Abstract

Using the Health Belief Model, this project practicum explored emergency preparedness through interviews with fourteen study participants sixty-five years old or older and three key informants. The goals of this project practicum were to understand the potential needs of adults sixty-five years old and older in an emergency or disaster and to improve the effectiveness of emergency outreach education and messaging. Prior storm experience and reported time living in Issaquah appeared to influence preparedness activity among study participants. Exposure to media and emergency preparedness messaging appeared to have a lesser effect on emergency preparedness activity. Project practicum results suggest that help from neighbors, friends, and family may be the best way to keep vulnerable older adults safe in an emergency or disaster. Thus, these neighbors, friends, and family need to know about emergency preparedness even though it seems to be less effective than life experience. The City of Issaquah appears to be on the right track educating people with its Map Your Neighborhood, Citizen Emergency Response Team training program, and its emergency preparedness booths at community events.