



PRESS RELEASE

ASN Contact: Christine Feheley
(202) 640-4638 | cfeheley@asn-online.org

STUDY REVEALS RISK OF DEATH AFTER HURRICANES FOR PEOPLE ON DIALYSIS

Risk is especially high immediately after storms.

Highlights

- In an analysis of 1997–2017 data on U.S. patients requiring dialysis, exposure to a hurricane was associated with a higher risk of death.
- Risk of death was highest immediately after a hurricane and waned over time.

Washington, DC (July 14, 2022) — Many individuals with kidney failure rely on dialysis, but access to this life-sustaining therapy can be impeded by extreme weather events—such as hurricanes—that disrupt power, water, and transportation systems. A recent study in *JASN* found that patients undergoing dialysis face a higher risk of dying in the 30 days after a hurricane.

Because climate change is expected to intensify extreme weather events like hurricanes, it's important to understand and address the toll that hurricanes take on people who need dialysis. To provide insights, Matthew Blum, MD (Johns Hopkins School of Medicine) and his colleagues analyzed information on patients requiring maintenance dialysis who were registered in the United States Renal Data System and who initiated treatment between 1997 and 2017 in one of 108 hurricane-afflicted counties.

The researchers identified 187,388 patients and 27 hurricanes, and 29,849 patients were exposed to at least one hurricane. A total of 105,398 deaths were recorded in 529,339 person-years of follow-up on dialysis. (This means that among 529 patients, there were approximately 105 deaths over one year.) Hurricane exposure was associated with a 13% higher risk of death after adjusting for demographic and socioeconomic factors. Also, patients' risk of dying was highest immediately after a hurricane and waned over time.

“Our findings suggest that dialysis-dependent patients are vulnerable during hurricanes and highlight the need to safeguard this population, especially given the predicted increased hurricane intensity with climate change,” said Dr. Blum. “Anything that disrupts someone’s ability to obtain dialysis—including extreme weather—can put them at risk of death. There are groups such as the Kidney Community Emergency Response Coalition that seek to prepare for these events.”

Dr. Blum's co-authors include Yijing Feng, MHS, G. Brooke Anderson, PhD, Dorry L. Segev, MD, PhD, Mara McAdams-DeMarco, PhD, and Morgan E. Grams, MD, PhD.

Disclosures: The authors reported no financial disclosures.

The article, titled "Hurricanes and mortality among patients receiving dialysis," will appear online at <http://jasn.asnjournals.org/> on July 14, 2022; doi: 10.1681/ASN.2021111520.

The content of this article does not reflect the views or opinions of The American Society of Nephrology (ASN). Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the authors. ASN does not offer medical advice. All content in ASN publications is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions, or adverse effects. This content should not be used during a medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Please consult your doctor or other qualified health care provider if you have any questions about a medical condition, or before taking any drug, changing your diet or commencing or discontinuing any course of treatment. Do not ignore or delay obtaining professional medical advice because of information accessed through ASN. Call 911 or your doctor for all medical emergencies.

About ASN

Since 1966, ASN has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has more than 20,000 members representing 132 countries. For more information, visit www.asn-online.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

###