

Domain-specific examples: Disasters



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Disaster definition

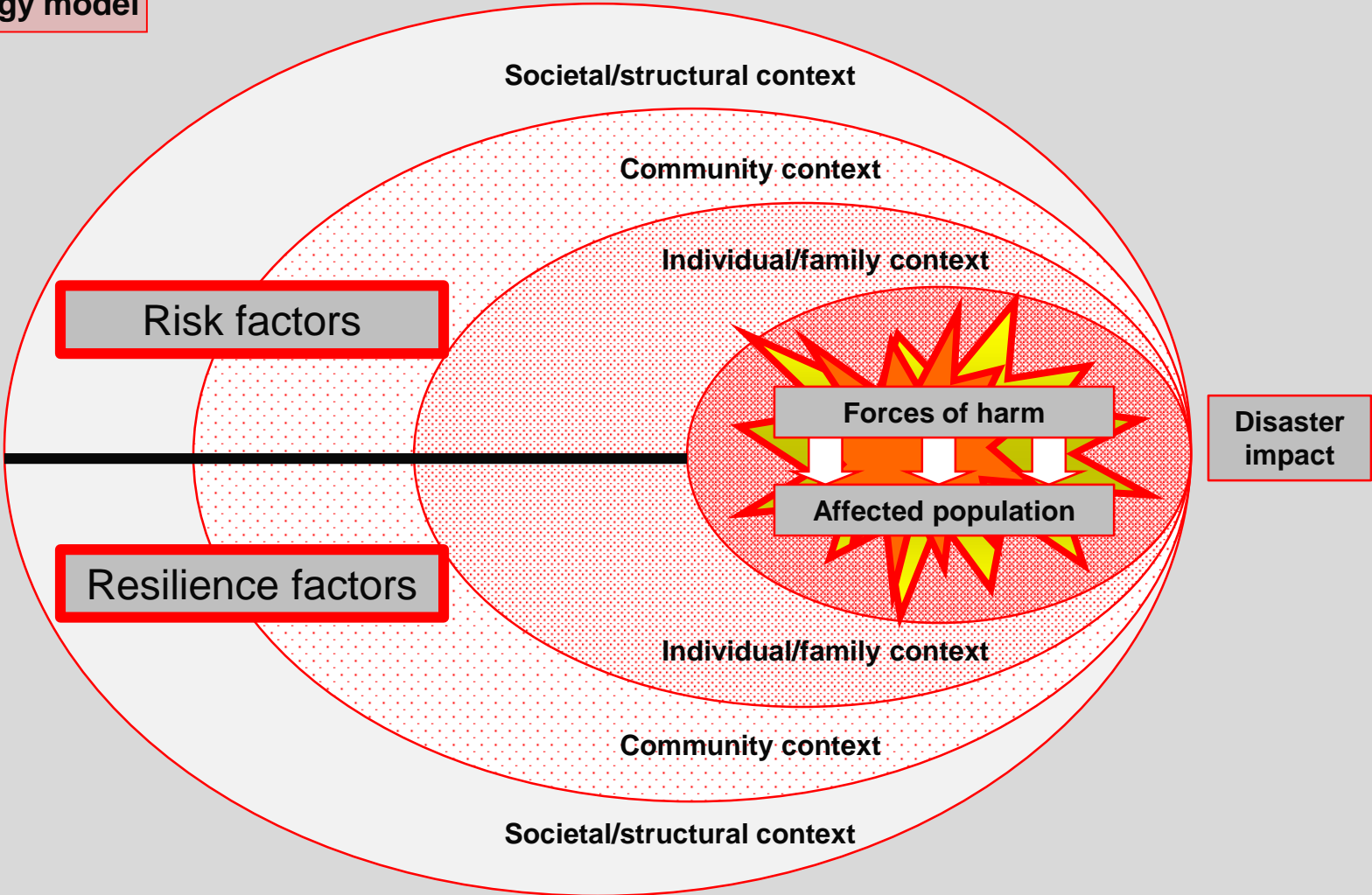
A ***disaster*** is characterized as an encounter between “forces of harm” (*hazard*) and a human population “in harms way” (*vulnerability*) influenced by the ecological context...

where the encounter creates **demands** that **exceed** the coping **capacity** of the affected community

DEMAND

CAPACITY

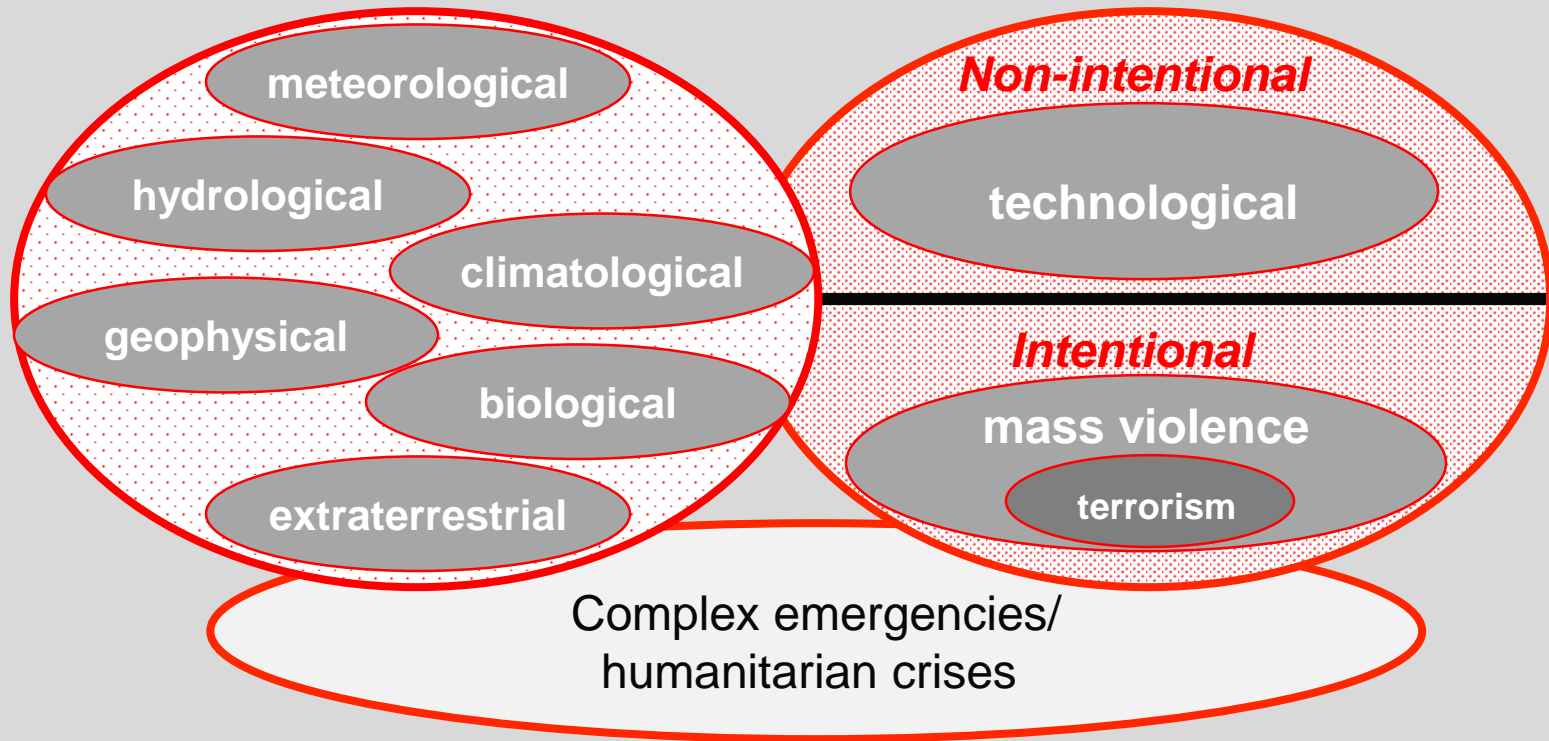
Disaster ecology model



Disaster taxonomy

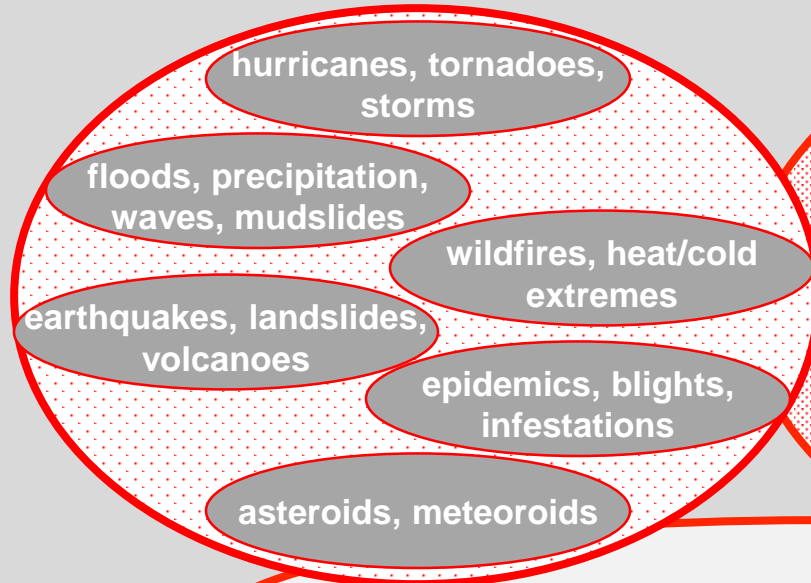
"Natural" disasters

Anthropogenic disasters

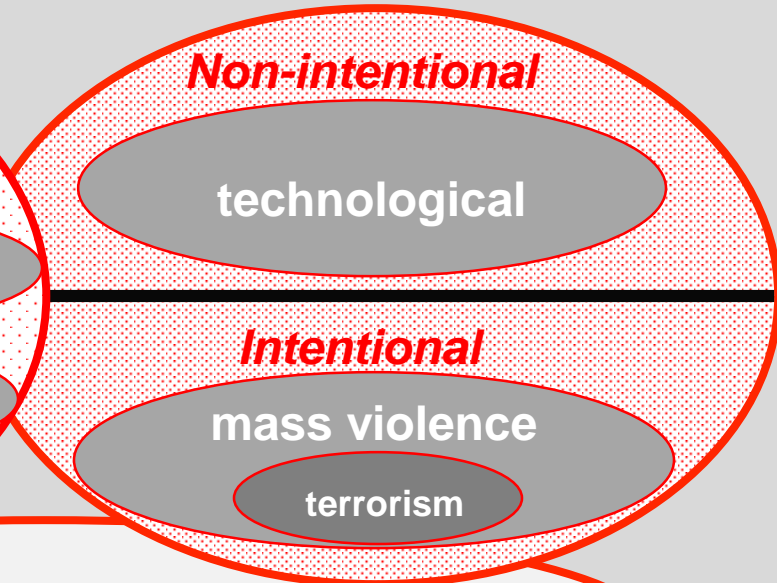


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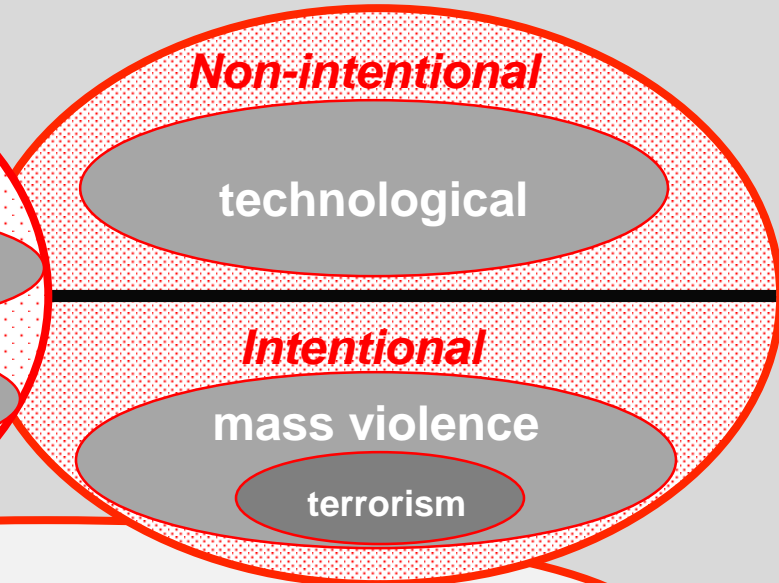
Complex emergencies/
humanitarian crises

Disaster taxonomy

"Natural" disasters



Anthropogenic disasters



Complex emergencies/
humanitarian crises

2017 Prominent Climate Drivers

- Elevated ocean temperatures
- Elevated air temperatures
- Sea level rise
- El Niño neutral conditions
- Minimal vertical wind shear
- High thermal potential

Emergency Management (EM) Disaster Response Challenges

- Economic limitations on pre-storm mitigation
- Inability to pre-position and stage supplies
- Severe damage to infrastructure limiting response
- Disabled government and EM operations
- Delayed response: time needed to transport personnel
- Delayed response: time needed to transport materiel
- Inoperable and incompatible communications
- Limited available situational information
- Simultaneous responses to dispersed populations
- Heterogeneity of response partners
- Diverse national jurisdictions
- Political considerations affecting response priorities
- Issues of environmental injustice
- Complexity: disasters create disasters

Hurricane Disaster Risks for SIDS: Function of Hazard x Vulnerability

2017 Atlantic Basin Hurricane Hazard Characteristics

2017 seasonal characteristics

- Above average number of storms (17)
- Above average number of hurricanes (10)
- Above average major hurricanes (6)
- Larger storms
- Prolonged storm season
- Multiple locale impacts per storm
- Multiple storm impacts per locale

Wind hazards

- Increased maximum peak wind speeds
- Rapid intensification prior to landfall
- Increased high intensity storm duration

Water hazards

- Increased atmospheric moisture-holding capacity
- Record-setting precipitation rates
- Record-setting rainfall amounts
- Severe overland flooding
- Mudslides in steep terrain

Sea level rise

- Severe storm surge impacts
- Severe coastal wave action
- Decreased flood drainage

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Vulnerabilities

- Located in the MDR
- 360° coastal perimeter
- Minimal elevation
- Mountainous terrain
- Physically remote
- Geographically isolated
- Clusters of islands
- Developing states
- Resource limitations
- Limited EM capacity

2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season Disaster Consequences for SIDS

2017 Hurricane Disaster Consequences

General effects

- Disabling economic crises
- Disruption of government functions
- Extensive structural / home damage
- Population displacement
- Lack of food, clean water

Infrastructure impacts

- Power outages
- Communication disruptions
- Transportation disruptions
- Fuel shortages
- Port/airport damage/closures

Health system impacts

- Hospital closures
- Healthcare services disruptions
- Life-saving treatment disruptions
- Lack of medications

Agricultural impacts

- Crop/livestock losses
- Diminished agricultural production

Systems impacts

- School damage/closures
- Worksite damage/closures

Public Health Consequences

- Impact phase mortality
- Post-impact phase mortality
- Morbidity: physical injury
- Morbidity: heat-related injury
- Morbidity: chronic disease exacerbation
- Morbidity: vector-borne diseases
- Morbidity: water-borne diseases
- Morbidity: environmental hazard exposure
- Morbidity: psychological distress
- Morbidity: psychopathology

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HAZARD: Climate influences on 2017 Atlantic basin hurricane hazard characteristics

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2017 Atlantic basin hurricane hazard characteristics

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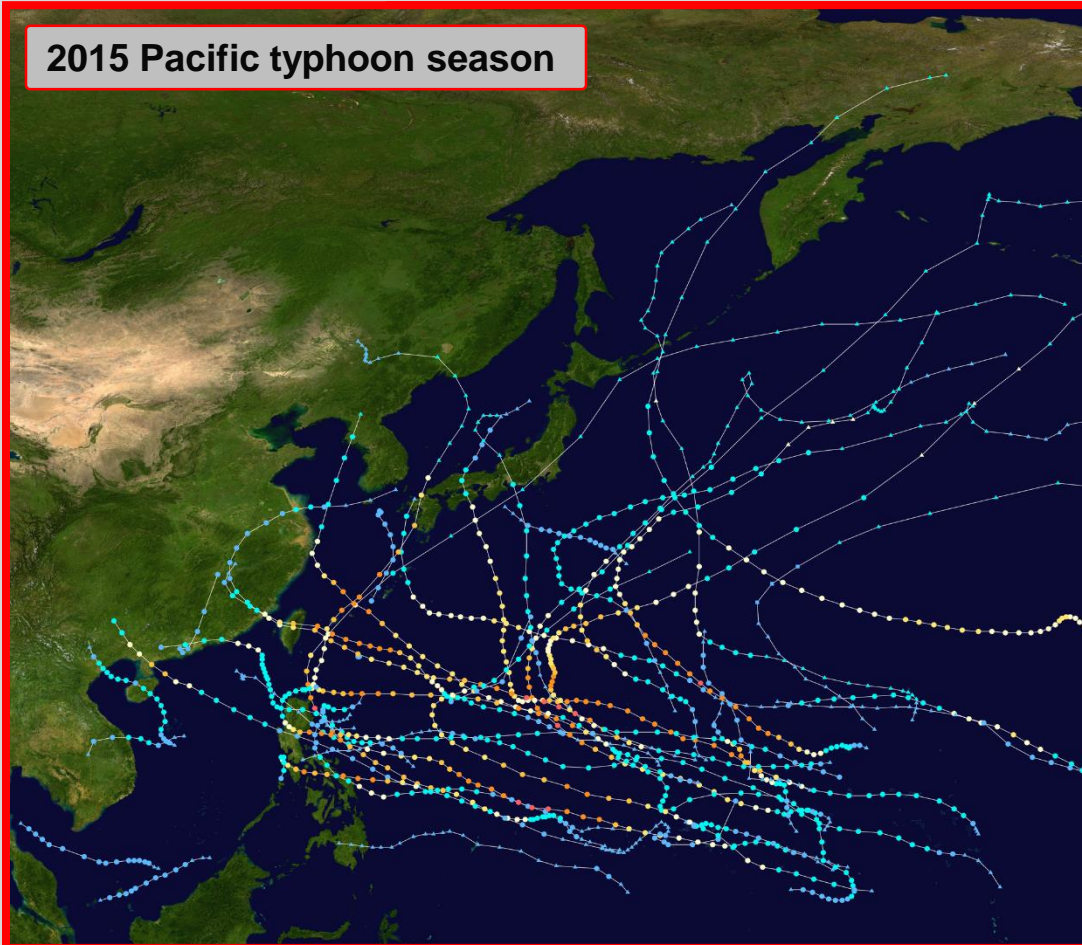
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Sea level rise

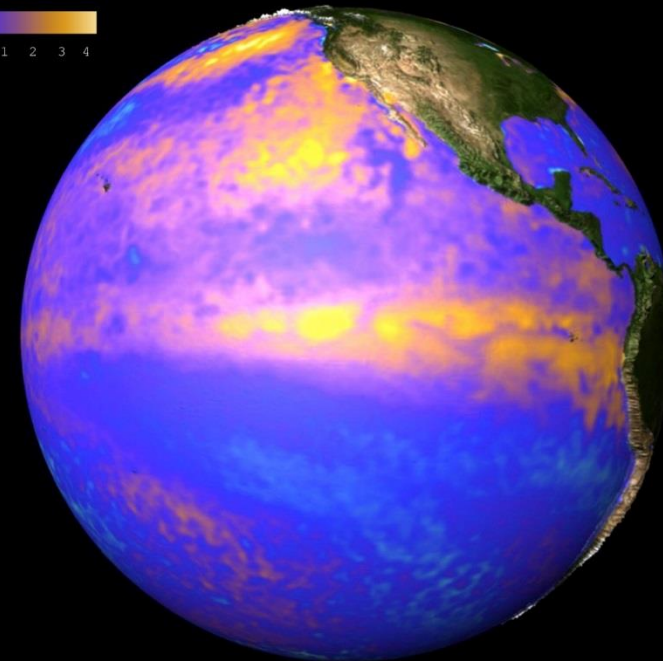
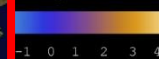
Severe storm surge impacts
Severe coastal wave action
Decreased flood drainage

Increased frequency of disaster-generating climate events (tropical cyclones, heat waves, droughts, and floods)

2015 Pacific typhoon season



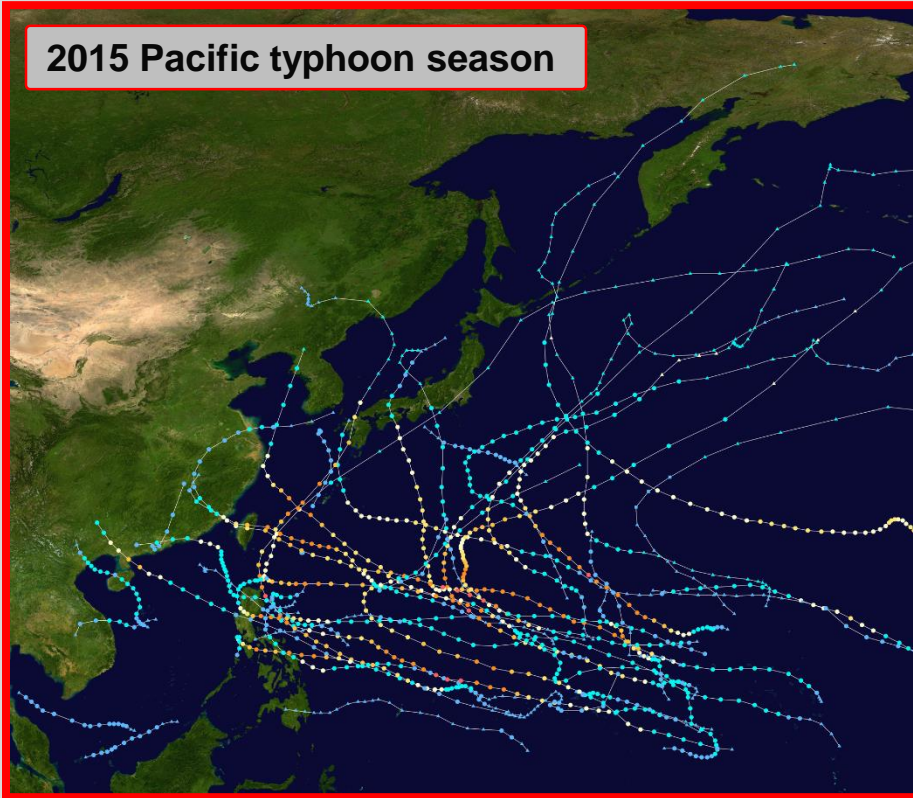
Surface Temp
omaly (°C)



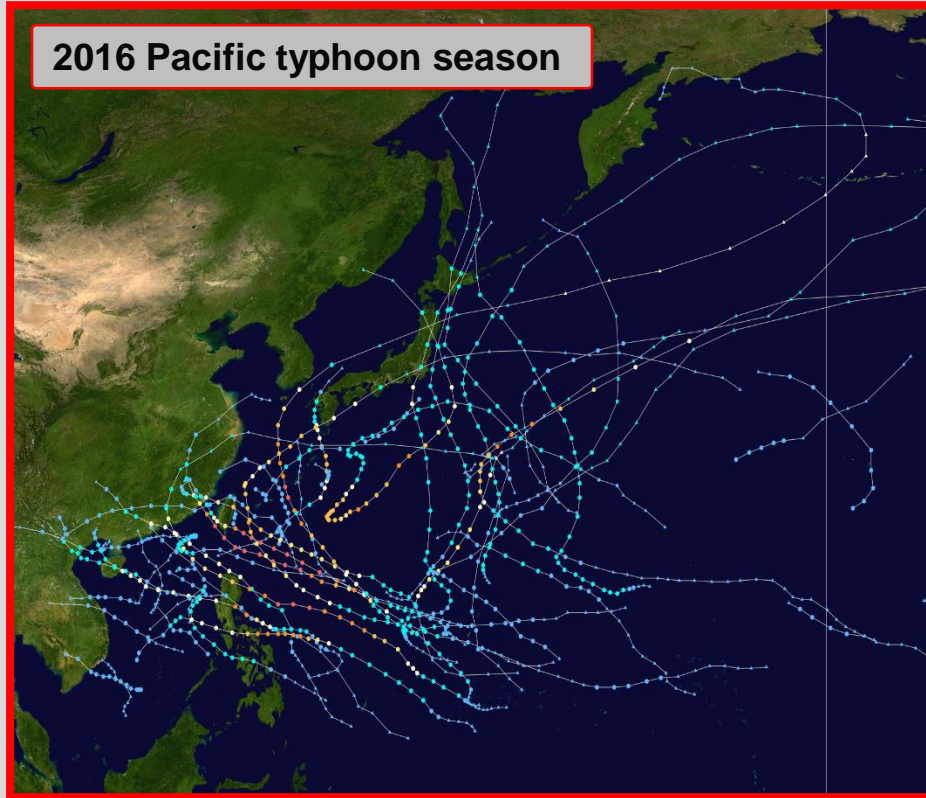
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Increased frequency of disaster-generating climate events (tropical cyclones, heat waves, droughts, and floods)

2015 Pacific typhoon season

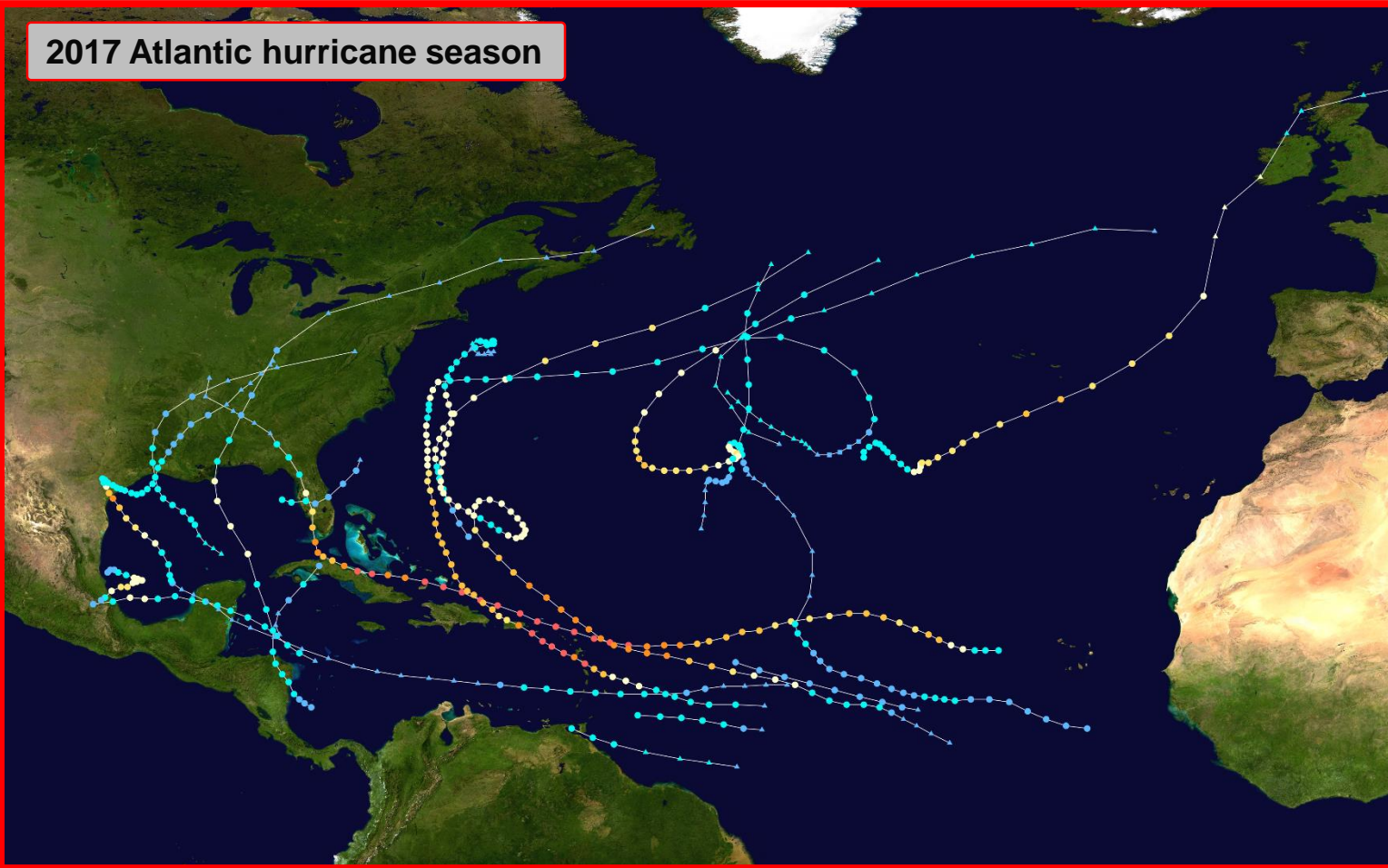


2016 Pacific typhoon season

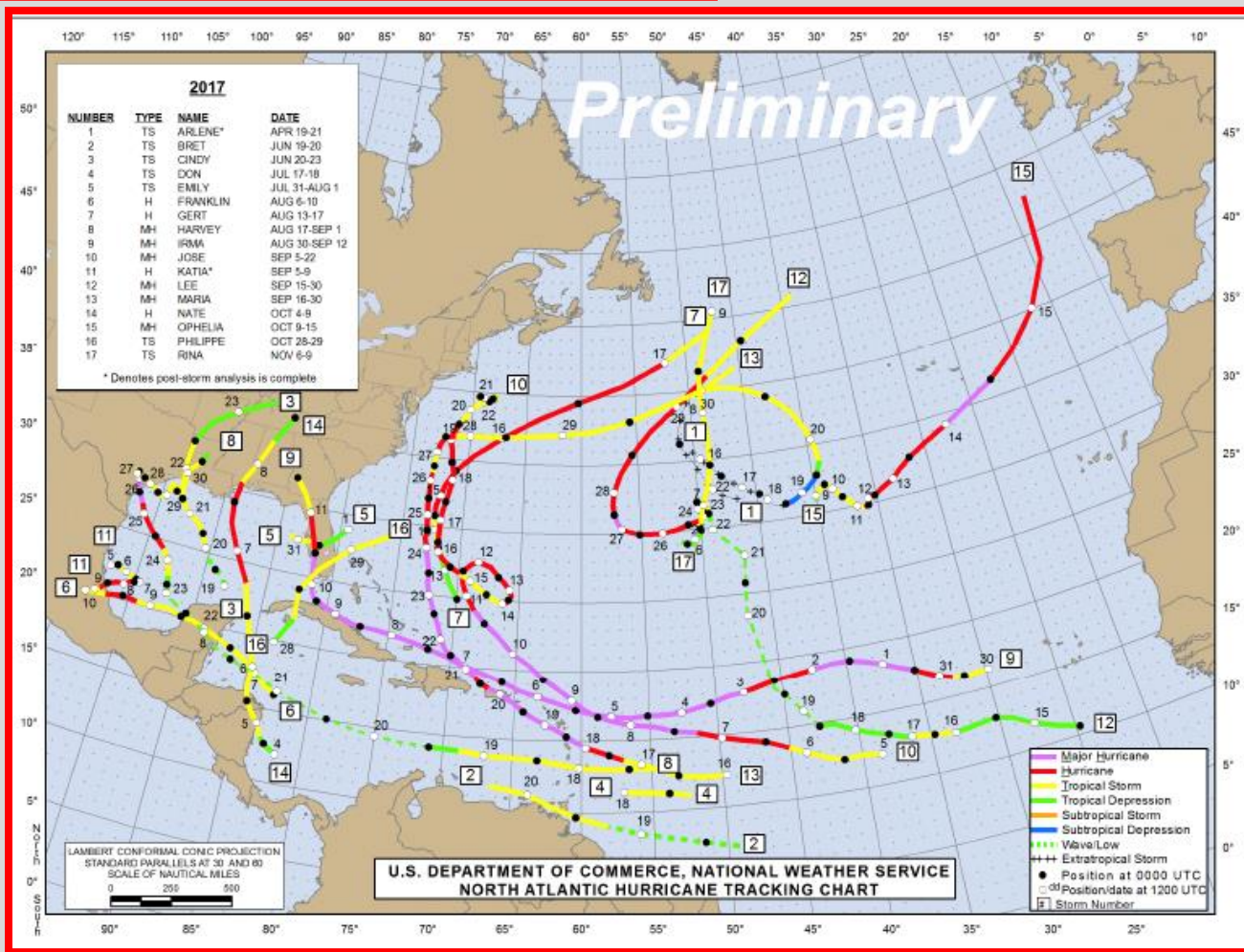


Increased frequency of disaster-generating climate events (tropical cyclones, heat waves, droughts, and floods)

2017 Atlantic hurricane season



2017 Atlantic basin hurricane season: 17 named storms



VIEWPOINT

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Mitigating the Mental and Physical Health Consequences of Hurricane Harvey

The complexity of the disaster risk landscape and the exposure of large human populations to prolonged and potentially traumatizing events were on full display during Hurricane Harvey. During the 5 days of Hurricane Harvey, more than 33 trillion gallons of rain fell on Texas and Louisiana and set a continental US record for rainfall at 51.88 in (131.78 cm). Among 13 million persons directly affected by the storm, more than 22 000 were rescued from floodwaters, an estimated 32 000 displaced survivors were temporarily housed in shelters, and at least 450 000 will apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster assistance.¹ More than 100 000 homes were damaged and only 17% of the affected residents had flood insurance. Damage and recovery estimates are projected to exceed those incurred during Hurricane Katrina (\$14.5 billion paid on an estimated \$160 billion in damages). The usually circumspect National Weather Service tweeted, "This event is unprecedented & all impacts are unknown & beyond anything experienced."

During Hurricane Harvey, Texas and Louisiana residents experienced the full complement of hurricane hazards: cyclonic winds, tornadoes, storm surge along a concave coastline, deluging rains, and inland flooding.²

...what happens to populations in the months and years after large-scale traumatic events can have more substantial health consequences than the immediate disaster.

What made Harvey an exceptional hurricane was that water, rather than wind, was the major destructive force. Harvey will be forever remembered for the unrelenting inundation that resulted from rain bands that spiraled inland from the gulf, overflowing Houston's reservoirs and overtopping dams before moving on to submerge Port Arthur, Texas, and drench western Louisiana.

The Harvey disaster response has been expansive and televised. However, this response is typical of response to such events—early initial high-visibility rescue and response activities. The storm-affected region is currently receiving a massive injection of state and federal emergency personnel and resources. Yet history teaches that this outpouring of resources will be time-limited. Responder units will be repurposed and redeployed and the media focus is already shifting elsewhere. In this case, to the subsequent catastrophic storm (Hurricane Irma).

Public health officials and others know that what happens to populations in the months and years after

large-scale traumatic events can have more substantial health consequences than the immediate disaster. The mental and physical health consequences of an event like Hurricane Harvey are long-lasting. Harvey's physical health consequences included mortality, primarily drowning deaths occurring in submerged vehicles and structures (63 storm-related fatalities were tallied through September 5)³ and injuries including lacerations, puncture wounds, abrasions, fractures, and insect bites (floating fire ant colonies have been a particular hazard) that commonly occur during clean-up activities. Residents are actively gutting their homes to stave off mold. The health effects of widespread population exposures to contaminated floodwaters—an admixture of sewage, toxins, and other hazardous substances—filling homes, streets, and neighborhoods have not been evaluated.

The psychological consequences of Hurricane Harvey are associated with traumatic exposures to storm hazards during the event, losses and hardships in the aftermath, and disruption of vital care and essential medications for those with chronic and persistent mental illness and cognitive impairment.⁴ Comprehensive reviews of the mental health consequences of natural and human-generated (anthropogenic) disasters have shown that, for hurricanes, up to half of those who survive being directly in the storm's path risk developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and that 10% of those who live in the vicinity of the storm may also develop PTSD.^{5,6} Scientific evidence gleaned from work with residents from areas that

were directly affected by Hurricane Katrina showed that respondents experienced nearly universal exposure to hurricane stressors and a correspondingly high 30-day prevalence of anxiety-mood disorders (31.2%).⁷ Ensuring that health care system managers and clinicians recognize these risks and implement appropriate screening and treatment systems is critical.

Available evidence suggests how emergency responders, clinicians, and health care system managers can meet the key challenge of mitigating health consequences. Early psychological intervention is already under way in the immediate postdisaster phase of Hurricane Harvey. Disaster behavioral health teams are integrated into the response, providing psychological first aid and assessing for urgent psychiatric needs at Houston's 2 large consolidated shelters. However, the reach of these brief-duration approaches is limited. In contrast, research has shown that replenishing social and economic resources that will restore living conditions for those affected by the hurricane will do as much, if not

Opinion



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Perspective

Preparing for the Next Harvey, Irma, or Maria — Addressing Research Gaps

James M. Shultz, Ph.D., and Sandro Galea, M.D., Dr.P.H.

Extreme events often cast in bold relief what we do and don't know about medicine and public health. In recent weeks, three hurricanes, each characterized by "unprecedented" features,

have illuminated our knowledge gaps regarding the consequences of disasters and their mitigation.

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria affected large populations and caused widespread destruction, resulting in massive resource losses and economic costs. We know quite a bit about the likely consequences of these storms. As winds diminish and rescues proceed, the response focus rapidly shifts toward reestablishing essential infrastructure. Top mitigation priorities include distributing survival necessities, restoring power, and bringing hospitals back on line. These actions minimize short-term health threats such as patients with chronic health conditions decompensating or losing

access to life-sustaining treatments and populations' exposure to deadly heat stress and waterborne and vectorborne diseases. Performed effectively, they also forestall longer-term mental health consequences.

We know that a substantial proportion of people who were directly exposed to life-threatening storm hazards, were physically injured, lost a loved one, or lost substantial resources may report increased symptoms of mental disorders in the coming months, with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as the sentinel condition.¹ PTSD and depression may also develop in storm-affected people who were not directly exposed, albeit at lower rates.

A stepped-care approach includes a number of phased elements. During the disaster impact, these include moving people to safety, providing survival needs, and reuniting separated family members. In the immediate aftermath, it's important to maintain or restore care, provide access to medications for persons with pre-existing conditions, meet short-term practical needs, and assess hazard exposures and resource losses. Over the longer term, it's essential to maintain ongoing surveillance, and referral as needed, for the onset of psychopathology in persons who've been injured, bereaved, or experienced traumatic exposures or severe losses. Rapid restoration of social and economic function contributes substantially to population health and well-being after these events.²

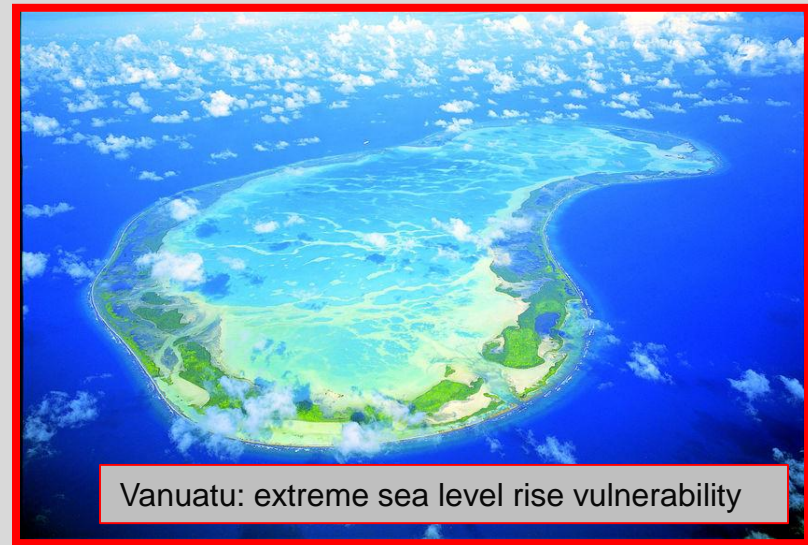
The closeness in time and space of these storms has conflated them in the public narra-

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VULNERABILITY: Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

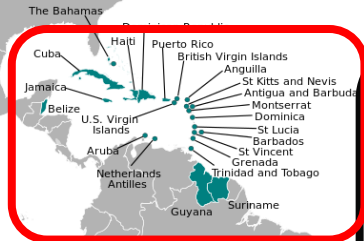
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- Developing states
- Resource limitations
- Limited emergency management capacity



VULNERABILITY: Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Caribbean Region: 29



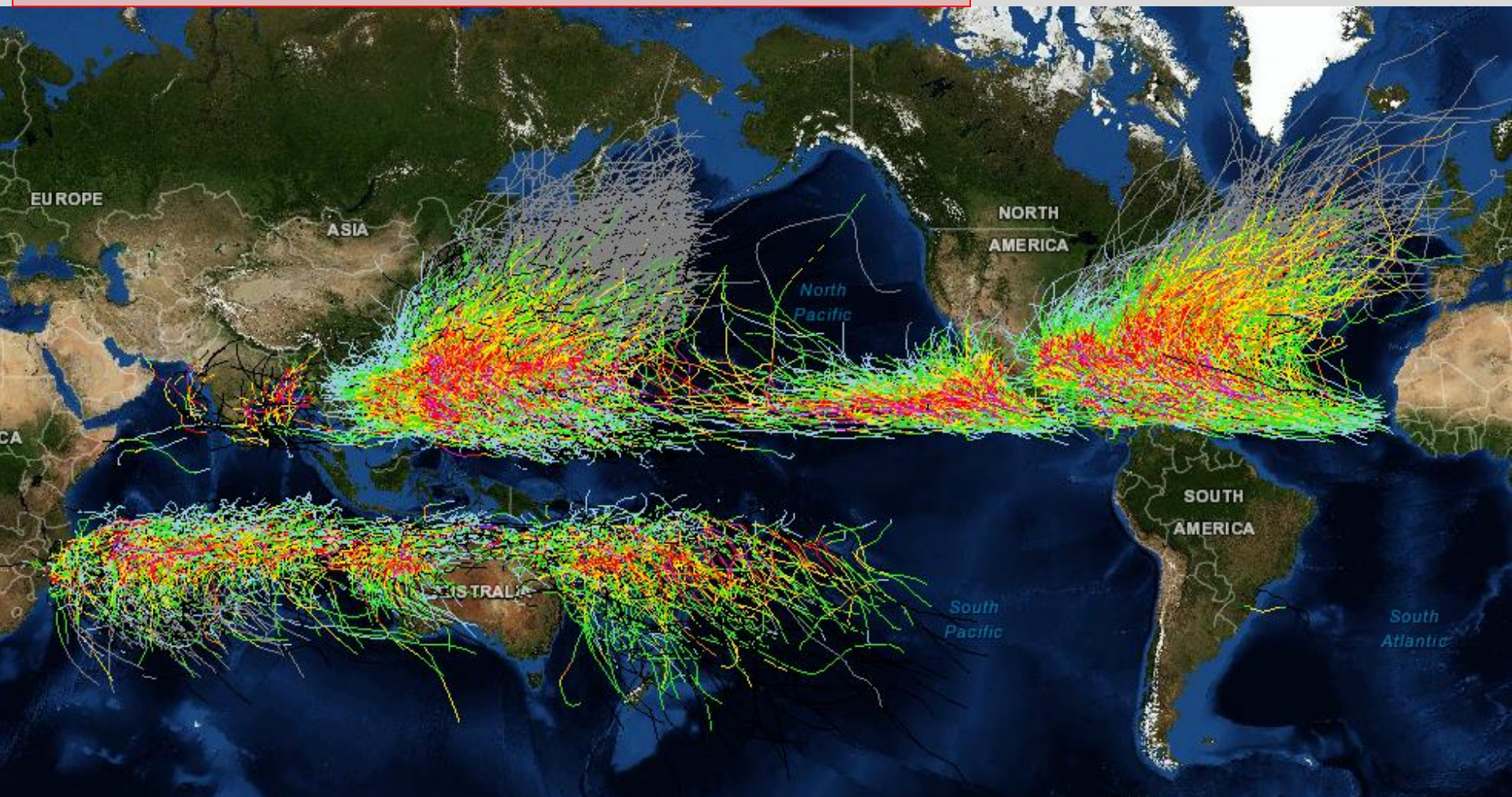
AIMS Region: 8



Pacific Region: 20



VULNERABILITY: Worldwide distribution of tropical cyclone paths



Mitigating tropical cyclone risks and health consequences: urgencies and innovations



The devastation wrought by human population exposure to the 2017 Atlantic basin hurricanes and the protracted health and social consequences of these storms highlight the destructive potential of tropical cyclones.^{1,2} Two factors are contributing to the progressively increasing risk for weather-related disasters throughout the 21st century.³ First, as the oceans warm and the sea levels rise, prominent tropical cyclone hazards are quantifiably increasing over time, especially peak storm intensity, maximum precipitation rate, frequency of the most intense cyclones, and areal extent of storm surge flooding.^{3,4} Second, vulnerabilities are worsening, driven by population growth, urbanisation combined with increasing population density (particularly in coastal cities bordering the world's tropical cyclone basins), the disproportionate risk for small island developing states (SIDS)—22 of 29 SIDS in the Caribbean region were affected by at least one 2017 storm;⁵ damaged ecosystems, fragile and failing infrastructure, and increasing socioeconomic disparities. The public health consequences of tropical cyclones will commensurately increase unless solutions are found to mitigate and adapt to increasing risk.⁶ The 2017 Atlantic storms brought these risk dynamics into clear view.

After a lull of several years with few land-falling hurricanes in the Atlantic, the 2017 season has re-energised the conversation around disaster risk reduction and management. Unless action is taken to mitigate hazards and invest in adaptive capacity, losses could increase sharply throughout the 21st century as stronger storms encounter populations residing in environments with marked areas of vulnerability.^{1,4} Therefore, 2017 could be a harbinger of things to come that require innovative solutions on multiple levels to match the complexity of effectively governing tropical cyclone risks and consequences. With these hazard and vulnerability patterns in mind, confronting tropical cyclone risks globally will require a reformulation of the approach on several scales.

Important contributors to future tropical cyclone risk are people's vulnerability along with erosion of the ecosystem's natural buffer function. The 2015–30 Sendai Framework⁷ and the UN Sustainable Development

Goals⁸ recognise the primacy of disaster risk reduction, which prioritises the upstream elements of prevention, protection, and preparedness over the downstream focus on rescue and response.^{9,10} Disaster risk reduction partners smoothly with climate change adaptation by fully encompassing it.¹¹

Effective macro-level planning will rely on collaborations between atmospheric and oceanographic scientists, hydrologists, structural engineers, urban planners, legal scholars, and social scientists in active partnership with medical, public health, and health-care professionals; all dovetailing their expertise with emergency managers and disaster response personnel.⁴ Also at the macro level, fragile infrastructure must be redesigned and renovated. As observed repeatedly throughout the 2017 season, long electrical power outages decapitate the emergency response, and are thus life threatening. Also, regional satellite and communications capabilities must be dramatically upgraded.

Fortunately, some model programmes worthy of emulation exist. The Atlantic storms reinforced the importance of the Pan American Health Organization initiative to create disaster-proof, safe, and green hospitals throughout the western hemisphere. The US public health preparedness approach of creating regional health-care coordination could be adapted to provide care for island-based populations and coastal communities that sustain damage to the point at which local health-care delivery is hindered or inoperable.

At the community level, local emergency management plans will need to be updated on the basis of lessons learned and redeveloped to prioritise disaster risk reduction approaches.¹² Evacuation procedures must be revisited in light of previous experiences, including assuring adequate fuel supplies along the designated routes and creatively using public transport options.¹³ Post-storm damage assessment data can usefully guide enforcement of tougher building codes. Community shelter systems should be expanded, retrofitted, and fortified to withstand stronger storms.

During 2017, the need for mutual aid became a forefront issue. One component is maintaining and replenishing community or regional stockpiles of essential supplies and

POLICY ANALYSIS

Risks, Health Consequences, and Response Challenges for Small-Island-Based Populations: Observations From the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season

James M. Shultz, MS, PhD; James P. Kossin, PhD; J. Marshall Shepherd, PhD; Justine M. Ransdell, Rory Walshe, Ian Kelman, PhD; Sandro Galea, MD, DrPH

ABSTRACT

The intensely active 2017 Atlantic basin hurricane season provided an opportunity to examine how climate drivers, including warming oceans and rising seas, exacerbated tropical cyclone hazards. The season also highlighted the unique vulnerabilities of populations residing on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to the catastrophic potential of these storms. During 2017, 22 of the 29 Caribbean SIDS were affected by at least one named storm, and multiple SIDS experienced extreme damage. This paper aims to review the multiplicity of storm impacts on Caribbean SIDS throughout the 2017 season, to explicate the influences of climate drivers on storm formation and intensity, to explore the propensity of SIDS to sustain severe damage and prolonged disruption of essential services, to document the spectrum of public health consequences, and to delineate the daunting hurdles that challenged emergency response and recovery operations for island-based, disaster-affected populations. (*Disaster Med Public Health Preparedness*. 2018;0:1-13)

Key Words: climate change, climate driver, disaster, disaster response, hazard, health consequences, hurricane, risk, Small Island Developing States, tropical cyclone, tropical storm, vulnerability

The United Nations (UN) officially recognises the precarious existence of 57 Small Island Developing States (SIDS), distributed across 3 vast ocean regions occupying the earth's tropical and subtropical beltline (Table 1).¹⁻³ Twenty-nine of the SIDS are in the Caribbean region. Throughout the highly active 2017 Atlantic basin hurricane season, a series of human population encounters with strong tropical cyclones underscored the vulnerabilities of SIDS to the impacts of climate-related storm hazards. The Caribbean SIDS sustained the brunt of human harm and public health consequences as well as structural damage and environmental devastation.

Aiming to advance our understanding of the particular burden faced by SIDS in the face of escalating vulnerabilities to hurricanes, we organised our discussion to (1) document the 2017 storm impacts on the Caribbean SIDS and then, in sequence, (2) describe the climate-related hazards that influenced the destructive capacity of the season's tropical cyclones, (3) outline the unique disaster risk landscape for SIDS, (4) summarise the cascades of hurricane health consequences, and (5) explore the constellation of challenges that impeded, and sometimes derailed, an effective disaster response.

2017 ATLANTIC HURRICANE IMPACTS ON CARIBBEAN REGION SIDS

Seventeen named tropical cyclones developed during the 2017 Atlantic basin hurricane season, beginning in

April and extending into early November, along with two weaker systems (a tropical depression and a potential tropical cyclone) (Figure 1).⁴ Worldwide, tropical cyclones are variably termed hurricanes, typhoons, or cyclones, depending upon their basin of origin.⁵ Atlantic storms are classified according to their peak sustained wind speeds and corresponding wind-focused damage estimates, according to the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale (SSHWS).⁶ Tropical systems are named, using alphabetical lists, once they attain tropical storm force velocities (39–73 mph). If wind speeds increase to 74 mph or higher, the tropical storm graduates to a hurricane status. Hurricanes are further classified, based on ranges of wind speeds, into Categories 1 through 5. The top 3 categories (3–5) are major hurricanes.

Among the 17 named storms in 2017, 7 had their highest wind velocities in the tropical storm range, whereas the other 10 storms attained hurricane wind speeds. Six hurricanes reached major hurricane status, with winds in excess of 110 mph.

We analyzed the National Hurricane Center (NHC) 2017 storm archive files, examining the map sequences to identify the SIDS that experienced tropical storm and/or hurricane wind fields during the passage of each storm.⁴ For each Atlantic basin named storm, the archive contains a series of maps, updated every 6 hours, displaying the path of the storm and the geographic center of circulation surrounded by a red

2017 Atlantic basin hurricane season: key findings

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9-of-17 named storms brought tropical storm or hurricane force winds to at least 1 SIDS

22-of-29 Caribbean Region SIDS were impacted by at least one of the 2017 Atlantic storms

4 SIDS were impacted by 1 storm; 13 SIDS were impacted by 2 storms; 5 SIDS were impacted by 3 storms

For 11 SIDS, maximal storm winds were tropical storm force

For 11 SIDS, maximal storm winds were major hurricane force

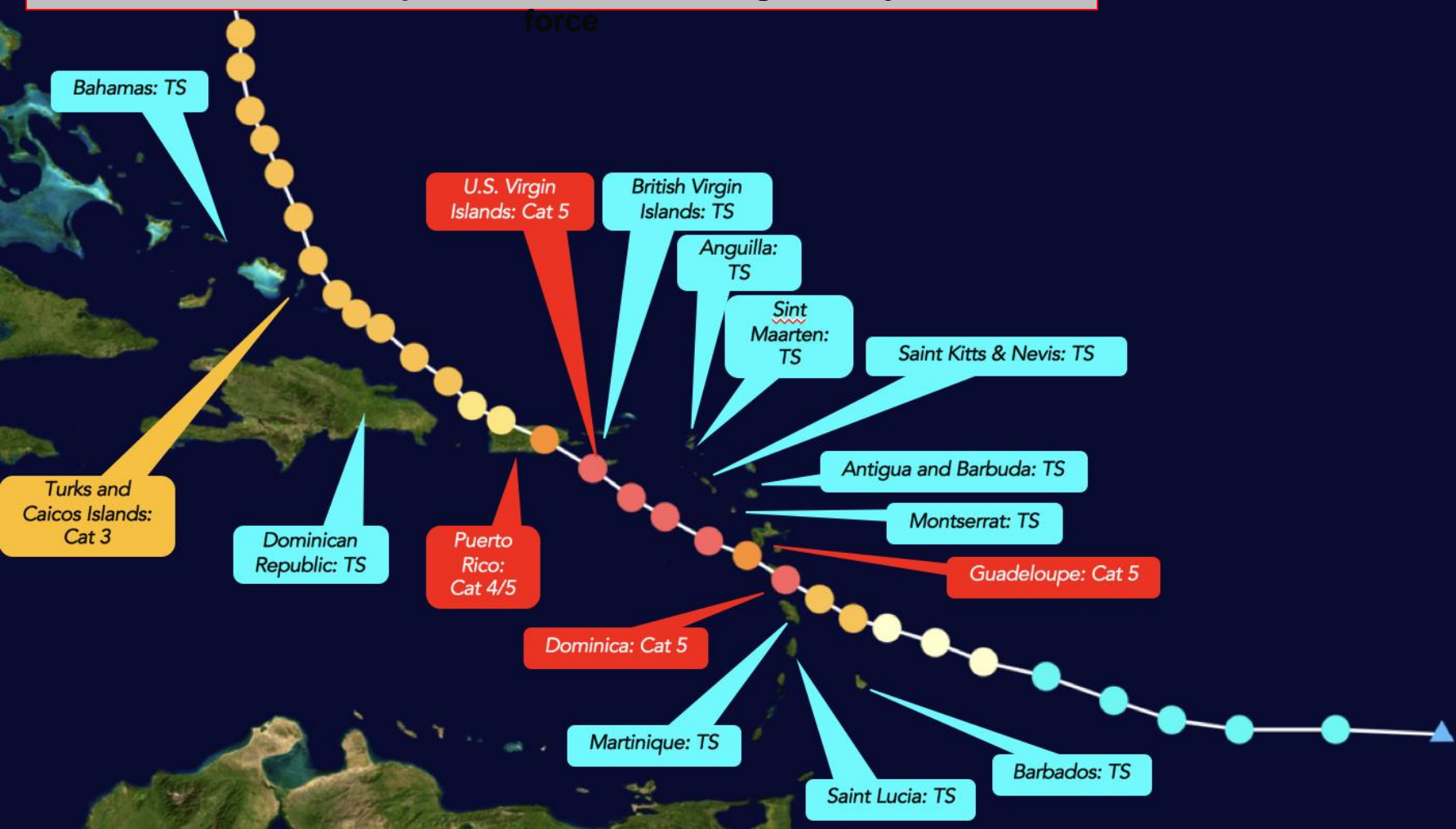
9 SIDS experienced the direct landfall of a major hurricane

ETHICS: Environmental injustice – SIDS contribute minimally to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions but are sentinels for the most severe impacts of rising temperatures, sea-level rise, climate-related disasters

2017 Hurricane Irma impacted 14 SIDS, including 8 at major hurricane force



2017 Hurricane Maria impacted 16 SIDS, including 5 at major hurricane force



HAZARD: Atlantic basin hurricane hazards

Increased frequency of “major” hurricanes
Increased peak wind speeds
Rapid intensification
Increased atmospheric moisture content
Increased precipitation rate
Increased rainfall totals
Rising sea levels: increased storm/tidal surge

2017 Hurricane Jose

2017: The “perfect storm season”

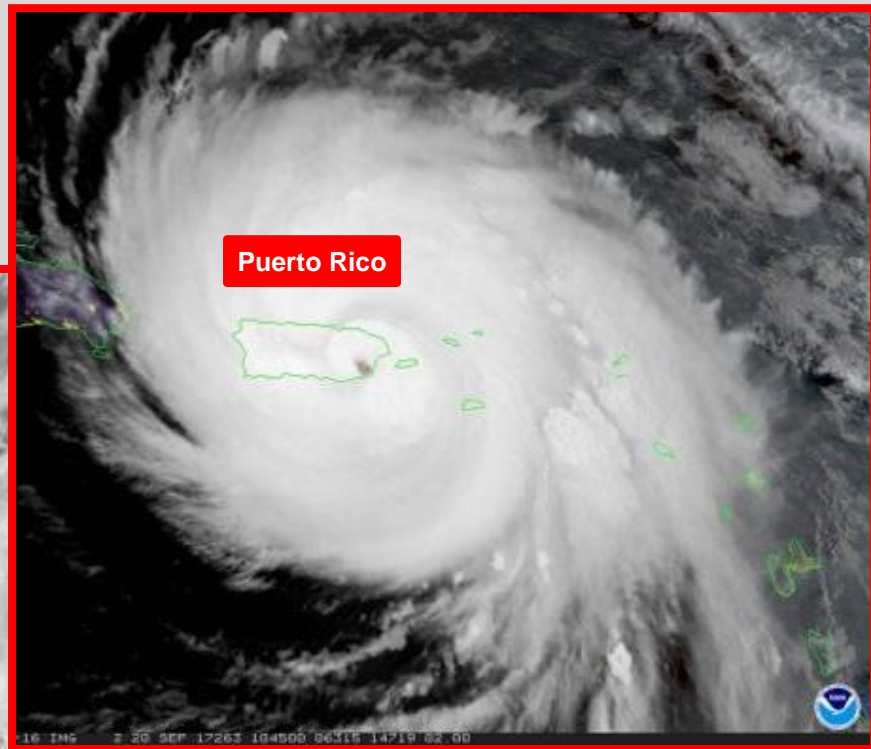
2017 Hurricane Maria

HAZARD: Atlantic basin hurricane hazards

Puerto Rico

Dominica

Puerto Rico



Public health consequences

Public Health Consequences

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HAZARDS: Impact/post-impact phase

Impact phase:
potentially-traumatizing
exposures (PTEs) to hazards:

Wind hazards:
hurricane (Category 4/5)
tornado

Water hazards:
deluging rains
storm surge
coastal surge
inland flooding
mudslides

Storm-related physical injury:

Impact phase: blunt trauma from projectile debris

Post-impact: falls, lacerations, puncture wounds, chainsaw injuries

Heat stress / heat-related illness

Injury-related psychological distress

Exposure to vectors for Zika, dengue, chikungunya

HAZARDS: Impact/post-impact phase

Storm destruction /
roof loss leading to:

Exposure to the elements

Exposure to mosquitoes/
vectors

Elevated risks for Zika,
dengue, chikungunya



HAZARDS: Impact/post-impact phase

Damage to infrastructure

Island-wide power outages

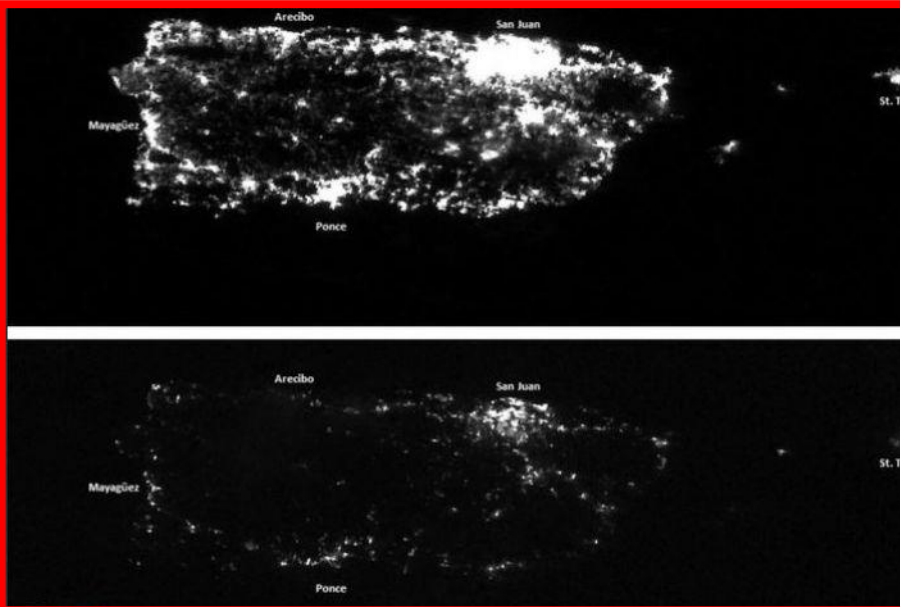
heat stress/exhaustion/stroke

Extreme water shortage

Lack of communications

Lack of information

Lack of timely response



HAZARDS: Impact/post-impact phase

Inland flooding:

- Exposure to contaminated water and water-borne infectious diseases
- Enhanced breeding conditions for mosquitoes



Disaster behavioral health precepts



PSYCHOLOGICAL
"FOOTPRINT"

MEDICAL
"FOOTPRINT"

In a disaster, the size of the psychological footprint greatly exceeds the size of the medical footprint

theguardian

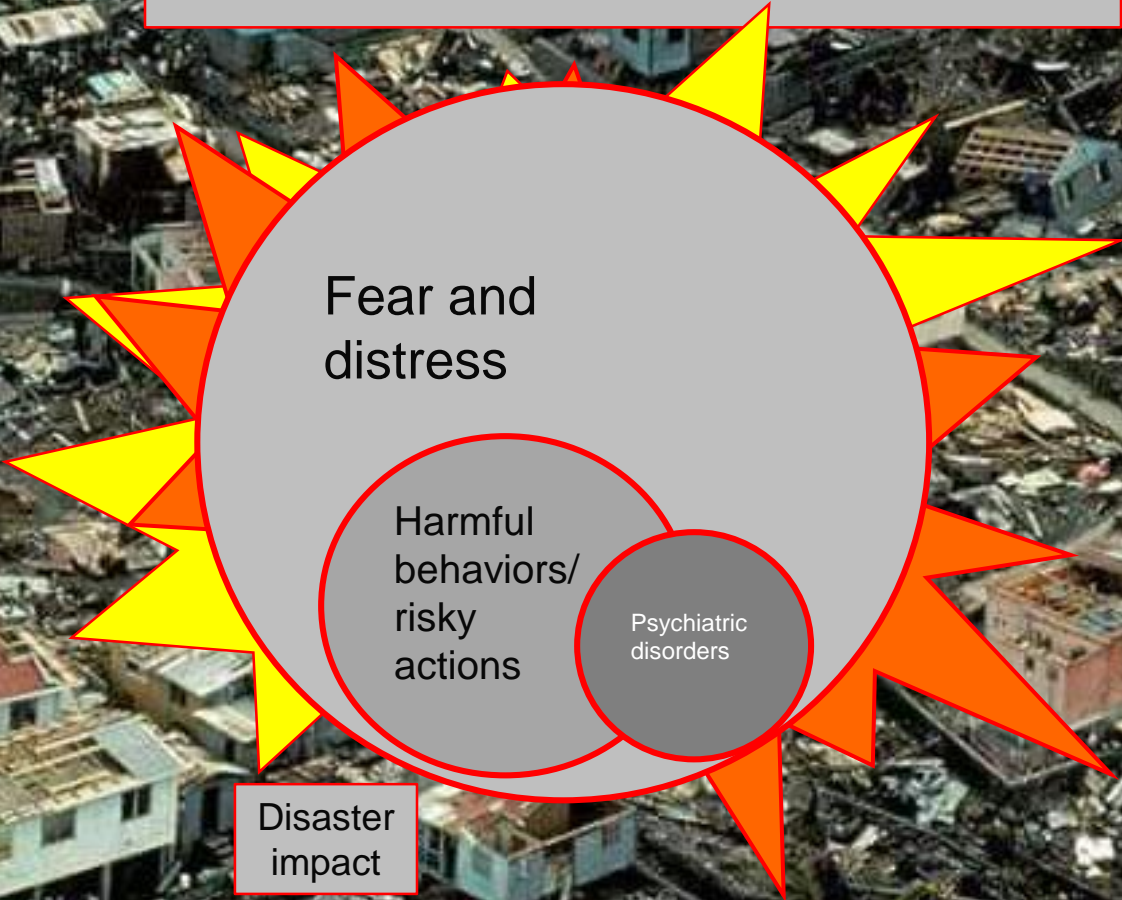
One day in San Juan: Puerto Ricans search for normality amid the debris

Puerto Ricans struggle to carry on with no school, little electricity and few indications of when the island will overcome the effects of Hurricane Maria
by Amanda Holpuch in San Juan

Disaster behavioral health precepts

In a disaster, psychosocial consequences extend along a **spectrum of severity**.

Severity relates to the degree and intensity of exposure



Fear and
distress

Harmful
behaviors/
risky
actions

Psychiatric
disorders

Disaster
impact

Disaster behavioral health precepts

In a disaster, psychosocial consequences expand across a **range of duration**

Forces of harm



Affected population

Disaster impact

Hazard

Resource/human losses

Enduring life changes

Time from impact



2017 Prominent Climate Drivers

- Elevated ocean temperatures
- Elevated air temperatures
- Sea level rise
- El Niño neutral conditions
- Minimal vertical wind shear
- High thermal potential

Emergency Management (EM) Disaster Response Challenges

- Economic limitations on pre-storm mitigation
- Inability to pre-position and stage supplies
- Severe damage to infrastructure limiting response
- Disabled government and EM operations
- Delayed response: time needed to transport personnel
- Delayed response: time needed to transport materiel
- Inoperable and incompatible communications
- Limited available situational information
- Simultaneous responses to dispersed populations
- Heterogeneity of response partners
- Diverse national jurisdictions
- Political considerations affecting response priorities
- Issues of environmental injustice
- Complexity: disasters create disasters

Hurricane Disaster Risks for SIDS: Function of Hazard x Vulnerability

2017 Atlantic Basin Hurricane Hazard Characteristics

2017 seasonal characteristics

- Above average number of storms (17)
- Above average number of hurricanes (10)
- Above average major hurricanes (6)
- Larger storms
- Prolonged storm season
- Multiple locale impacts per storm
- Multiple storm impacts per locale

Wind hazards

- Increased maximum peak wind speeds
- Rapid intensification prior to landfall
- Increased high intensity storm duration

Water hazards

- Increased atmospheric moisture-holding capacity
- Record-setting precipitation rates
- Record-setting rainfall amounts
- Severe overland flooding
- Mudslides in steep terrain

Sea level rise

- Severe storm surge impacts
- Severe coastal wave action
- Decreased flood drainage

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Vulnerabilities

- Located in the MDR
- 360° coastal perimeter
- Minimal elevation
- Mountainous terrain
- Physically remote
- Geographically isolated
- Clusters of islands
- Developing states
- Resource limitations
- Limited EM capacity

2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season Disaster Consequences for SIDS

2017 Hurricane Disaster Consequences

General effects

- Disabling economic crises
- Disruption of government functions
- Extensive structural / home damage
- Population displacement
- Lack of food, clean water

Infrastructure impacts

- Power outages
- Communication disruptions
- Transportation disruptions
- Fuel shortages
- Port/airport damage/closures

Health system impacts

- Hospital closures
- Healthcare services disruptions
- Life-saving treatment disruptions
- Lack of medications

Agricultural impacts

- Crop/livestock losses
- Diminished agricultural production

Systems impacts

- School damage/closures
- Worksite damage/closures

Public Health Consequences

- Impact phase mortality
- Post-impact phase mortality
- Morbidity: physical injury
- Morbidity: heat-related injury
- Morbidity: chronic disease exacerbation
- Morbidity: vector-borne diseases
- Morbidity: water-borne diseases
- Morbidity: environmental hazard exposure
- Morbidity: psychological distress
- Morbidity: psychopathology

Domain-specific examples: Disasters

Thank you very much.

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