



Hazard Reduction & Recovery Center

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“The Protective Action Decision Model: Theoretical Modifications & Additional Evidence.”

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For a long time, researchers have been interested in explaining the process where people respond to environmental cues or socially shared warnings about environmental hazards and disasters. The Protective Action Decision Model (PADM) is a multistage model that is based on findings from research on these kinds of citizen responses. The model combines the processing of information from social and environmental cues with messages that social sources transmit through communication channels to those at risk. This article is a literary review that describes an updated version of the PADM and summarizes the research that supports its main components.

Findings

The purpose of this study is to describe three applications of the PADM: development of risk communication programs, evacuation modeling, and adoption of long-term hazard adjustments. The study also identifies the research that is needed to respond to unsolved issues. The study finds that warning systems are different in how well they get attention and provide clear messages that will change the way that residents from risk areas understand a threat. The perceived impact characteristics, such as speed of onset, existence of environmental cues, scope of impact and duration of impact, influences the relationship between characteristics of the hazard agent characteristics (likelihood of a major release, ease of risk reduction, and likelihood of release prevention) and expected personal impacts (immediate death, delayed cancer, genetic effects, and total property loss).

Implications

Though risk perception is usually an important factor that affects protective action, there are other perceptions that are also important. It's important to consider how invasive a hazard is perceived along with perceptions of protective actions and stakeholders. The awareness of the residents in risk areas to available changes that reduce risk to hazards and accurate perceptions of what those adjustments include helps citizens negotiate the relationship between hazard experience and adjustment. Although these applications are in their early stages, the evidence suggests that the PADM is continuing to evolve into a useful framework for managing responses to environmental hazards in society.