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# An Investigation of the Impact of La Soufrière Eruption on the Lives of Vincentians

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## KEY MESSAGES

1. Residents used diverse coping strategies during and after evacuation.
2. There are significant psychosocial and physical deficiencies in shelter services.
3. Collaborative disaster management strategies are urgently needed to address emotional and practical challenges.

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Enhancing quality of life is crucial for building sustainable communities through collaboration. Natural hazards like volcanic eruptions cause significant health, social, and economic impacts. This study explores the lived experiences of residents in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines following the La Soufrière volcano eruption.

**Materials and methods.** An interpretive phenomenological approach was used to capture residents' experiences in affected zones. Seventeen in-person focus group discussions with purposively selected participants were conducted. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with NVivo software.

**Results.** Key themes included coping strategies during and after evacuation, motivations for returning despite risks, concerns about food insecurity, and psychosocial and physical deficiencies in shelter services. Respondents expressed faith, hope, and optimism but also concerns about service availability and food adequacy. Emotional toll, feelings of unpreparedness, and difficulty managing challenges were emphasized.

**Conclusion.** Participants' fears and struggles highlight the urgent need for collaborative efforts to develop comprehensive disaster management strategies prioritizing psychological well-being, food security, and adequate shelter. Findings offer critical insights for improving disaster preparedness and response policies.

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KEY FIGURE




## REFERENCES

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2. Pan American Health Organization [PAHO], (2021). Volcano La Soufriere eruption in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. PAHO: bit.ly/PAHO-volcanic

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