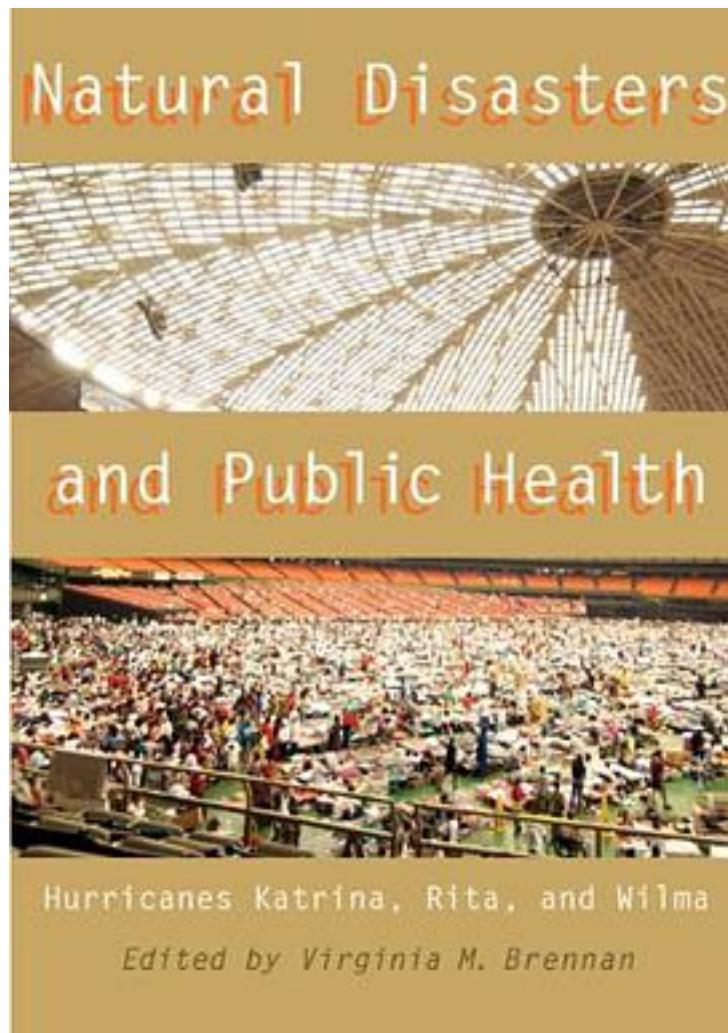


Natural Disasters and Public Health



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The events of Hurricane Katrina have been seared into our collective consciousness,

revealing a glaring discrepancy between the experiences of privileged whites and those of low-income blacks. The latter faced a scale of physical danger and mental trauma that the former largely escaped. While residents with resources evacuated in cars, poor residents were left to fend for themselves-without food, water, medicine, shelter, or safety. Many poor African Americans died; many more lost loved ones and all of their material belongings. Natural Disasters and Public Health analyzes the public health effects of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma on minorities in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. The contributors assess the overall health policy and public health implications of these three natural disasters. While most of the current literature on disaster relief focuses on FEMA, race, urban planning, and the environment, Natural Disasters and Public Health takes a broader perspective, advocating the inclusion of comprehensive public health policy in future disaster relief programs. Unflinching photographs-many from the Astrodome in Houston after the evacuation of New Orleans and including the triage clinic set up there by the Baylor School of Medicine-illustrate the poor conditions under which health care professionals and aid workers ministered to the sick and injured. Reports from the field by disaster relief professionals and research articles by scholars present lessons learned and offer tools and guidance for future planning. This volume is a valuable resource for public policymakers, health care agencies, providers who plan for large-scale emergencies, academics teaching disaster relief courses, and professionals working in this field.

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