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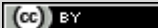
Book Review

Greenberg, Michael, R. Protecting Seniors against Environmental Disasters: From Hazards and Vulnerability to Prevention and Resilience. New York, NY: Routledge. 2014. ISBN 978-0-415-84201-3, 210 pp. Price \$145 (Hardcover)

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Book Review

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My first thought while reading Greenberg's book was that we finally have a text that demonstrates the struggles older adults face during a disaster. This book is a must read for those who work in public health and formulate disaster mitigation and emergency response plans. It is also a must read for all who work with older adults. It would be an excellent text for students pursuing careers as health care executives.

This book is backed by a foundation of research and historical accounts of past disasters. What makes this an enjoyable text for me is the application of the material presented by the author's use of case studies and lessons learned. In the preface of the book, Greenberg shares a personal story of his parents as they grew older and their fears of potentially facing yet another natural disaster in their lifetime both while living in their home and later in assisted living. Despite the resilience of Baby Boomers (see Chapter 2 for more about Boomers) surviving events such as the Great Depression, hurricanes, and blizzards, being cut off from the external world was of great concern as his parents aged.

Chapter 3 provides a risk assessment of events such as tornadoes, power outages, terrorism, flooding, wildfires, and more. Greenberg discusses the impact of such events on older adults which can vary greatly based on their mobility, access to resources, and the condition of their home.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the local, state, and federal government's role in a disaster. Greenberg provides a summary of data on disasters and relief efforts from 1950-1979. What caught my attention in this chapter was the section on nursing homes. As the author notes, most healthcare organizations, due to a variety of regulatory and accreditation requirements have disaster and evacuation plans. He also notes that such organizations are exempt from evacuation and have the option to shelter in place. The author notes the tough decision by executives to shelter or evacuate, understanding that the mortality of compromised individuals increases during an evacuation. The author shares lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and how lives may have been saved by having stronger shelter in place plans.

Chapter 5 discusses risk management for not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. Greenberg highlights planning for senior housing and other agencies from a variety of perspectives such as first-responders, financial and city planners, and other stakeholders. The author provides a valuable table demonstrating the critical elements of a disaster plan and provides discussion on lessons learned.

Chapter 6 shares the risk management needs of seniors, family, and friends. Greenberg cites Renya and Brainerd's decision making model in determining older adults' reactions to disaster and predictions for their action in a crisis. According to Greenberg, despite potential physical and cognitive declines, seniors are the most resilient, most optimistic, and feel less threatened regarding their survival. The author discusses post event stress which is not so much a factor of grief and loss as one would expect, but that of struggle and confusion with paperwork and eligibility requirements to submit insurance claims, receive assistance, the laws behind what disasters qualify for governmental assistance, and trying to make sense of it all. When they cannot, distrust grows and seniors are less likely to seek assistance. While not all older adults are frail, the author notes in this chapter that older adults who are able are more likely to assist in prevention and recovery efforts.

Chapter 7 provides experiences and lessons learned from tropical storms in New Jersey. Chapter eight provides recommendations for future disaster prevention and resilience. The recommendations include sheltering and post event recovery, mitigating and improving the resilience of the medical system, communication with seniors, improving infrastructure, and increasing community development projects resilience by evaluating hazard event mitigation before building.

This text provides an excellent overview of the needs of older adults in all home and care environments during a disaster and offers much to consider for all professionals who work with older adults.