D5.3: After the Storm: Where did all the Participants Go?

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Abstract:
Introduction: The purpose of this paper is to describe the experiences of actual and potential research subjects and efforts made to locate and assist research subjects.

Method(s): The eye of Hurricane Ike swept over Galveston Island, Texas on September 13, 2008. In the wake of the hurricane, devastation reigned with extensive damage to or total loss of property, the hurried and often erratic displacement of island residents, a downward spiral of the economy, the near total shut down of health and social services, and an increase in the unmet need of community residents, especially the already marginalized and most at-risk for adverse consequences to their health and well-being.

Results: Prior to the storm, the majority of women in violent relationships used the social services provided by the Resource Crisis Center of Galveston (RCC, a battered women’s shelter) and the outpatient health clinics of the Galveston County Health Department (GCHD). Prior to as well as after the storm, Galveston residents primarily evacuated to other Texas cities, Louisiana, and Mississippi. After the storm, residents either remained at their original evacuation site or relocated to yet another geographical area. Due to the devastation, few residents had a place to live or a home to return to in Galveston. On their return, most had no other place to live except for Tent City, a temporary housing established by the American Red Cross. The RCC remained closed and eventually relocated to the mainland due to massive structural and water damage and loss of employees due to the evacuation and lack of local safe, inhabitable housing. The GCHD also remained closed for several months due to a similar situation.
Discussion & Conclusions: It is no secret that Hurricane Ike severely impacted the Galveston community. What is less well recognized is its impact on the academic community that provides direct health services to Galveston County residents and conducts health related research to improve the health status of these residents. Where did my research participants go? What did I do right? What could I do better? This session is developed to share the lessons learned for the “next time.”

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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