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Barriers and Facilitators to Disaster Preparedness in People with
Disabilities

Background: According to the CDC, about 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have a disability. These individuals are more than four times as likely to die in disasters, yet little is known about their preparedness. To better understand preparedness behaviors and attitudes among people with disabilities (PWD), a brief study was conducted.

Methods: A confidential Qualtrics survey was sent to a convenience sample of PWD in Region 9. Preparedness was measured using a 5-item metric. Facilitators and barriers were examined in a sample of 127 respondents.

Results: The mean preparedness score was 2.34 (range 0-5; mode 0; median 2.0), with 51% reporting they did not feel prepared. Only 21% of those needing caregivers had backup plans. Higher scores were linked to older age (>61), prior disaster experience, severity of prior events (e.g., injury), and participation in emergency drills. Those who felt prepared scored higher.

Discussion: Prior and more severe disaster experiences were linked to greater preparedness. Perceived and actual preparedness were aligned.

Participation in emergency drills was the most actionable factor and should be promoted by local emergency response agencies.

Presentation Theme: Disasters and Disability.

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