

Firsthand 9/11 exposure fueling alcohol- and drug-related deaths: study

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(HealthDay)—People directly exposed to the World Trade Center

terrorist attacks appear at increased risk of drug- and alcohol-related death, a new study finds.

"Following a [major disaster](#), alcohol- and drug-related mortality may be increased," said Dr. Jim Cone and colleagues of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

For the study, the researchers analyzed data on more than 71,000 people who had direct exposure to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. All of the study participants were enrolled in the WTC Health Registry.

The findings showed that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to the Twin Towers' collapse further heightened the odds of [death](#) related to drinking or drugs.

"The odds of dying from an alcohol- or drug-related cause were two times greater among enrollees with 9/11-related PTSD, compared to those without," Cone's team reported.

There were almost 1,200 deaths among the group through 2012. Drugs and alcohol were involved in nearly 6 percent of those deaths. Males and young adults were most at risk.

Besides those with PTSD, risk of alcohol/drug-related death was also elevated for rescue/recovery workers and people injured in the attacks, according to the report.

The findings were published in the October issue of the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

"Screening for both current substance use disorders and at-risk alcohol and drug use behaviors should be included as part of post-disaster mental health assessments," the researchers said in a journal news release.

Also, substance use must be addressed at the same time as co-occurring conditions such as PTSD and depression, the study authors added.

More information: New York City has more on [9/11 and health](#).

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