

**Photo by: Daniel Mercer**

**When you see this photo,  
what's the first thing that comes to your mind?**





Photo by: Matthew Beziat

# Against the stings, the bell rings:



rethinking jellyfish hazards  
through gender-inclusive  
and more-than-human One Health ethics



*Transforming Aquaculture and Fisheries  
for Gender Justice*

October 1-3, 2025  
Bangkok, Thailand

**Miss Renz Prudenciado**  
Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

# Background of the study



Jellyfish, with their radially symmetrical body plan, are biologically defined by their bell-shaped form — an elegant medusa whose anatomy is at once simple and sophisticated (Wright et al. 2021).

This **bell structure** comprises essential organs: an umbrella for swimming, a manubrium for digestion, gonads for reproduction, and tentacles for prey capture, all interconnected by radial canals for nutrient transport (Fujita and Kuranaga 2021).

The **jellyfish's bell** takes on a double resonance:

a mechanism of life and motion

a symbolic harbinger of danger that that calls for action.

Historically, bells have rung not only to mark time or celebration but also **to warn** communities of fire, shipwreck, wolf attacks, and other urgent threats (Sebastian 2008).



# When Jellyfish Stings

Photo by: Fity Club



Kapya Flores, head of the Emergency Operations Center Unit of the PDRRMO, said on April 22 that more than **80 cases** of jellyfish stings have been reported this year, particularly in the cities of Alaminos and Dagupan and the towns of Binmaley and Lingayen.

[Beachgoers warned on jellyfish surge in Pangasinan – Philippine ...](#)

[pia.gov.ph/news/beachgoers-warned-on-jellyfish-surge-in-pangasinan/](https://pia.gov.ph/news/beachgoers-warned-on-jellyfish-surge-in-pangasinan/)

By Jenrie C. Del Rosario and Micko T. Rosario April 24, 2025



Inquirer.net

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net>

[Child dies after jellyfish sting at Subic beach resort](#)

Jul 16, 2024 · A five-year-old child died after being stung by a jellyfish while swimming at All Hands Beach resort in San Bernardo, Olongapo City, late last ...



**This human-jellyfish conflict—where jellyfish are demonized for their negative interactions with humans—creates barriers to scientific understanding and conservation efforts, exacerbating ecological imbalances (Richardson et al. 2009)..**



# Jellyfish, stings, and people



## ONE HEALTH

- to address jellyfish sting hazards in the Philippines and advocating for the integration of gender-inclusive and more-than-human One Health approaches to support more sustainable and inclusive public health governance

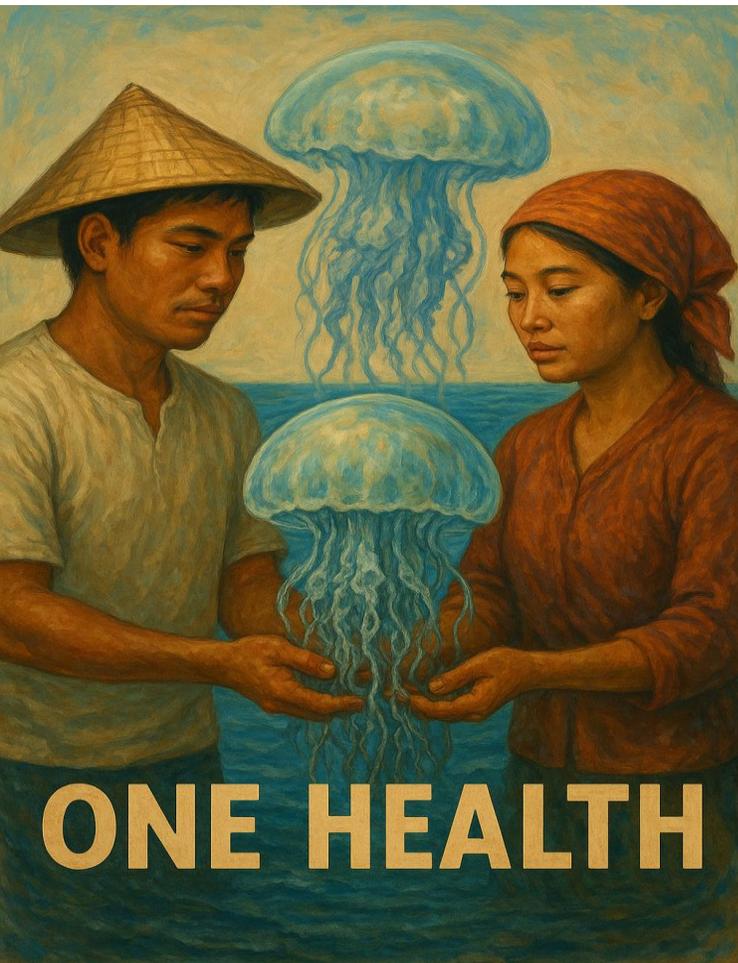
Addressing this issue demands a mainstreamed One Health approach—rather than treating it as a niche discipline, human, animal, and environmental health sectors must collaborate accordingly (Zinsstag et al. 2012).

# Against the stings, the bell rings:

rethinking jellyfish hazards  
through gender-inclusive  
and more-than-human One Health ethics



## One Health means treating stings as not only a medical issue but also an ecological and social one



# ONE HEALTH

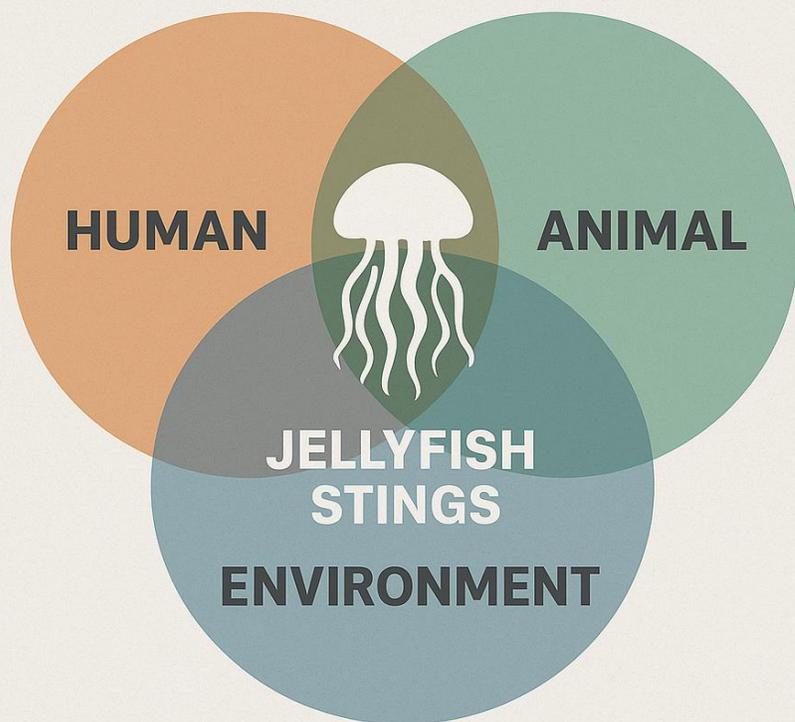
**Jellyfish proliferation correlates with overfishing, warming seas, pollution, and plastic saturation—signs of planetary boundary transgression.**

**As Macali and Bergami (2020) argue, jellyfish are sentinel species that reflect the ocean's metabolic disturbances. Their presence invites a rethinking of the ethical relationship between humans and marine life — not merely as threats to be controlled, but as subjects embedded**

# Against the stings, the bell rings:

rethinking jellyfish hazards  
through gender-inclusive  
and more-than-human One Health ethics

## One Health lens



### Human health:

**Stings cause pain, allergic reactions, or even severe injury.**

**Medical preparedness, first aid training for coastal communities, and public health awareness are key.**

### Animal health (jellyfish and marine life):

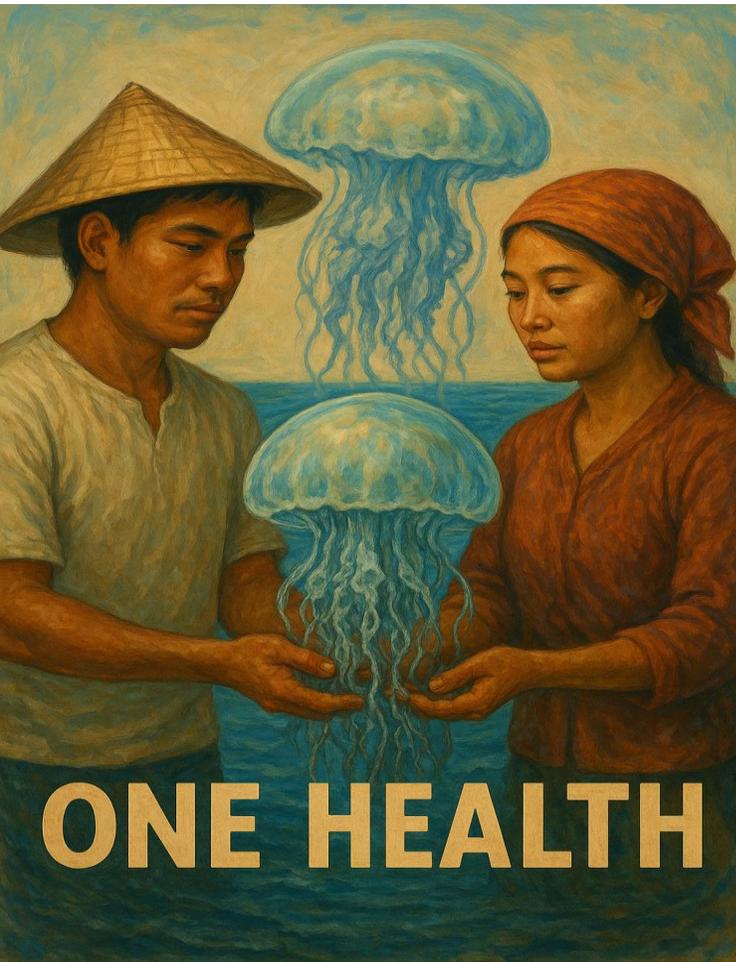
**Jellyfish blooms often signal ecological imbalance—such as overfishing of their predators (like turtles) or climate-driven changes in ocean conditions.**

### Environmental health:

**Coastal pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change all increase jellyfish populations, raising sting risks.**



# One Health approach



## Surveillance & Data Sharing

- monitoring jellyfish populations alongside human sting cases.

## Community Education

- training fishers, swimmers, and health workers on sting prevention and treatment.

## Ecosystem Management

- restoring marine balance (protecting turtles, reducing pollution) to manage jellyfish blooms.

## Policy Integration

– ensuring fisheries, tourism, and health sectors coordinate responses.

tackling jellyfish stings in One Health means treating stings as not only a medical issue but also an ecological and social one



## Gendered versus intersectional



Focuses on differences between men and women

**Example:**

**Male fishers:** often at higher risk because they spend long hours in deep waters.

**Female fishers or gleaners:** at risk in shallow waters where they gather shellfish, sometimes with children.

**How do male fishers respond to stings?**

**Why is it necessary to explore hegemonic masculinities in the shore?**

Goes deeper than gender alone.

Considers age, livelihood role, poverty, education, health access, and other factors.

**Example:** Young boys diving without protection may face higher sting risks.

Elderly male and female fishers who wade in coastal areas may be vulnerable but less able to access treatment.

Low-income households might lack first aid supplies, worsening outcomes.

**Policies address the overlapping vulnerabilities, not just gender.**



# Conclusion



## Addressing Jellyfish Sting Hazards in the Philippines (One Health)

### Risks are unequally distributed:

**Men – frontline occupational exposure**

**Boys & impoverished groups – limited protection and healthcare access**

**Women – hidden caregiving burdens**

### Gender-inclusive lens:

**recognizes differentiated vulnerabilities and ensures more equitable, effective interventions, while also understanding intersectionality**

### More-than-human One Health:

**Acknowledges ecological drivers (climate change, overfishing, coastal degradation)**

**Sees jellyfish as indicators of ecosystem imbalance, not only threats**

### Path forward:

**Gender-responsive community-based training & protective measures**

**Affordable, timely treatment access**

**Ecological stewardship integrated with health systems**

### Overall:

**Supports sustainable and inclusive public health governance, enhancing resilience of both coastal communities and ecosystems**