, two contractors who have agreed in principle to take part will trial an earlier start and fixed rest breaks, so that heat strain can be compared under the current and the adjusted schedules. Interviews with 20 workers and six site managers will examine what makes a schedule work or fail in practice. The project aims to give contractors and the governorate evidence they can use when setting summer working hours, and a schedule that employers in other hot cities could adapt.

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