

NIH supports study of health risks and resilience following Hurricanes Irma and Maria ^[1]

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National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) ^[2]

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Eight new awards will help researchers examine the health impacts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands following the physical damage and community-level hardships left by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The grants are funded by The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), part of the National Institutes of Health.

Research will focus on hurricane-related psychosocial stressors, such as grief, separation from home and loved ones, loss of income, and limited access to medical care, which can result in immediate health impacts. Such stressors may also lead to increased risk for mental or physical conditions or worse outcomes among those with pre-existing chronic health conditions. Territory-level coping strategies and responses may worsen or lessen the impact of these stressors on health outcomes.

"This groundwork is crucial to understanding the health care needs of Puerto Ricans affected by this sentinel event, who are more vulnerable because of social factors and chronic health problems," according to NIMHD Director Dr. Pérez-Stable. "Such investigation will help uncover risk and resilience factors, better preparing these and other communities for possible disasters

down the road."

Over the next two years, NIMHD will provide approximately \$3 million, subject to available funds, to support exploratory and developmental research projects. Additional awards under this initiative are funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Aging, and the National Cancer Institute—also parts of NIH.

To determine post-hurricane health impacts, these studies will use an approach that encompasses multiple domains of influence and multiple levels of influence, part of NIMHD's Research Framework [3].

"These projects will lay a foundation for future research, leading to effective prevention measures and chronic disease management to improve quality of life following natural disasters," said Dr. Pérez-Stable.

The grantee organizations funded by NIMHD are:

Post-Hurricane Cancer Care: Patient Needs After Hurricane Maria
Eida Maria Castro, Psy.D.
Ponce School of Medicine
1R21MD013674-01

Risk and Resiliency Among Vulnerable People Living With HIV in Post-Hurricane Puerto Rico
Michael C. Clatts, Ph.D.
University of Puerto Rico – Medical Science Campus
1R21MD013657-01 [4]

Preterm Births and Other Infant Health Outcomes in Puerto Rico Following Hurricanes Irma and Maria
Jose F. Cordero, M.D.
Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust
1R21MD013709-01 [5]

Changes in Risk for Non-Communicable Disease, and Resilience After Hurricane Irma and Maria
Kaumudi Joshipura, Sc.D.
University of Puerto Rico – Medical Science Campus
1R21MD013666-01 [6]

Resilience and Helpseeking in Health and Illness by and for the Elderly
Patria Lopez, Ph.D.
University of Puerto Rico – Cayey University College
R21MD013701-01

Food Access, Social Connectedness, and Allostatic Load After a Natural Disaster: a Mixed Methods Study

Josiemer Mattei, Ph.D.
De Diego Research Foundation

1R21MD013650-01 [7]

Epigenetic and Microbial Profiles Related to Hurricane Maria Prenatal Stressors

Evangelia Morou-Bermudez, D.D.S., Ph.D.

University of Puerto Rico – Medical Science Campus

1R21MD013652-01 [8]

Modeling the Protective Effect of Spirituality in Disaster Recovery

Eugene Tull, Dr.PH.

Inter-American Center for Public Health Improvement, Inc.

1R21MD013692-01 [9]

NIMHD is one of NIH's 27 Institutes and Centers. It leads scientific research to improve minority health and eliminate health disparities by conducting and supporting research; planning, reviewing, coordinating, and evaluating all minority health and health disparities research at NIH; promoting and supporting the training of a diverse research workforce; translating and disseminating research information; and fostering collaborations and partnerships. For more information about NIMHD, visit <https://www.nimhd.nih.gov> [10].

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov

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Content Categories: • Biological and health sciences [12]

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