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Wading in the Waters: Spirituality and Older Black Katrina Survivors

Erma J. Lawson, PhD, RN
Cecelia Thomas, PhD, LMSW-AP

Abstract: Hurricane Katrina has drawn increased interest in coping strategies, spirituality, and mental health among low-income Blacks. Given the paucity of information available regarding the role of spirituality in surviving Hurricane Katrina, this qualitative study explores active coping strategies of older Blacks. Older respondents who were evacuated to a Texas retirement apartment complex participated in a series of three in-depth interviews (starting approximately three weeks after their arrival in the host state and continuing weekly). Without exception, the findings indicate that this population coped with Katrina and its aftermath through reliance on a Higher Power. The relationship to a Higher Power did not necessarily translate into church membership. The conclusions of the respondents' spiritual coping mechanisms revealed the following themes: 1) regular communication with a supernatural power; 2) miracles of faith through this source of guidance and protection; 3) daily reading of the Bible and various spiritual and devotional materials; and 4) helping others as a consequence of faith and devotion to a supreme being. This study indicates that spirituality promotes emotional resilience in the aftermath of traumatic events such as Hurricane Katrina. These findings also point to the need for researchers to reconsider expressions of spirituality based solely on church membership/attendance and prayer, and to consider redefining spiritual coping as a form of cultural capital.

Key words: Spirituality, religion, African American, Katrina, coping, narratives.

Coping with distress following a hurricane has been a major research interest in public health and sociology.¹⁻³ Researchers have often viewed such coping in terms of psychological resources, cognitive strategies, and behavioral techniques.⁴ For example, hardiness is a positive psychological coping trait; interpretations of an event are considered a cognitive technique;⁵ behavioral strategies include yoga and biofeedback, among many others.⁶ Notably, previous studies have often paid little attention to how older Black hurricane survivors cope.⁴⁻⁸

Katrina, at its height a category 5 hurricane, caused catastrophic damage.⁹⁻¹¹ Breached levees flooded 80% of New Orleans and resulted in \$75 billion in damages.⁹⁻¹¹ Katrina was responsible for at least 1,417 deaths; between 3,000 and 5,000 people remain missing and 1.5 million were displaced.¹² Although it is unclear how many will return, as

ERMA LAWSON is an Associate Professor of Medical Sociology at the University of North Texas (U-NT), where she can be reached at P.O. Box 311157, Denton, TX; elawson@unt.edu. *CECELIA THOMAS* is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work, and Addictions at U-NT.

of October 2005, approximately 50,000 households comprising mostly poor, Black American residents had no plans to return to New Orleans.¹² If that number is accurate, Katrina-induced migration will be the largest internal migration in a generation.¹¹⁻¹³

As sections of the New Orleans levee system collapsed, the natural disaster of Katrina deteriorated into a social debacle. Thousands of people, mostly Black and poor, many of them elderly, were trapped in the New Orleans Superdome and the city's convention center, or on rooftops, without electricity or food.¹⁰⁻¹² Many bodies that emerged from the floodwaters were of people aged 50 years or older,¹⁰⁻¹³ evidence of their low priority in the nation's response to Katrina.¹¹ Moreover, the consequences of this natural disaster are grave: 1.5 million people had to meet the challenge of where they would live or work, and pondered if they would ever return to their homes after such massive, widespread suffering.¹⁰⁻¹³ They faced the shock of losing loved ones while dealing with confusion over federal policies regarding disaster relief.

This article explores the coping of older Katrina survivors and seeks to stimulate innovative theoretically driven strategies to redefine Katrina-related coping mechanisms prominent for an older Black population. The article briefly reviews the literature on coping. It presents a qualitative study of how Katrina survivors coped to reestablish their lives.

Religious and spiritual coping. Beliefs in a Higher Power have influenced every aspect of the Black experience.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Religion provided hope and group identity throughout 250 years of slavery¹⁴⁻¹⁶ and previous research has extensively documented that religious institutions are important sources of support for Blacks.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ Specifically, an analysis of several national data sets by Chatters and colleagues found that 8 out of 10 Blacks reported that religious beliefs are very important to them, and 43.6% said they "almost always" sought spiritual comfort through religion.¹⁸

This is particularly true for older adults.¹⁹⁻²¹ For example, Keonig and colleagues in 1988 found that 45% of older Blacks coped with stressful life events through religious activity.²⁰ Around the same time, Krause and Tran also found that older Blacks relied on involvement in religious activities to buffer the effects of negative life events.²² Participation in church programs provided positive self-worth, thereby reducing psychological distress.

Furthermore, numerous studies have shown that Black use prayer as a resource.¹⁷⁻²⁸ According to Chatters and Taylor, 78% of a nationally-based representative sample of Blacks reported praying almost daily.²⁹ A significant number of Blacks believe in healing power of prayer compared with Whites and other racial/ethnic groups;²⁴⁻²⁵ approximately 50% of Blacks report requesting that others pray for them daily.²⁹ In 1995, McAddo found that 72% of Black women engaged in prayer for emotional support.³⁰ This is consistent with Hill et al., who found that Black mothers living in urban areas used prayer to cope with such problems as pervasive criminality.³¹ Similarly, Bryant-Davis found that Black survivors of childhood violence incorporated prayer and spiritual beliefs as a preferred method of coping with the associated trauma.³² A study of coping during the 9-11 terrorist attacks found that Black respondents, compared with other racial/ethnic groups are most likely to have reported praying to cope with the trauma of those events.³³ Prayers, Cook and Wiley suggest, are understood by Blacks (as well as others) as a direct link to God about problems in daily life.³⁴

Extensive research has also reported that Blacks rely on spiritual practices and

religious beliefs to cope with chronic and acute illness.^{30,35–38} For example, Blacks use prayer to cope with breast cancer,^{38–39} and to practice health prevention behavior;^{40–41} and to live with HIV⁴² and recovery from alcohol addiction.⁴³ Becker and Newsome found that religion influenced older Blacks to perform instrumental activities of daily living, irrespective of gender, age, education, and self-rated health status.⁴⁴

Older Blacks' tendency to seek spiritual comfort through prayer during personal crises operates irrespective of socioeconomic status.^{45–48} These findings underscore the prevalence of spirituality and prayer as a preferred means of coping with problems in this population.^{28,30–35,40–41,48–49}

Although researchers have documented the influence of religious practices and spiritual beliefs of Blacks, few studies have explored how religion and spirituality enable older Blacks to rebound following a natural disaster.

Methods

The research team recruited study participants from a residential adult senior citizen Texas facility that housed some Katrina survivors. Other residents at this facility were mostly upper-middle class, White senior citizens. The facility offered apartments that provided Katrina survivors with one- or two-bedroom (one-bathroom) units as needed and as available.

Subjects. The investigators purposefully selected study participants who had been dislocated by Hurricane Katrina. The inclusion criteria were no mental or physical disability, no previous suicide attempts, and no current use of illicit drugs.

Data procedures. Before the data collection began, the research team obtained institutional review board (IRB) approval from the University of North Texas and held an informational meeting with the facility's director. The director presented the idea of the research study to the Katrina survivors who fit the inclusion criteria. Approximately 20 Katrina residents resided at the facility; 12 respondents met the inclusion criterion and 8 respondents volunteered to participate. However, as the study progressed, other residents approached the team to tell their stories. All of the respondents completed informed consent forms and were told that this was an exploratory study to understand Katrina survivors' coping and to make service delivery recommendations.

Data collection. Limited demographic information was obtained from participants via a data sheet and the research team collected qualitative data using focus groups. However, following the first interview, it was apparent that this was not the best method to use with the study population due to the inordinate time required for each member to relate his or her experiences. Consequently, the team decided to conduct interviews with one or two individuals at a time. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the research team or by a doctoral student. The research team crosschecked transcriptions.

Most of the respondents participated in three interviews and the researchers made an effort to select times and a location convenient for the respondents. All of the interviews took place in the study participants' living rooms and often lasted much longer than expected, from 1–3 hours. The investigators collected data over a 10-month period.

Interview guide. The research team collected data using interviews to understand

the experiences of older Katrina survivors. The first question established rapport, and follow-up questions focused on coping and the failure of the federal, state, and local governments to coordinate service delivery. The first interview included some of the following items as prompts:

- A number of people have coped with traumatic events. Tell us how you have coped with previous traumatic situations.
- Walk us through your experiences of Hurricane Katrina.
- Tell us how you coped with each phase of Katrina.

The first interviews generated as much as 52 pages of transcription; the transcriptions averaged approximately 32 pages each. The third interviews averaged approximately 40 pages, as the themes were re-defined and re-conceptualized.

Data analysis. The investigators read the transcripts, and each member of the team used open coding to generate an emergent set of categories. Grounded theory was used to develop the codes for categories that the data might fit.⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ The team members analyzed the data line-by-line, yielding a total of about 60 codes on spirituality themes. The principal investigator collapsed the coding schemes using Ethnograph V5.0 for Windows PC (Qualis Research Associates, P.O. Box 50437, Colorado Springs, CO 80949), a computerized qualitative analysis program, to determine the consistency of those schemes, to search and note segments within the data, and to mark codes. A coding paradigm was developed for conditions and strategies of the major themes; regular comparison across interviews was made of themes. Box 1 depicts sample coding of interview responses, collapsed by theme. An audit trail, peer reviews, and member checks were incorporated in the study to ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

Participant observation. In addition to interviewing the study participants, the researchers actively observed the respondents in their social worlds. During the study, a few of the respondents requested specific favors, such as rides to church or to the local shopping mall to help relieve their social isolation. Throughout the study processes, the researchers recorded their observations of significant events affecting the participants as memos. According to Denzin, the emphasis of qualitative research is on in-depth understanding of the social context.⁵² Participant observation created a holistic understanding of coping among older Black Katrina survivors.

Reflexivity in the study. The participant observation memos were distinct from the field notes recorded following data collection. Although a researcher conducts a preliminary data analysis during data collection, reflexive analyses sensitize the researcher to particular themes and thus inform data analysis and interpretation. Murphy et al. emphasize the role of *reflexivity* in how researchers' own socialization and personal biography influence data analysis.⁵³

Acknowledging reflexivity ensures that researchers' assumptions are to some degree explicit. In the present study, the researchers achieved this aim by exploring their own racial/ethnic identities (Black) and early socialization. As researchers we perceived ourselves as members of the Black community and as having much in common with the Katrina survivors. As women of color, we, too, sensed heightened vulnerability in the view of the government's response to Katrina. Although we realized that differences

Box 1.**RESEARCH THEMES OF COPING STRATEGIES:
SEPTEMBER, 2005–JUNE, 2006**

Theme description and coding	Sample coping responses by respondents
Constant divine communication	<p>“I knew me and my family was going to be alright because of the power of prayer.”</p> <p>“Prayer helps me to know what God wants me to do.”</p> <p>“I talk to God daily and say the Lord’s Prayer and ask the Lord to watch over me, because I feel I am favored by God.”</p>
Miracles of faith	<p>“I’ve come this far by faith and trust in God.”</p> <p>“God does not put any more on us than we can bear.”</p> <p>“Believe me, there is a God and He is in control.”</p> <p>“Faith and God got me through. I knew I was going to be alright.”</p>
Inspirational reading	<p>“Every morning is my quiet time with God.”</p> <p>“Daily I read the scripture and spend at least a good half hour every day reading.”</p> <p>“I read meditations every day, a little meditation in order to survive and to go on.”</p>
Coping by helping and assisting others	<p>“There was a lady sitting there, and I asked her, where is your family? She said her family dropped her off. She was outside the Superdome so we took her in and took care of her until the last day. She was in her 70s.”</p> <p>“God had me there for a reason. I had to get an ambulance for a guy who made the newspapers by looking for his wife, but he died on the 19th.”</p> <p>“A meal is the tie that binds, so I cooked and distributed food to those who needed it.”</p> <p>“One of the girls I was with, mother could not walk, she was crippled, so someone had to carry her on their back and walk through the water.”</p>

exist between the Katrina survivors and us, many of the study participants grew up in the South and reported strong religious traditions similar to our own experiences. According to Murphy et al., researchers may be blinded to the data if they fail to recognize differences and similarities between the researcher and respondents.⁵³ Thus, the researchers concentrated on not losing sight of their own identities and how they might be playing a role during the interpretation phase of the study.

Results

Sample demographics. The sample comprised 10 adults, 2 men and 8 women. SPSS was used to analyze descriptive information of respondents. The sample consisted of Katrina survivors 55 years and older, with the oldest aged 67. The majority were widowed; one participant experienced the Katrina-related death of a spouse. Most of the respondents relocated to Texas from the poorest parish of New Orleans. All of the respondents grew-up in two parent households. One respondent was raised by a stepmother. Eight respondents completed high school; one completed 10 years of education; and one completed four years of college. The typical respondent was approximately 58.3 years of age, female, widowed, with 12 years of education.

Identified themes. *Prayer throughout the day.* Prayer throughout the day is defined as talking to God minute to minute as a personal and intimate habit. A distinctive one-on-one relationship to a Higher Power was incorporated into the respondents' daily lives. For example, they reported praying throughout the day and seeking Divine guidance. Often, these prayers were composed spontaneously, or offered in silence, and involved thanking God for the positive experiences that occurred during Katrina. For instance, the respondents reported thanking a Higher Power for the rescue from rooftops, appropriate sleeping space in shelters, and moving to permanent housing. According to the respondents, a Higher Power was involved in every activity; they believed that God always spoke to them, and they always listened. As Anne, a 55-year-old woman, who experienced a great deal of trauma at the Superdome stated, "I talk to God constantly 'cause He will love and protect you every step of the way."

The respondents' continual communication with God involved a personal relationship with Him, and not necessarily church membership. For instance, Celeste, a 55-year-old middle-class Katrina survivor whose husband died about 5 years before the hurricane struck, described her personal relationship with God as follows: "I don't go to church. I stopped going to church years earlier. I pray and talk to God every day, and constantly. There is not a minute which goes by that I do not talk to God." Elaborating on this theme of persistent communication, Carl a 65-year-old male and retired school teacher explained: "I talk to God daily and say the Lord's Prayer and ask the Lord to watch over me, because I feel that I am favored by God." According to Carl, "favored by God" translates into viewing God as gracious, caring, and ever-present. In the midst of what they viewed as unjust FEMA treatment and their painful awareness of an unmerciful society, the respondents reported that they believed God was just, loving, and merciful, and would exert the final judgment and deliver them from FEMA.

Rita, a 57-year-old woman who had a history of drug addiction, recalled the incident of misplacing her grandchildren. She reported:

I freaked out and prayed, 'God please work it out for me.' Work it out, cause I could not go and get my grandbabies. People said if I went back, I would drown. When we got to the Superdome, we sat and then I started to pray.

Rita paused and tearfully noted, "I said Jesus, it is in your name. What is this here? Is the world coming to an end?" And I asked God for forgiveness for all that I have done 'cause I did not know what I was 'bout to face." She emphatically added, "It looked as though I was facing the last days of my life."

These findings are consistent with research that documents that private religious practices such as prayer often mediate the impact of stress for a large number of Black women.^{24–25,27,35–36,38}

Divine miracles. The findings showed that the respondents' experiences of miracles represented a form of coping defined by participants as God's power flowing to people who pray. The respondents perceived miracles as unpredictable daily occurrences that solve apparently insoluble problems. For instance, Beth, aged 60, who slept outside of the Superdome on hard concrete for hours, believed that God performed miracles throughout the experience. She remarked: "Even though we didn't have control of where we were going, I thought God was controlling where I needed to end up. You can't figure out what God's purpose is, but you know the purpose was for you to be here."

Numerous narratives illustrated the survivors' profound belief in miracles. For instance, Diane, a 55-year-old female survivor recalled her belief in miracles. She stated: "God was there. He blessed me. My home is safe. A tree could have fell on it or anything. And then when I got to the shelter, I was the first one to leave. You see the good Lord removed me from there before I was hurt."

Essie, a 61-year-old widow, also reported her view of a miracle that allowed a short wait for the bus to Texas as well as seats for her family. She explained: "It only took 20 minutes to get on the bus to leave New Orleans. Other families waited hours. Before we got on the bus, they were separating whole families. Then when it was my turn; they put families together on one bus." According to Essie, a miracle occurred that decreased the wait time as well as provided space on the bus to travel to Texas, which reaffirmed her belief in miracles. Other respondents also reported miracles surrounding finding family members; locating the right church to attend; determining an appropriate physician; and even discovering suitable beauty/nail salons or barber shops.

Inspirational reading and coping. Although the hurricane and subsequent breached levees undermined the respondents' sense of control, they often regained it through the use of religious reading—the Bible, inspirational books, and daily devotional meditation books—to cope with Katrina. Carl reported that while he was in the Superdome, he read the Bible daily to gain strength. Another survivor, 59-year-old Jim, explained the effects of reading the scriptures as he awaited rescue from his rooftop. He reported:

Every day, I read Psalm 91—'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, My refuge and my fortress,

My God, in whom I trust? I did not read the Bible daily, so now reading the Bible bolsters my faith.

The respondents reported receiving comfort from readings from the Old Testament, which speaks of God dwelling among and caring for His people. Jim also said, "I can look back where God was working in my life like Psalms 91:11–16: 'For He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways.'" Approximately 80% of the respondents reported that reading the Bible allowed them to increase their understanding of God.

The respondents also read inspirational books and materials to develop a "closer, more fruitful walk with God." For example, *Guideposts*, a devotional magazine, provided inspiration and encouragement, and the respondents reported they experienced the Spirit connecting them to God through the words of that magazine. Rita explained:

I read meditations every day, a little meditation in order to survive and to go on. For instance, [reading from the magazine] this one reads, 'I want to be worthy of Thy blessings of happiness and good fortune. So, please let me walk each day in Thy presence.' These verses help me to stay cool 'cause I have to concentrate on me.

Assisting others and coping. To further assist them in coping with Katrina, the respondents devoted much time to helping others. The act of assisting people less fortunate than themselves is rooted in the respondents' religious beliefs. One respondent recited his philosophy: "Giving to others and helping those in need is how God blesses you." Frequently, the respondents exchanged clothing, food, and various services in a spirit of cooperation and assistance.

The respondents typically reordered their priorities, giving low priority to mundane concerns and high priority to helping others, and reported gaining positive meaning from the experience. Beverly, age 55, for example, described how many individuals helped others reach the Superdome. She remarked, "One of the girls I was with, her mother could not walk; she was crippled. So someone had to carry her and pick her up on their back and walk through the water."

Beverly also recalled that, on seeing a woman sitting alone outside the Superdome, she felt compelled to help. She explained,

We made a homeless shelter, like with cardboards, and stayed there until we left. There was a lady sitting there, and I asked her, 'Where is your family?' And she said, 'I don't know. My family dropped me off.' She was outside the Superdome, so we took her in. She was in her seventies, and we took care of her until the last day. I asked people to take her to the hospital because she had problems. So, they took her, and I was happy.

In some cases, the respondents related helping to divine purpose and, ultimately, to coping. Rita stated; "There was a guy here who was sick, . . . like I said, God has me here for a reason. I had to get an ambulance for him, but later he died." Rita arranged transportation to church for the deceased man's widow and provided assistance to completing FEMA money voucher forms. Respondents valued helping individuals in

worse shape than themselves. Another male respondent recalled distributing food to and cooking for other survivors, actions symbolizing the spiritual component of collective Katrina survivorship. Indeed, according to one respondent, a meal is the tie that binds and through the preparation and serving of New Orleans gumbo and fried okra, as well as other services, Katrina survivors helped and comforted each other. Others described helping those who had poor reading and writing skills to complete extensive FEMA documentation for housing vouchers as well as passing on information about the latest FEMA deadlines. As Carl, Jim, Rita, and other respondents stated, "When I help another person, it helps me to take my mind off my problems."

Participant observation results. The participant observations confirmed the results found in the interviews. First, the respondents were observed talking to God throughout the day and relying on Divine guidance when deciding where to live, or which church to attend. Second, the observations revealed that a number of respondents not only read daily meditations, but purchased various television ministers' books and called 800 numbers for prayer. Third, often the respondents voiced deep disappointment over the loss of family Bibles due to the storm and the fact that most shelters failed to provide Bibles upon their arrival. Fourth, a large majority of the respondents expected miracles after FEMA failures.

Follow-up. Thirteen months after Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the United States, most of the respondents reported that they were still dealing with some of the same issues as in the first interviews, such as the FEMA deadlines for housing support. One respondent remarked, "A lot of people are still having housing problems and a lot of them cannot live alone. New Orleans is still stalling in rebuilding." They described themselves as having their lives on hold and seemed to be grieving for the loss of their city: "There is nothing to go back to, no jobs or homes." Yet that respondent's belief in a Higher Power remains: "I am trusting in the Lord. He will guide. I pray, and reading helps keep me spiritually uplifted."

Discussion

This exploratory analysis examined the coping of older Black Katrina survivors. In this sample, there was extensive reliance on a Higher Power to cope with the hurricane and its aftermath. Unceasing communication with a Higher Power represented an integral dimension of the respondents' faith and resulted in spiritual strength. Indeed, ongoing communication with a Higher Power has typically played a central role in Blacks' efforts to endure and respond to life's challenges.^{14-16,25,45-46} The respondents in the present study viewed their relationship with God as personal, essential, and unique, providing comfort, inspiration, and guidance. Importantly, the respondents' spiritual practices and behaviors were not dependent on church attendance, or participation in organized church activities.

The continual talk with a Higher Power can be viewed as an expansion of prayer, and the respondents reported it as the most frequently used coping strategy. Clearly, unceasing communication with a Higher Power assisted the respondents in gaining control over threatening events. As a result, they often exhibited courage and determination to cope with the dislocation of Katrina. This is consistent with previous literature

that documented that while other sources of well-being decline with age, relationship with a supreme being may become more important over time.^{19–20,22}

A majority of the respondents reported that miracles had occurred in their lives during the hurricane and its aftermath. Understanding the respondents' belief in miracles when they prayed requires viewing their experiences from a particular perspective. Historically, Blacks have believed in and practiced the paradox of faith—the certainty of the uncertainty^{14–16,51}—and reported having had spiritual experiences involving unexplainable coincidences.²⁵ Although the respondents in the present study experienced a great deal of pain and loss, these survivors expressed an unfaltering belief that the reality of miracles springs from living as people who are united with God.

The study also found that scriptures and inspirational materials served as sources of coping. Although, historically, Blacks have engaged in Bible-reading, the study finding that many of the respondents read inspirational books written by non-Black authors suggests some convergence of traditionally Black religious materials with those of their White American counterparts. The message is that the world is in a crisis, but that belief in old-time religion results in divine protection. This message was expressed by a large proportion of the participants.

The data reported here reveal that the tradition among Blacks of helping others, including older people, clearly helped these Katrina survivors cope. This is reminiscent of such historical practices as mutual benefit societies of early churches,¹⁵ care-giving and support of neighbors, and the exchanges of goods, services, and shared bathrooms in depression-era Chicago tenements^{14,54} Helping others less fortunate than themselves provided relief and the capacity to adjust and cope with the tragedy. These findings tie in with a more general body of literature indicating that, when faced with a threat, individuals will usually help others to bolster their self-esteem as well as to find emotional healing.^{2,4,14,23–25} It is important to recognize that the act of assisting others combines a faith-based motive with psychological processes, resulting in the respondents' assisting others to cope with problems. Although people generally assist each other when a natural disaster strikes, in this sample, Blacks' religious faith guided their actions to help others.

Overall, the respondents' lifestyles and ethos can be viewed as important elements of social capital in view of the fact that Blacks' spiritual practices and religious beliefs often reflect positive coping. According to the World Health Organization, social capital is embodied in social norms and beliefs to facilitate support.⁵⁵ In this way, social capital enhances health. Consequently, in this sample, the positive effects of non-organizational spiritual practices may counterbalance some of the negative distress associated with Katrina.

Additional research is needed to clarify how different types of religious involvement may mediate the effects of a natural disaster. For instance, researchers must investigate how speaking in tongues, divine revelations, divine healing, visions, fasting, prophecies, and tithing as well as the usage of prayer cloths, praise dance, and listening to gospel music relate to the mental health of Blacks and others. Future research must address how physiological measures, spirituality, and coping are interrelated. Expressions of spirituality through service to others or passing on information to other older natural disaster survivors also deserves future research consideration. Understanding Blacks'

spirituality provides an opportunity for assessing coping and for planning culturally appropriate disaster responses.

Limitations. The limitations of this study are the following: First, the respondents retrospectively recalled the Katrina experience. Second, the sample size is small and findings cannot be generalized without great caution to any larger group. Third, only one research site was utilized. It is unclear whether Katrina survivors in other housing arrangements (e.g., single family housing, traditional apartments) might recall different experiences. Fourth, the sample was homogeneous, mostly women of lower socioeconomic status. However, the sample is consistent with the demographics of Katrina survivors. The strength of this study is the use of in-depth interviews to discover perceived coping mechanisms immediately on the survivors' arrival in Texas.

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