

Disaster Epidemiology

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Disaster epidemiology is a relatively new field of study. Only within the last twenty years have investigators thought of studying the characteristics of disasters from an epidemiologic perspective.

The epidemiologic investigation of disaster events focuses on two approaches. The first is the typical epidemiologic study of the underlying causes of the disaster. This may focus upon the event itself, or the mortality and morbidity associated with the event. Learning as much as possible about the reasons for disasters is important for developing prevention activities in the future.

The second approach is to use epidemiologic methods to investigate mechanisms for alleviating the burden of a disaster once it occurs. This may be applied at the stage of disaster preparedness or at the stage of disaster relief. The most direct application of epidemiology in this situation is the establishment of surveillance systems to identify injuries and the possible emergence of communicable diseases.

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ARTICLES

Methodological Challenges and Contributions in Disaster Epidemiology

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MUPS, medically unexplained physical symptoms • PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder

The first 150 words of the [full text](#) of this article appear below.



INTRODUCTION

Considering the very unusual and extreme situations under which a disaster and the corresponding adverse health responses occur, it is challenging to provide a unified methodological framework for disaster epidemiology. In this commentary, we identify targets of estimation and common challenges in estimating the quantities of interest. In some cases, we discuss methodological contributions and future work regarding the design and analysis of

epidemiologic studies of disasters. To ground our points, we refer to some of the papers published in this issue.

Although disasters occur in a wide variety of settings and circumstances, it is possible to identify several methodological challenges and commonalities in the epidemiologic studies of disasters published in this issue. These provide a platform for developing statistical methods to assess short- and long-term adverse health effects of disasters and to predict consequences of future disasters.

Disasters have been defined as acute, collectively experienced traumatic events, with a . . .
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▶ **ESTIMATION TARGETS**

▶ **ESTIMATING PREVALENCE**

▶ **ESTIMATING THE EXPOSURE-RESPONSE RELATION**

▶ **CROSS-SECTIONAL VERSUS COHORT STUDIES**

▶ **PREDICTING THE FUTURE OCCURRENCE OF A DISASTER**

▶ SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

▶ THE MEDIA

▶ CONCLUSIONS

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Disaster epidemiology includes rapid needs assessment, disease control strategies, assessment of the availability and use of health services, ...
www.medscape.com/viewarticle/513259_2

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von M Lechat - 1993

Lechat, Michel; *Accident and disaster epidemiology.* ; 1993. *Public health reviews* , Vol. 21, no. 3-4 p. 243-53 (1993) hdl: <http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/> ...

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