



People tolerate natural disasters better than man-made ones and media has an important influence on this

Rudski and colleagues (2011) proposed another explanation for the preference of natural disasters observed in previous studies (Baum et al., 1983; Brun, 1992; Siegrist & Sutterlin, 2014). According to them, when assessing risk, people include their expectancies about the typical severity of an event, which are argued to be formed through personal experience and the media (Rudski et al., 2011). For example, many people have survived or know someone who has survived heat waves or an earthquake; hence these risks are perceived as less dangerous in relation to the unknown events such as chemical poisoning (Rudski, 2011). Additionally, heatwaves (as well as droughts) are considered to be low-visibility events with little media coverage regarding the seriousness of their consequences (Aten & Boan, 2016). Similarly, people tend to ignore the risk of excessive sun exposure, since it is something they have experienced without immediate negative consequences (Rudski et al., 2001). On the other hand, rare and highly dreadful disasters are usually extensively covered by the mass media, which result in the overestimation of risk related to rare disasters (Gierlach, Belsher, & Beutler, 2010). Extensive media coverage and high-visibility of an event further increase the perceived risk of rare events such as terrorist attacks or nuclear accidents, regardless of the objective risk level (Nerb & Spada, 2001).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Individual/collective memory](#), [Attitudes toward the media](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#), [Response](#), [Recovery](#), [All disaster phases](#)

Types of Actors Concerned: [Non-active citizens](#), [Media](#)

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#), [Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations](#), [Man-made intentional hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Inform citizens about the risk they may face and about possible actions and measures, they can take to reduce vulnerability and better prepare themselves](#)
- [Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 60\)](#)

This file was generated automatically on: 12.02.2019.

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