



Ethnicity as a risk for heat-related disasters

Only few studies have specifically addressed the issue of ethnicity as a risk factor for heat-related human health (Yardley et al. 2011) clearly indicating a knowledge gap. In particular, in a recent study (Hansen et al. 2013) the authors reported that social and economic disparities, living conditions, language barriers, and occupational exposure are among the many factors contributing to heat-susceptibility among minority ethnic groups in the United States. In a previous study carried out in the USA (MMWR 2008) other authors revealed that Mexican and Central American immigrants who come to California to work in the agricultural and construction sectors are particularly vulnerable because of the cumulative impacts of their long workdays under heat strenuous conditions and their low capacity to protect themselves on the job. Furthermore, most of complications caused by heat conditions occurred in adults aged 20 - 54 years, a population typically considered at low-risk for heat illnesses (MMWR 2008). Heat wave studies in the United States have shown that African Americans minority groups are particularly vulnerable to heat waves (Whitman et al. 1997; Klinenberg 1999; Healy 2005; Shonkoff et al. 2009). More recently, other authors (Yardley et al. 2011) revealed that certain "non-White" minority groups in North America have shown higher morbidity and mortality rates associated with hot weather. However, this is probably due to disparities in socio-economic status rather than inherited ethnicity itself. For example, it is known that a higher proportion of African-Americans do not have access to home air conditioning compared to the general population (O'Neill et al. 2005). For this reason, disparities of these technologies, such as air conditioner ownership, is of great importance because some households may rely on air conditioning during extreme heat events and days when communities are instructed to stay indoors and avoid outdoor pollution exposures (Shonkoff et al. 2011).

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Ethnicity](#)

Disaster Phases: [Response](#)

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

Hazards: [Natural hazards](#)

Recommendations:

- [Foster the adoption of a culture of disaster prevention and resilience by informing and motivating citizens to take action](#)

Source

[Deliverable D3.1 "Cultural factors and technologies" \(page 62\)](#)

This file was generated automatically on: 12.02.2019.

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<https://culturalmap.carismand.eu/a/3-1-31-ethnicity-as-a-risk-for-heat-related-disasters>





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