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The role of public health in saving the lives of the elderly during disaster

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*INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISASTERS CONGRESS*

*<https://www.en.acilim.org.tr/>*

# **The role of public health in saving the lives of the elderly during disaster**

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&

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Online talk Turkey, 12 June 2024

# Outline

- Introduction
- Challenges faced by the elderly during disasters
- Role of public health
- Public health interventions and strategies
- Impact of funding shortfalls
- Conclusion

# Introduction

- Public health plays a crucial role in saving the lives of the elderly during disasters.
- The elderly population is particularly vulnerable during disasters due to factors such as limited mobility, isolation, and specific medical needs.
- Public health interventions can help address these challenges and ensure the safety and well-being of the elderly.

# Introduction

Preparation	Public health agencies can help prepare the older people for disasters by providing them with information on what to do in case of a disaster, helping them create a personal emergency plan, and ensuring they have access to necessary resources and services.
Response	During a disaster, public health agencies play a key role in coordinating the response efforts, including the provision of medical care, food, and shelter. They also work to ensure that the specific needs of the older people are met, such as the provision of medications and assistive devices
Recovery	After a disaster, public health agencies continue to support the older people by providing ongoing medical care, mental health support, and assistance with rebuilding and recovery efforts.
Advocacy	Public health professionals also advocate for policies and practices that protect the older people during disasters, such as inclusive emergency planning and the prioritization of the elderly in disaster response efforts.

# Challenges Faced by the Elderly During Disasters

- Isolation, limited mobility, medical needs, and distrust<sup>2</sup>
- Pre-existing conditions exacerbated during crises<sup>3</sup>

# Role of Public Health

- Initiating the public health response during the first 24 hours of an emergency or disaster<sup>1</sup>
- Coordinating with existing emergency response structures<sup>1</sup>
- Risk communications and incident management<sup>4</sup>



# Public Health Interventions and Strategies

- Focus on social isolation, deferral of medical care, management of chronic conditions, elder abuse and neglect, and decondition<sup>5</sup>
- Public health departments working tirelessly alongside and on the frontlines of the preparation, response, and long-term recovery<sup>4</sup>

## **Impact of Funding Shortfalls**

- Decline in federal funding for public health emergency preparedness<sup>4</sup>
- Difficulty in retaining expert personnel and maintaining capabilities to prepare for disasters<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion

- Reiterate the importance of public health in saving the lives of the elderly during disasters.
- Call to action for policymakers to support affected states and the public health and healthcare systems.
- In conclusion, public health plays a vital role in protecting the elderly during disasters, and it's important for these efforts to be supported and prioritized.

# References

1. [Public Health Emergency Response Guide|Preparation & Planning \(cdc.gov\)](#)
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4. [Microsoft Word - Public Health In Disasters Fact Sheet 091318.docx \(tfah.org\)](#)
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