Nursing-2013
OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery
International Conference on
Nursing & Emergency Medicine
December 2-4, 2013 Las Vegas, USA

Older adults following disasters: Assessing life changes and resulting needs

Marlene M Rosenkoetter
Georgia Regents University, USA

Abstract

Older adults, particularly frail elders, are vulnerable in disasters not only due to their chronological age, but to any physical, cognitive or psychological problems, limited mobility, decreased sensory awareness and economic constraints. While attention to their immediate needs following a disaster is critical, the long term effects can be devastating and are often neglected with the passage of time. Because women generally outlive men, many of the poor elderly are women with special considerations. Months after a disaster, many older residents will still not have received money for housing, damages, and funds to deal with their environmental, physical and emotional scars. While increasing emphasis has been placed on preparation for disasters, not all can be predicted. There can also be complacency and the inability to prepare. Resilience and reliance are critical. Resilience for personal recovery and reliance not only on one's own resources, but the resources of others will often determine the time it takes to return to any former state. Having health care, governmental and volunteer organizations participate in this recovery are essential. By having a model, a framework from which to plan, these external groups and agencies can prepare and assist more effectively with the long term recovery efforts of individuals, families and communities. A flex-model is proposed to facilitate this process based on the Life Patterns, an open system model of overlapping elements: roles, relationships, support groups, self-esteem, and use of time and life structure, intertwined to form a whole through which each is optimized.

Biography

M. Rosenkoetter is a nurse researcher with over 30 years of experience, extensive publications and presentations, disaster research, and an international health care consultant. S. Quarles is a retired Colonel with 28 years in active and reserve components, and strategic leadership experience in military disasters and warfare operations, and Fellow of the American Council on Education. Both are Fellows in the American Academy of Nursing.

mrosenkoetter@gru.edu