This study is the first to examine risk perceptions of water sector professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa toward risks facing water and wastewater utilities. We surveyed 90 participants at the African Water Association’s Congress in Nairobi, Kenya and measured perceived likelihood and severity of several climate/weather events and non-climate factors that may disrupt utility service. Average risk perception toward impacts from nine different weather and climate events is low, 19.3 out of 100. Water sector professionals perceive greater risk from the impacts of non-climate factors (μ=31.4 out of 100) on utilities than climate factors. Non-utility professionals are more concerned about climate-related risks than utility professionals. These findings highlight a need for adaptation strategies that simultaneously address climate and non-climate concerns of utilities and the potential for better communication within the water sector.

Committee:

Jamie Bartram, Ph.D. (Advisor)
Pete Kolsky, Ph.D.
Jackie MacDonald Gibson, Ph.D.