

LSU researchers survey health impacts of Deepwater Horizon disaster on coastal Louisiana residents

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LSU Sociology Professors Matthew Lee and Troy Blanchard have conducted a survey to gain an understanding of the health impacts the ongoing Deepwater Horizon disaster is having on people living in Louisiana's coastal communities.

"Louisiana's [coastal communities](#) are the most geographically proximate human settlements to the actual disaster site," said Lee. "It is imperative that we begin work now to better understand the human impacts of this situation because the results are expected to be long-lasting and diverse."

The researchers, in conjunction with LSU's Public Policy Research Lab, or PPRL, conducted a telephone survey beginning June 17, less than 60 days after the onset of the Deepwater Horizon blowout. PPRL investigators conducted more than 900 interviews with coastal Louisiana residents near the spill site. Prominent findings include:

- Self-rated stress has more than doubled since the oil spill, as compared to a year ago.
- Nearly 60 percent of the sample population reported feeling almost constant worry about the oil spill during the week before being interviewed.
- More than eight out of 10 respondents worry over family, friends and community survival due to complications caused by the oil spill. Seven in 10 are worried about having to move because of it.
- More than 35 percent reported experiencing headaches or migraines or feeling sick to their stomach some of the time or almost constantly in the week

before the interview because of their worry over the oil spill; nearly 43 percent reported being unable to focus on their usual jobs or tasks because of their worry over the situation in the Gulf.

"The indication is, at least at this point, that the human health impacts are real and substantial," said Blanchard. "Right now, the data suggest that significant public health resources may be required to assist residents in the coastal parishes of Louisiana in dealing with the consequences of this disaster."

More information: To view the results, visit www.lsu.edu/pa/mediacenter/tip...heets/oilspill.shtml under "LSU Resources."

Provided by Louisiana State University

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