

*Jamaica, 3. Mona Ageing & Wellness Centre, Kingston 7, Kingston, Jamaica*

Jamaica is prone to hurricanes and associated flooding. The older adult population is vulnerable given the increasing ageing population (12% over age 60), high rate of disability (20% - 30%) low literacy levels, increased feminization, and high numbers of old-old. This paper describes strategies employed in disaster management with a special focus on older persons as a vulnerable group. The significant contribution of social networks to disaster mitigation will also be discussed. Age-friendly strategies include older person representation on local disaster committees; mainstreaming the needs of older persons in community disaster plans; training of disaster workers on ageing and the special needs of older persons; maintaining community lists of frail, single and house-bound older persons. Social networks especially faith-based organisations are integral in disaster preparedness and recovery activities.

#### **SKILLS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY DURING AND AFTER DISASTERS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SUPPORT**

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The combination of an aging population and a limited number of disaster responders reveals a need for trained laypeople who can implement interventions that facilitate recovery after traumatic events. Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) is an intervention that is designed to be implemented after use of Psychological First Aid with people who were exposed to a traumatic stressor. SPR uses a skills-building approach to promote self-efficacy, support resilience, strengthen social networks, and ameliorate the negative impact of traumatic life events. Strengthening social support is beneficial as research clearly demonstrates that destruction of communities and loss of informal social support networks produces long-term psychological distress for older adults. This presentation will demonstrate a SPR social support exercise with attendees, provide an overview of the other modules, and describe modifications for using SPR with older adults. During times of crisis, social support systems are critical to the psychological well-being of older adults.

#### **THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS AS PERCEIVED BY ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATORS**

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The importance of communities in disasters has been well established since Hurricane Katrina. Smit and Wandel's bottom-up approach to assess risks during a disaster involves community stakeholders. Administrators of assisted living (AL) environments increasingly have to assess the risks of hurricane evacuation for vulnerable older adults. The current study examines intersections between social networks, communication and preparedness during a hurricane for AL administrators. We conducted focus groups and interviews with AL administrators (N=60) in Florida about communication

patterns with community associations, emergency management officials, AL staff, residents and their families during Hurricane Irma (2017) and about their perceptions of preparedness. A content analysis approach was used. Atlas.ti v7 was used for initial and axial coding. Co-occurrences were found among communication and preparedness themes. Some prevalent themes included "social capital", "high versus low tech strategies" and "leadership effectiveness". Themes intersected with individual administrator and AL organizational characteristics.

#### **VOADS AND OLDER ADULTS IN DISASTERS**

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Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) are a key mechanism for sharing knowledge and resources throughout a disaster cycle. VOADs work as a coalition of not-for-profit organizations that can respond to disasters on a local level in a coordinated response. Given the changes in FEMA's Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, the role of VOADs will become more important over time. It is unclear whether the needs of older adults in disasters will be addressed by VOAD coalitions. Organizations such as public health departments and emergency management services are typically involved in the activities of VOAD organizations, but it is unclear whether organizations serving older adults know about VOAD coalitions or have considered becoming members of these organizations. A case study of the state of Maryland's VOAD coalition will be used as an example of how one state VOAD is able to provide services and supports for older adults in disasters.

### **SESSION 2070 (SYMPOSIUM)**

#### **INTEREST GROUP SESSION—NUTRITION: IMPLEMENTATION OF NUTRITION, BODY COMPOSITION, AND FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT IN VULNERABLE OLDER ADULTS**

Chair: Rose Ann DiMaria-Ghalili, *Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States*

Discussant: Julie Locher, *University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, United States*

This symposium will highlight the implementation of nutrition, body composition and functional assessment in vulnerable older adults. Understanding the barriers and enablers of implementing traditional nutrition screening and assessment tools, nutrition focused physical examination, body composition analysis, functional assessment and biomarkers can aid researchers in the design of pragmatic nutrition studies in vulnerable older adults. DiMaria-Ghalili will provide an introduction to overall nutrition assessment in community-dwelling older adults and present lessons learned in regards to nutrition assessment protocols (Mini-Nutritional Assessment, hand-grip strength, and inflammatory biomarkers) from an ongoing clinical trial. Starr will discuss the issues surrounding nutrition screening and assessment in high-risk older adults undergoing abdominal surgery. A comparison of data on different nutrition screening and assessment tools (NRS-2002; PG-SGA, Nutrition Focused Physical Examination) in older adults undergoing abdominal