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Mortality Surveillance: 2004 to 2005 Florida Hurricane-Related Deaths.

Original Article

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Abstract:

During 2004 and 2005, Florida was struck by 8 hurricanes, resulting in 213 deaths. The Department of Health and Florida medical examiners monitor hurricane mortality surveillance. This study analyzed hurricane-related deaths reported by the Florida Medical Examiners Commission for 2004 to 2005. The objectives of this study were to (1) describe the Florida hurricane-related mortality for 2004 and 2005, (2) accurately characterize the hurricane-related deaths, and (3) identify strategies to prevent or reduce future hurricane deaths. For 2004, there were 144 total hurricane-related deaths. The majority (59%) occurred in the postimpact phase, with accidents accounting for 76% of deaths. Among these, over half were caused by trauma, followed by drowning, other injury, electrocution, and carbon monoxide poisoning. For 2005, there were 69 hurricane-related deaths. Sixty-one percent of deaths occurred in the postimpact phase, with accidents accounting for 86% of all deaths. Among these, over half were due to trauma, with drowning and carbon monoxide poisoning being the other major contributors. Most hurricane-related deaths are due to unintentional injury and therefore, preventable. Seventy-nine percent of deaths are in those aged 40 and older. Prevention messages should target high-risk, postimpact activities, especially in older adults.

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