

Disaster survivors sought for evacuation study

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A British expert on human behaviour in major disasters has called for survivors, especially those of the 2005 London bombings, to come forward to help improve evacuation procedures.

Professor Ed Galea, from the University of Greenwich in southeast London, said he wants to hear from people who have experience of emergency evacuations.

"It is only by talking to survivors that we can really understand how people react to a crisis and significant dangers in the real world," Galea said Wednesday.

"Then we can improve the design of buildings and all forms of public transport, and their evacuation procedures, to save lives.

"One thing is clear -- Hollywood films consistently get it wrong. These inaccuracies tend to shape the way many people -- even safety professionals -- believe people actually react in [emergency situations](#)," Galea said.

The expert particularly wants to hear from people who survived the July 7, 2005 London bombings in which suicide attackers struck three Underground trains and a bus.

The long-awaited inquests into the 52 deaths, which got under way Monday, heard through eyewitness testimony how people reacted to the

situation.

Some instinctively fled the scene, while others stayed to try to help the casualties.

Galea's research is part of 1.8-million-pound (2.85-million-dollar, two-million-euro) European Union-funded project investigating emergency evacuation behaviour and the effect of cultural influences in a disaster.

"We also need to find out if people from different countries and cultures react differently in these crises, so that we can ensure cultural differences are incorporated into evacuation procedures and our modelling of building evacuation," he said.

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