

Abstract

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Climate Change and Disaster Mental Health: Addressing Burnout and Leveraging Wearable Technology for First Responder and the Healthcare Workforce Retention

Leia Y. Saltzman PhD, LMSW, Tonya C. Hansel PhD, LMSW and
Regardt J. Ferreira PhD

Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Abstract

Objective: Climate change has impacts that contribute to increased disasters and chronic stressors. Subsequently we are faced with the great resignation of employees in the first responder and healthcare workforces.

These industries are crucial to community recovery and there is an urgent need to understand risk and protective factors toward burnout and mental health.

Methods: We hypothesize that disaster experiences and community disruptions contribute to burnout and mental health problems among the healthcare and emergency personnel workforces. Mixed methodology was used to identify services that would support retention.

Results: As symptoms of burnout increased, mental health problems also increased. Increased burnout was associated with increased work hours per week, more hours than usual, and more traditional first responder roles. Social isolation and other trauma, such as disaster, were associated with mental health problems. Protective factors included wellbeing, connectedness, and self-care.

Conclusions: Findings support the need for services aimed at reducing negative mental health and loneliness while improving coping skills. This presentation explores the utility of artificial intelligence, such as wearable technology, to screen, triage, and provide mental health services. By leveraging technologies, we offer a plan for addressing burnout, increased retention and the future of disaster mental health.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <http://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2024.185>.