

PubMed

COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation.

Get the latest public health information from CDC: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>.Get the latest research from NIH: <https://www.nih.gov/coronavirus>.Full text links
PSYCHOSOMATIC
MEDICINE

The new PubMed site will become the default in mid-May.

[Click here to try it now!](#)[Frequently asked questions](#)

Format: Abstract

[Psychosom Med.](#) 1997 Mar-Apr;59(2):128-41.

Posttraumatic stress symptoms, intrusive thoughts, loss, and immune function after Hurricane Andrew.

[Ironson G¹](#), [Wynings C](#), [Schneiderman N](#), [Baum A](#), [Rodriguez M](#), [Greenwood D](#), [Benight C](#), [Antoni M](#), [LaPerriere A](#), [Huang HS](#), [Klimas N](#), [Fletcher MA](#).

Author information

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To examine the impact of and relationship between exposure to Hurricane Andrew, a severe stressor, posttraumatic stress symptoms and immune measures.

METHODS: Blood draws and questionnaires were taken from community volunteer subjects living in the damaged neighborhoods between 1 and 4 months after the Hurricane.

RESULTS: The sample exhibited high levels of posttraumatic stress symptoms by questionnaire (33% overall; 76% with at least one symptom cluster), and 44% scored in the high impact range on the Impact of Events (IES) scale. A substantial proportion of variance in posttraumatic stress symptoms could be accounted for by four hurricane experience variables (damage, loss, life threat, and injury), with perceived loss being the highest correlate. Of the five immune measures studied Natural Killer Cell Cytotoxicity (NKCC) was the only measure that was meaningfully related (negatively) to both damage and psychological variables (loss, intrusive thoughts, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). White blood cell counts (WBCs) were significantly positively related with the degree of loss and PTSD experienced. Both NKCC (lower) and WBC were significantly related to retrospective self-reported increase of somatic symptoms after the hurricane. Overall, the community sample was significantly lower in NKCC, CD4 and CD8 number, and higher in NK cell number compared to laboratory controls. Finally, evidence was found for new onset of sleep problems as a mediator of the posttraumatic symptom-NKCC relationship.

CONCLUSIONS: Several immune measures differed from controls after Hurricane Andrew. Negative (intrusive) thoughts and PTSD were related to lower NKCC. Loss was a key correlate of both posttraumatic symptoms and immune (NKCC, WBC) measures.

Comment in

Disaster: stress, immunologic function, and health behavior. [Psychosom Med. 1997]

PMID: 9088048 DOI: [10.1097/00006842-199703000-00003](https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-199703000-00003)

[Indexed for MEDLINE]

Publication type, MeSH terms, Substances, Grant support

LinkOut - more resources