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New Report Outlines Path to Improving Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery for Older Canadians

Recommends enhanced training for health care providers among 29 recommendations

TORONTO – Today, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA), *Closing the Gaps: Advancing Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery for Older Adults*, authored by Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA, showing that older Canadians consistently experience the greatest proportion of casualties during and after disasters in Canada.

“Older adults consistently experience the greatest proportion of casualties during and after emergencies and disasters in Canada, and internationally, when compared to younger age groups,” said Dr. Samir Sinha. This goal of this report is to provide support to governments and first responders on better emergency preparedness for older Canadians living at home, in the community, or in congregate settings.

The report, prepared in collaboration with the Canadian Red Cross (CRC), notes that COVID-19 is not unique in its disproportionate effect on older Canadians. In 2010, more than half of all deaths resulting from heat waves in Quebec were among persons aged 75 years or older. In 2017, wildfires in British Columbia and floods in Quebec, older adults were hit the hardest due to poorly coordinated protocols that left them vulnerable. More recently, 97% of Canada’s COVID-19 deaths have occurred in Canadians 60 years of older.

The report surveys current evidence and best practices to propose 29 recommendations for governments, care organizations, institutions, health care providers, emergency response personnel, older adults, and their unpaid caregivers to better prepare for disasters and emergencies. Among the recommendations is a call for health care providers and emergency management and response personnel to receive training on providing care to older adults and their unpaid caregivers before, during, and after disasters.

Worse outcomes among older adults are often due to physiological age-related changes, such as impairments to sensory, cognitive, and mobility disabilities. Additionally, social isolation, a lack of access to social supports, and having limited financial resources also impact the resiliency of older adults during disasters and emergencies. The report stresses the need for evidence-informed, uniform, and collaborative emergency management interventions to meet the needs of all older adults across the country.

The full report and recommendations can be accessed in English, [here](#) and in French, [here](#).

About the National Institute on Ageing (NIA)

The National Institute on Ageing is a Ryerson University think tank focused on the realities of Canada’s ageing population. Follow us on Twitter [@RyersonNIA](#)

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