



Links between age and gender and the vulnerability hypothesis

The results of previous studies regarding the influence of age and gender on perceived risk of natural disasters are rather inconclusive. A number of studies showed no differences between men/women, and younger/older people in terms of perceived risk (Burningham, Fielding, & Thrush, 2008; Siegrist & Gutscher, 2006; Tekeli-Yeşil, Dedeoglu, Braun Fahrlaender, & Tanner, 2010). On the other hand, some studies showed that women, and elderly people tend to be more concerned about natural disasters (Ho et al., 2008; Kellens, Zaalberg, Neutens, Vanneuville, & De Maeyer, 2011), and that they tend to estimate potential losses as higher (Karanci, Aksit, & Dirik, 2005). Consequently, results regarding the effect of gender and age on mitigating and protective behaviour in the context of natural disasters are also inconclusive. Some studies demonstrated that men are more likely to take no mitigation behaviours or to take less of it compared to women (Ho et al., 2008), while other studies found no gender differences related to mitigation behaviour (Raška, 2015). Some authors have proposed the so-called vulnerability hypothesis in order to explain the observed differences, suggesting that females and elderly feel more vulnerable and in less control, hence they perceive higher levels of risk in general (Flynn et al., 1994). Alternatively, a group of authors stated that effects of age and gender are probably mediated by other intervening factors (such as education and income), which must be taken into account in future studies (Wachinger et al., 2013).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Age-related roles](#), [Gender roles](#)

Disaster Phases: [Prevention](#), [Preparedness](#), [Response](#)

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

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Consider vulnerable groups when designing and implementing disaster response measures](#)
- [Empower vulnerable groups \(i.e. children, elderly, and people with disabilities\) by including them in disaster management decision-making and actions](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 64\)](#)

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