

Study highlights urgent need to address impact of extreme weather events on cancer survivorship

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Hurricanes and other extreme weather events pose immediate threats to life and property and have long-lasting impacts on health outcomes,

particularly for cancer survivors.

In a [mini-review published today](#) in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, Moffitt Cancer Center researchers shed light on the significant gaps in understanding and addressing the effects of hurricanes and [extreme weather events](#) on biological, psychosocial and clinical outcomes among [cancer survivors](#).

Researchers provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the literature, highlighting key findings from past extreme weather events such as hurricanes Ian, Maria, Sandy, and Katrina. These events have exposed the vulnerabilities of cancer survivors, leading to disruptions in [cancer care](#), exacerbation of psychosocial distress, and disparities in [health outcomes](#). It also revealed the need for better tools and systematic approaches to study these impacts.

Currently, there is no standardized way to collect information from patients in the immediate aftermath of an extreme weather event. Instead, the information comes from retrospective self-report surveys.

Lisa Gudenkauf, Ph.D., M.P.H., lead author of the mini-review and research scientist in the Department of Health Outcomes and Behavior at Moffitt, emphasized the urgent need for further research and interventions in this critical area.

"Cancer survivors face unique challenges during and after extreme weather events, including disruptions in treatment, increased stress levels, and disparities in access to care. It is imperative that we address these challenges to improve the long-term outcomes and quality of life for cancer survivors." Gudenkauf said.

The mini-review also calls for action from health care systems, public health leaders, and [research organizations](#) to develop comprehensive

strategies for mitigating the impact of extreme weather events on cancer survivors. Suggested strategies include implementing interventions to help survivors cope with stress, enhancing health care system preparedness, and addressing social determinants of health that contribute to disparities in outcomes.

"Our goal is to inform future research and policy initiatives that can lead to tangible improvements in the lives of cancer survivors affected by extreme weather events," explained Brian Gonzalez, Ph.D., study author and associate center director of Research Diversity and Workforce Development.

More information: Lisa M. Gudenkauf et al, Inequities in the Impacts of Hurricanes and other Extreme Weather Events for Cancer Survivors, *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* (2024). [DOI: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-23-1029](https://doi.org/10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-23-1029)

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