Coping and Recovering from Disasters

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Risk = Hazard Exposure x Physical and Social Vulnerability / Capacity

Increasing Capacity among Individuals and Groups Can Help Reduce Risk

Children as a Vulnerable Group
(but which children are most vulnerable?)

Abstract
This research note examines children's mortality resulting from forces of nature, including heat exposure, cold exposure, storms and flooding, lightning strikes, avalanches, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Data indicate that in the United States, children's risk of death resulting from natural disasters is relatively low. However, differential risks exist depending on the type of hazard agent involved and between youth populations based on age, gender, and race. Specifically, analyses of mortality data show that risk of death by natural disaster among youth cohorts age 0-24 is highest for infants, the most fragile and dependent segment of our population. The death rate for male children is higher than the death rate for female children across all age cohorts. Data on race indicate that African American male children between the ages of 0-4 are most at risk for death by disaster, while white male children between the ages of 5-24 are most at risk. In terms of risk by age by hazard type, infants and very young children age 0-4 are most likely to die of exposure to extreme heat. 5-14 year-olds are most likely to die in catastrophic
Children’s Long-Term Recovery and Reducing Their Vulnerability

Children of Katrina

ALICE FOTHERGILL AND LORI PEEK
## Additional Resources

- hazards.colorado.edu
- converge.colorado.edu

### NATURAL HAZARDS CENTER

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### RESEARCH NEWS

- **Mitigation Matters**
  - November 3, 2016
    - Speaker Call for Quick Response Grant Proposals: California's Resilience, Mitigation

### Webinars

- January 14, 2016
Mental Health Effects of Natural Disasters

Sarah R. Lowe, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Social & Behavioral Sciences
SciLine Media Briefing, December 4, 2019
Mental Health Conditions after Disasters

• Trauma-Related Disorders
  • Acute Stress Disorder
  • Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

• Other Mental Health Conditions
  • Major depression
  • Anxiety disorders
  • Substance use

• Interrelations with impacts on other domains of functioning
Differences in the Population

• Populations at risk of adverse mental health consequences
  • Persons w/ preexisting mental and physical health conditions
  • Women
  • Low-income populations
  • Single parents
  • The elderly
  • Racial and ethnic minorities

• Differential risk for immediate exposures and secondary stressors
Children & Disasters

• Similar classes of mental health conditions, and largely similar patterns over time

• Presentation of symptoms varies by age (in any context)

• Age-sensitive periods of trauma impacts

• Age differences in peri-traumatic reactions and secondary stressors
• Most common pattern is resilience ... But a substantial minority will have chronic responses

Bonanno, 2004