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Income, Employment and Individual Preparedness among Adults in the U.S.

Objective: Examine the roles of income and employment on individual disaster preparedness.

Methods: The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a nation-wide survey conducted by the CDC where respondents self-report income, employment, and individual preparedness measures (e.g., 3-day supply of food and water, prescription drugs, a battery radio, flashlight, and having an evacuation plan). Using data from the 2006-2010 BRFSS, our study assessed associations between employment or income and individual preparedness levels among residents that participated in the preparedness section (n=59,780). Based on the preparedness survey items, a categorical preparedness scale was generated (having 5-6 of the items = prepared; 3-4 items = moderately prepared; 0-2 = unprepared). Descriptive statistics were reported. Regression analysis examined how income level and employment status affected the respondents' level of preparedness. CDC data was deidentified and doesn't require IRB approval.

Results: Many respondents have 4-5 of the preparedness items (for income variable: frequency of 4 items=31.34%, 5 items=29.08%; for employment variable: 4 items=31.06%, 5 items=29.09%). Persons with higher income were more likely to be prepared than those with lower income (annual income greater than \$75,000 are 1.57x [CI 1.49, 1.64] more likely to be prepared than those with income less

than \$15,000). However, employment had an inverse association with preparedness (0.84x CI [-0.79, -0.13]).

Conclusion: Our study adds to the evidence regarding individual preparedness, resilience, and potential influencing factors. More research is needed to understand why employment may be inversely related to preparedness. Additionally, more data-driven research is needed at the local level.

Collaborators:

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