



The severity of risk consequences influences perceived risk of future disasters

It has been shown that the relationship between previous experience and risk perception is mediated by the severity of experienced damage and the amount of time that has passed since the experience (Wachinger et al., 2013). Namely, studies have shown that if experienced disaster had low severity people tend to believe that future events would also have less severe outcomes (Halpern-Felsher et al., 2001). Hence, previous experience results in a false sense of security and lower level of perceived risk (Siegrist & Gutscher, 2006; Wachinger et al., 2013). In other words, the disaster experience with benign consequences tends to provoke optimism bias, which reduces the motivation for engaging in protective behaviours (Lawrence et al., 2014). These results demonstrate that perceived risk of future disasters is not influenced by the previous experience itself, but rather by the severity of consequences experienced in the disaster (Wachinger et al., 2013).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Individual/collective memory](#)

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

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

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Develop risk assessments methodologies, which consider cultural factors, the manner in which people cognitively process information and which employ a gender perspective](#)

Source

[Deliverable D4.1 "Mapping risk perception concepts in the context of disasters" \(page 65\)](#)

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