

The BP Oil Disaster:

**Results from a Health and Economic
Impact Survey in Four Coastal
Louisiana Parishes**

On April 20, 2010, the British Petroleum (BP) Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, sinking two days later to become the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history. The explosion killed 11 workers and spilled approximately 270 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. According to BP, the subsequent application of dispersant added more than 1.8 million gallons of chemicals into the Gulf.

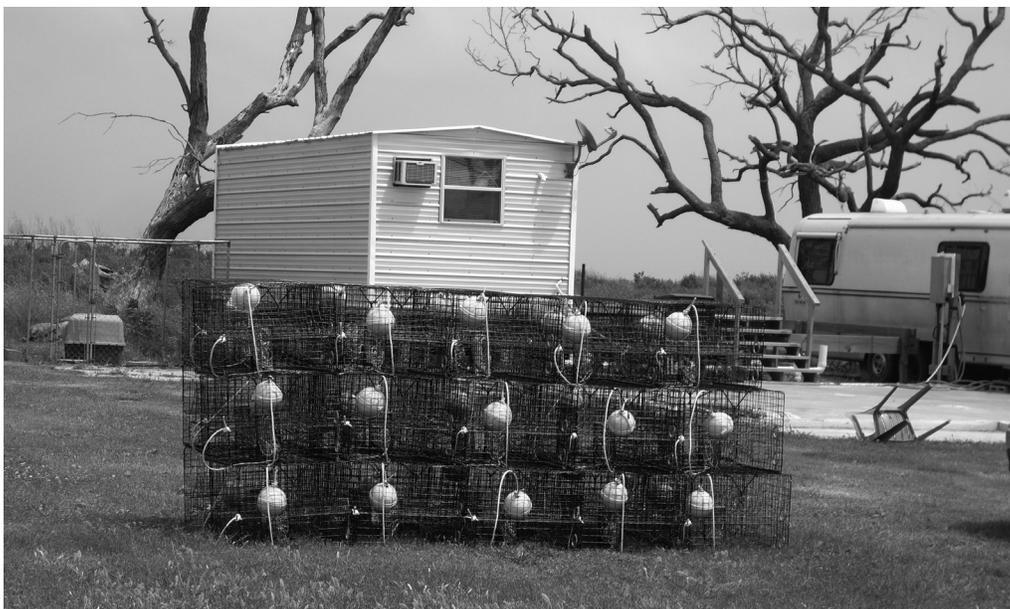
This Health and Economic Impact Survey was conducted by the Louisiana Bucket Brigade and Tulane University's Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy to determine if the oil spill had any health and economic impacts on coastal Louisiana communities. Patagonia Clothing Company donated time for 70 of their employees to assist with the project. These employees and 14 other volunteers were the enumerators – the people who conducted the survey. The enumerators completed a 4-hour training program before traveling from New Orleans to the survey locations. The enumerators remained in the parishes for the duration of their five-day surveying schedule and ongoing training took place. Most of the surveys were conducted door to door. In some cases, the enumerators interviewed people at grocery stores or other high traffic areas.

The results of this survey – including the recommendations – are directly from the residents of coastal parishes impacted by the BP Oil Disaster.

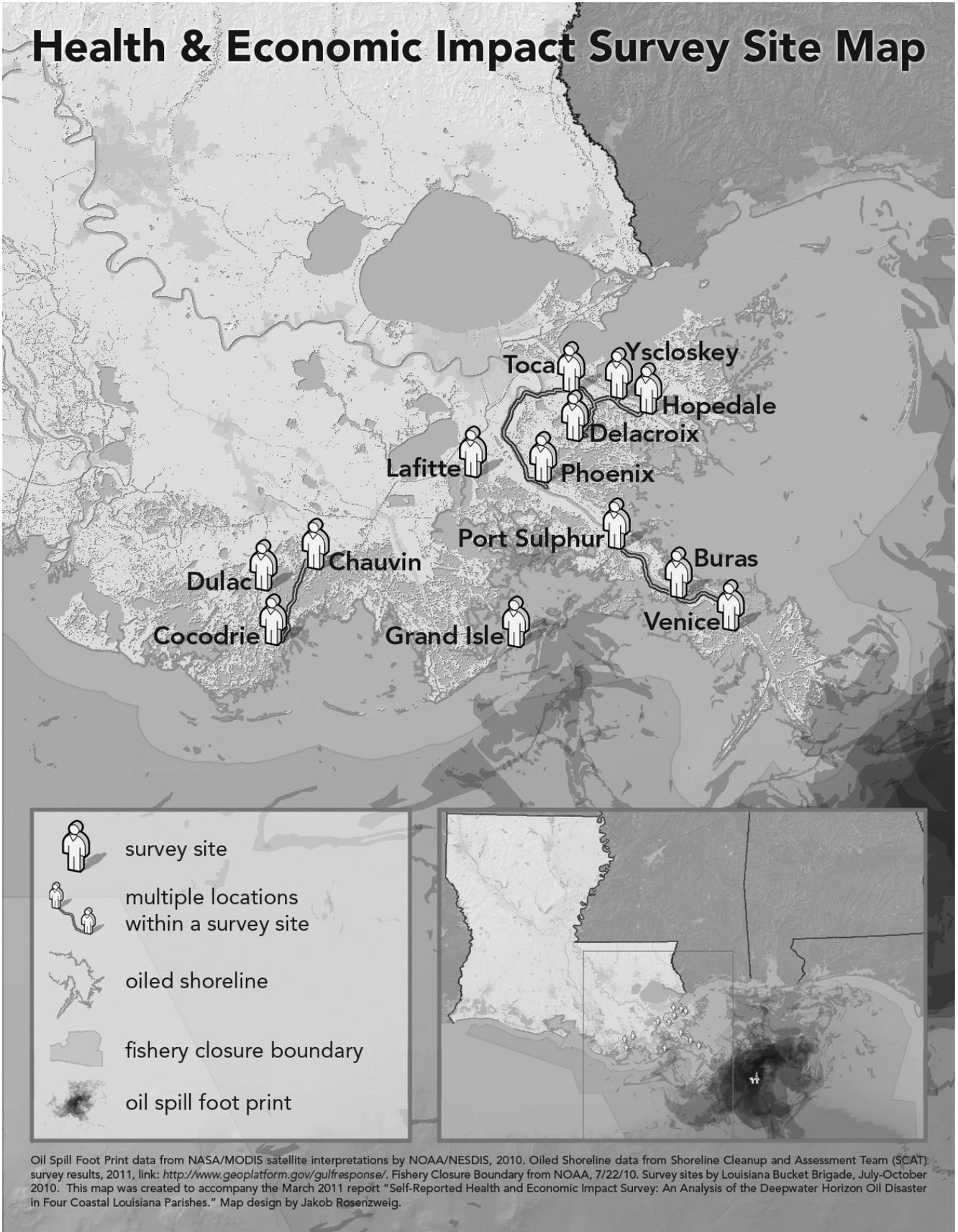


This survey began 11 days after the Deepwater Horizon well was capped. It is the largest known face-to-face survey of communities impacted by the oil spill, with 954 surveys collected from both door-to-door and stationary teams. Resident in four parishes were surveyed:

Parish	Coverage Area	Survey Periods	Number of Surveys Completed
Jefferson	Grand Isle	July 26-30, 2010	132
Plaquemines	Port Sulphur to Empire	August 2-6, 2010	142
Terrebonne	Dulac	August 16-20, 2010	157
Terrebonne	Cocodrie and Chauvin	August 23-27, 2010	92
Jefferson	Lafitte	September 6-10, 2010	123
St. Bernard and part of Plaquemines	Delacroix, Toca, Ycloskey, Shell Beach, Hopedale, Phoenix	September 13-17, 2010	109
Plaquemines	Buras to Venice	September 27-October 1, 2010	199
Total People Surveyed: 954 Percent Permanent Residents: 83%			



Health & Economic Impact Survey Site Map



-  survey site
-  multiple locations within a survey site
-  oiled shoreline
-  fishery closure boundary
-  oil spill foot print

Oil Spill Foot Print data from NASA/MODIS satellite interpretations by NOAA/NESDIS, 2010. Oiled Shoreline data from Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Team (SCAT) survey results, 2011, link: <http://www.geoplatform.gov/gulfresponse/>. Fishery Closure Boundary from NOAA, 7/22/10. Survey sites by Louisiana Bucket Brigade, July-October 2010. This map was created to accompany the March 2011 report "Self-Reported Health and Economic Impact Survey: An Analysis of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Disaster in Four Coastal Louisiana Parishes." Map design by Jakob Rosenzweig.

Five Key Findings

1. Almost three quarters of respondents who believed they were exposed to crude oil or dispersant also reported experiencing symptoms. **Nearly half of all respondents reported an unusual increase in health symptoms – coughing, skin and eye irritation, headaches – consistent with chemical exposure.** Also consistent with exposure was the sudden onset of these symptoms. Coastal residents reported sudden onset symptoms that quickly subsided, consistent with chemical exposure. Anxiety and mental health problems were associated with the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill, and health care providers might face a similar situation on the Gulf Coast.
2. **There are few treatment options.** Almost a third (31.1%) of respondents used over-the-counter medicine “more often than usual.” Medical treatment options are limited because there are few known medical providers in the region trained to diagnose and treat chemical exposure. More than half of the respondents had health insurance (54%), yet relatively few sought treatment for symptoms (31%) or exposures (14.8%).
3. **Of those surveyed, 44% said that the livelihood of the primary provider in the home had been impacted.**
4. **Many people in coastal parishes need economic assistance but are not receiving it. Nearly a quarter reported needing but not receiving economic assistance due to lost income.**
5. **The majority of respondents in the three communities surveyed between September 6 and October 1 – 64% – expressed concern about seafood contamination.**

Action Needed

Residents of coastal parishes have important information about their experiences during and after the oil spill, but there is otherwise little data demonstrating the problems and concerns as expressed in this survey. Those problems include health issues, loss of livelihood and concerns about seafood safety. More data should be gathered, but most important is action. Absence of data should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

Aggregate Results

Economic Impacts

By the numbers

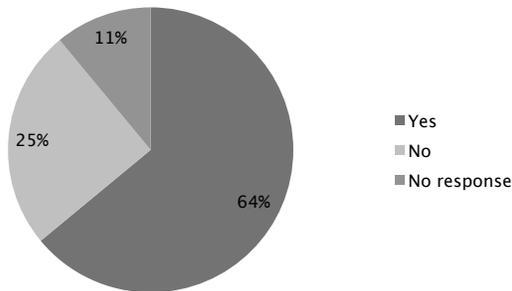
Livelihood impacted by the spill: 44%

Receiving disaster or economic assistance: 17%

In need of disaster or economic assistance but not receiving it: 24%

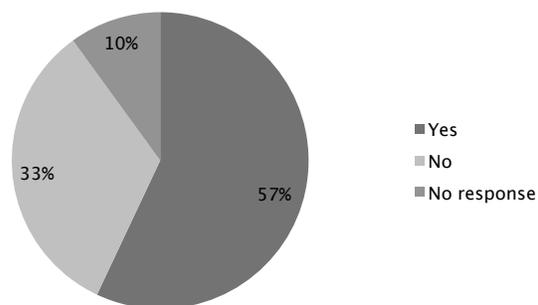
Considered moving: 12%

Are you concerned about seafood contamination?



As residents began to express concern about toxics in seafood, this question was added to the survey and asked of participants in Lafitte, St. Bernard and Plaquemines South.

Are you worried about dispersant spraying in your community post-well closure (asked between September 6 and October 1, 2010)?



The EPA ordered BP to decrease the spraying of dispersant by 75% on May 26, 2010¹. After this date, BP was required to receive special permission for the continued use of dispersant. Many of those surveyed stated that they continued to see dispersant applied from airplanes after that date. The concern over dispersant remains an issue.

“BP is lying about spraying dispersant in the Gulf. Never know what’s actually happening there.” (Lafitte, Retired: 9.8.10)

1. EPA directive located at: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/dispersants-qanda.html#apl1>

Health Impacts

This health information likely excludes many oil spill clean-up workers because the survey was conducted when clean-up crews were working. Additionally, some of the people contacted were unwilling to be surveyed for fear that BP would fire them or their family members.

Odor Complaints, Chemical Exposure and Symptoms

By the Numbers

Believed exposure to crude oil or dispersant: 46%

Reported an increase in odors: 48%

Reported smell of petroleum product: 33%

Experienced abnormal increases of at least one health symptom: 48%

Respondents with health insurance: 54%

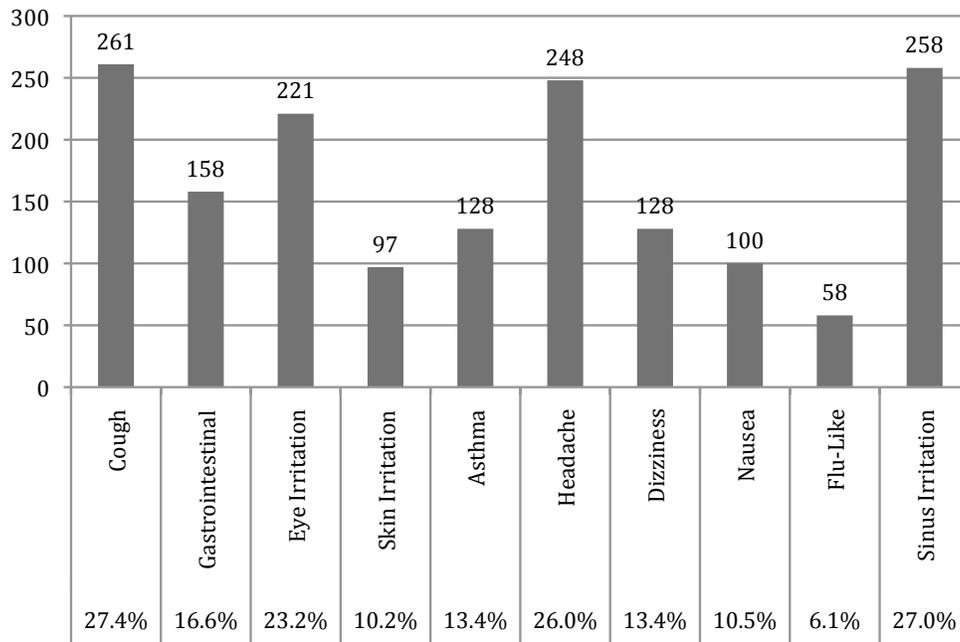
Without health insurance: 30%

Did not answer: 16%

Respondents who experienced one symptom and sought medical care: 15%

Respondents who used over-the-counter medication: 31%

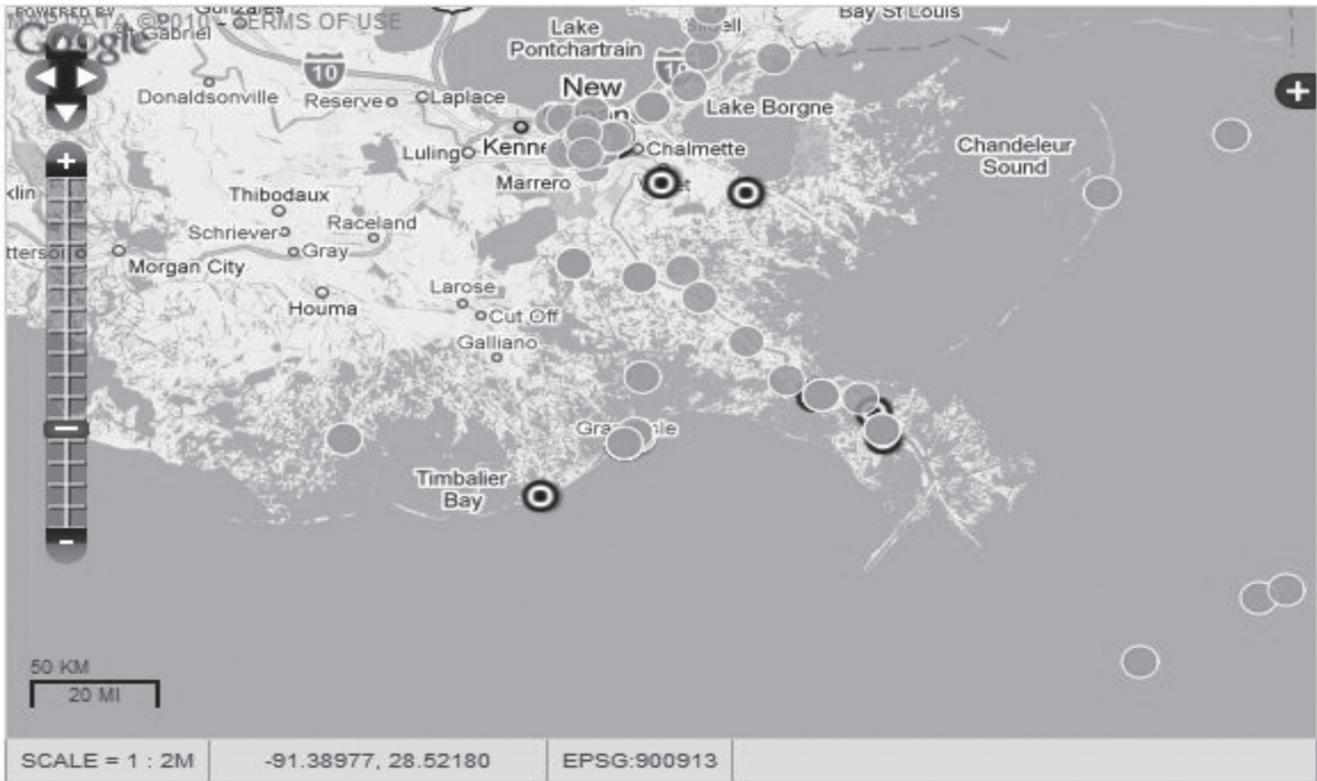
Total Reported Symptoms



Dizziness, nausea and skin irritation were classified by respondents as sudden and severe. These symptoms and the sudden manner in which they were felt are consistent with chemical exposure as opposed to pre-existing conditions.

These symptom numbers are significant, even when controlling for allergies that might cause similar symptoms. The use of over-the-counter medication corresponded to the reported symptoms. More than 30% bought cough, cold or allergy medicine and other medicines for self-treatment.

While survey respondents noticed odors and believed they were exposed to chemicals, air monitoring that might have confirmed or discounted these reports was not conducted. The map below – the Environmental Protection Agency stationary air sampling stations as compared to citizen reports of odors and perceived exposure – provides an example of the gap in government monitoring.



Stationary EPA monitors and reported health complaints
black dots: stationary air monitors, gray dots: health complaints

This absence of air monitoring data does not mean there were no air quality problems; instead, the lack of data highlights that there was often no monitoring in locations where it was needed. Odors and perceived exposures were consequently undetected by the EPA’s oil spill response. This gap highlights the need for community members to be trained to take samples. The immediate, accurate information that their monitoring work would provide would benefit emergency response agencies, health care providers, the EPA and communities.

Grand Isle, Jefferson Parish

Survey dates: July 27–30, 2010

By the Numbers

Surveys collected: 132

Permanent residents: 50%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 13%

Considered moving: 15%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 50%

Unusual increase in odors: 54%

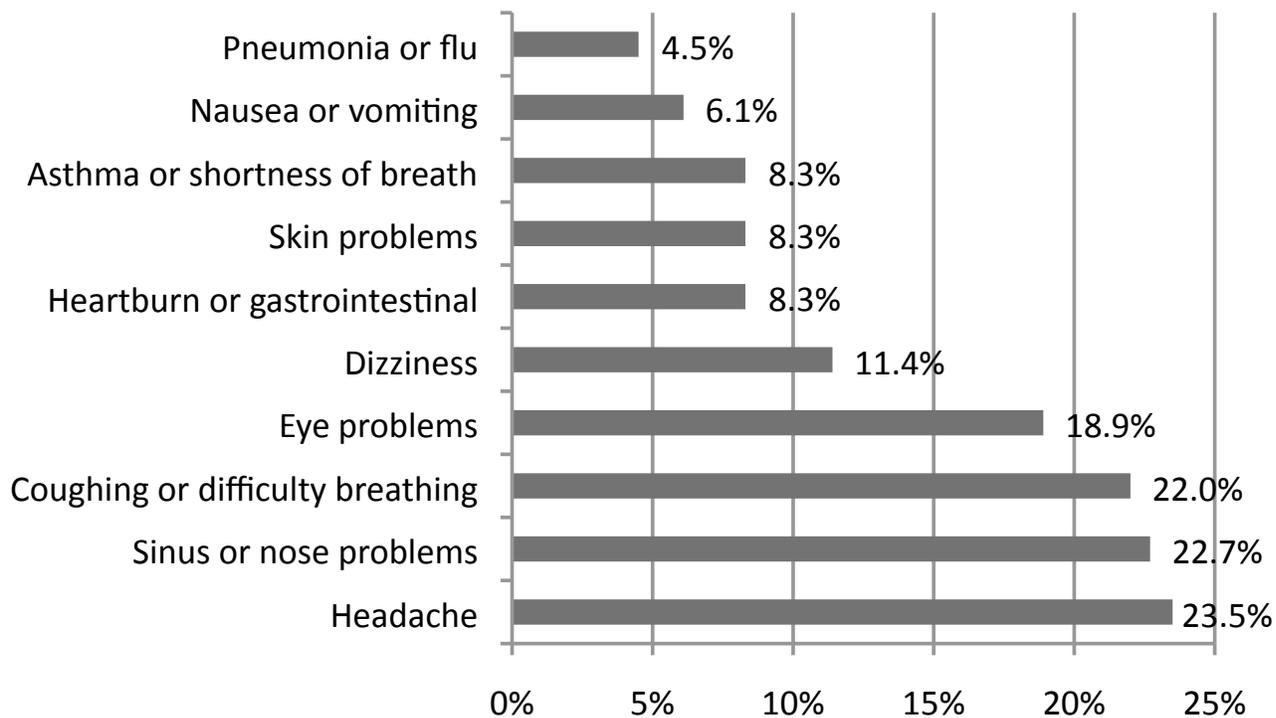
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 46%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 17%

Have health insurance: 51%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 30%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Grand Isle

These comments are taken from notes made by the survey enumerators.

How the community has changed since the oil spill

- It has created different types of jobs, which in turn has created jealousy. There are more people and types of people that locals aren't used to. (Community outreach worker: 7.27.10)
- This is a tight-knit community, especially since Katrina. Scared now because they know how to deal with a hurricane, but not this. (Bus driver: 7.27.10)
- It is like a military zone – the emotional impact is the hardest of it all. It has affected people's attitudes; people are less friendly, angrier, not as happy. (Shipping company manager: 7.29.10)
- Resident has started drinking. Believes that it is not safe; worried about drugs, robbery. He can't fish anymore and doesn't think that it is safe for tourists to come. (Retired: 7.30.10).

Disaster assistance experiences or needs

- Need someone to read and help fill out forms. (Bus driver: 7.27.10)
- Some say that there is not enough assistance and it doesn't come frequently enough. Things that would be helpful include toiletries and canned goods. (Truck driver: 7.28.10)

Statements on odor, potential exposure and food safety

- Brother was a fisherman and is out of business. Went to work for BP and was hospitalized for two weeks. Resident is optimistic that Mother Nature will fix everything and fish is safe to eat if it isn't dead. (Machine work: 7.27.10)
- Works for the Coast Guard and has been deployed on Grand Isle for 60 days and may be here until August or December. Three members of his crew became sick upon arriving, in which they were diagnosed with bronchitis. He was out of work for three days and used antibiotics and Sudafed. He is a smoker, but has thoughts that he may have had some poisoning from oil spill vapors. Doesn't think MDs are trained with oil contamination symptoms. (U.S. Coast Guard: 7.28.10)
- Believes that fishing is OK. The closure has helped population of crab and fish. Has seen offshore fish closer in. There are bigger and more plentiful crabs and fish. (Petroleum safety engineer: 7.28.10)
- Here from Texas working on oil spill clean-up. Never been to Grand Isle before. Said everyone in their house – 10 workers – have been sick. Thought it was mold in house and changed the filter, but they still are sick. (Oil technician: 7.28.10)

Port Sulphur to Buras, Plaquemines Parish

Survey dates: August 2–6, 2010

By the numbers

Surveys collected: 142

Permanent residents: 78%

Livelihood impacted: 51%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 20%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 29%

Considered moving: 12%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 23%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 1%

Believe exposed to both: 30%

Unusual increase in odors: 59%

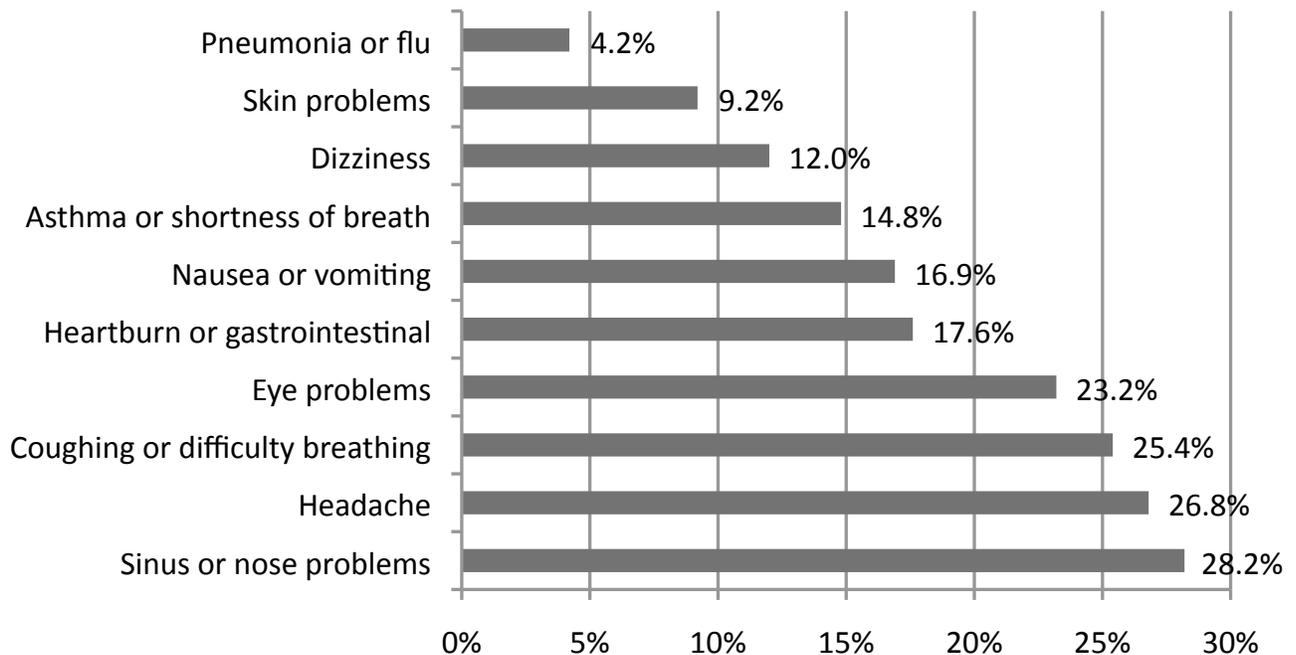
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 54%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 17%

Have health insurance: 51%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 37%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Port Sulphur to Buras

How the community has changed since the oil spill

- People are depressed; fishermen are out of work and depressed. We aren't going to be able to pass fishing and shrimping onto our kids. (Fisherman and shrimper/working for the spill: 8.3.10)
- Was working for BP; got sick doing clean-up. (Oysterman and shrimper/unemployed: 8.3.10)
- Haven't fished in 5 months; would rather have Katrina than an oil spill. (Plumber and recreational fisher: 8.4.10)

How livelihoods are impacted

- "Because of BP, I'll lose everything. We've received two checks from BP for \$2,500 each and a final check for \$1,000 along with a letter saying that since we don't have proper documentation of lost income that we won't receive no more money." (Oyster fisherman: 8.3.10)
- Brought work to community via the clean-up. (Deckhand, owned seafood business/survey oil: 8.3.10)
- Can't fish for shrimp. I am the sole provider and am worried because I don't know what I will do when clean-up is over. (Fishing, shrimper, oysterman/BP oil clean-up: 8.3.10)
- It's busier; there is more traffic in and out. Stores, laundromats, inns are flourishing, but what will it be like in 6 months? (Hotel manager: 8.4.10)

Disaster assistance experiences or needs

- Would take food from any organization. (Fisherman: 8.3.10)
- They get food vouchers but can't buy too much stuff because the storms may wipe out the refrigerators and you'd lose it all. They worry what will happen. (Correctional officer for sheriff: 8.5.10)

Statements on odor, potential exposure and food safety

- Unsafe to eat seafood, threw away shrimp that husband brought home after the spill. (Fisherman, crabber, shrimper: 8.4.10)
- Can no longer eat what they used to eat. Diet changed dramatically - eats more frozen foods. (Journeyman and painter: 8.4.10)
- Financially, can't find work; food and oil prices skyrocketed. Used to live off the land but now can't trust the plant and animal life is safe. (Construction and contracting: 8.4.10)
- Crabs have oil on their bellies so they won't eat them. (Correctional officer for sheriff: 8.5.10)

Buras to Venice, Plaquemines Parish

Survey dates: September 27–October 1, 2010

By the Numbers

Surveys collected: 199

Permanent residents: 83%

Livelihood impacted: 64%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 21%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 35%

Considered moving: 17%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 17%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 4%

Believe exposed to both: 41%

Unusual increase in odors: 65%

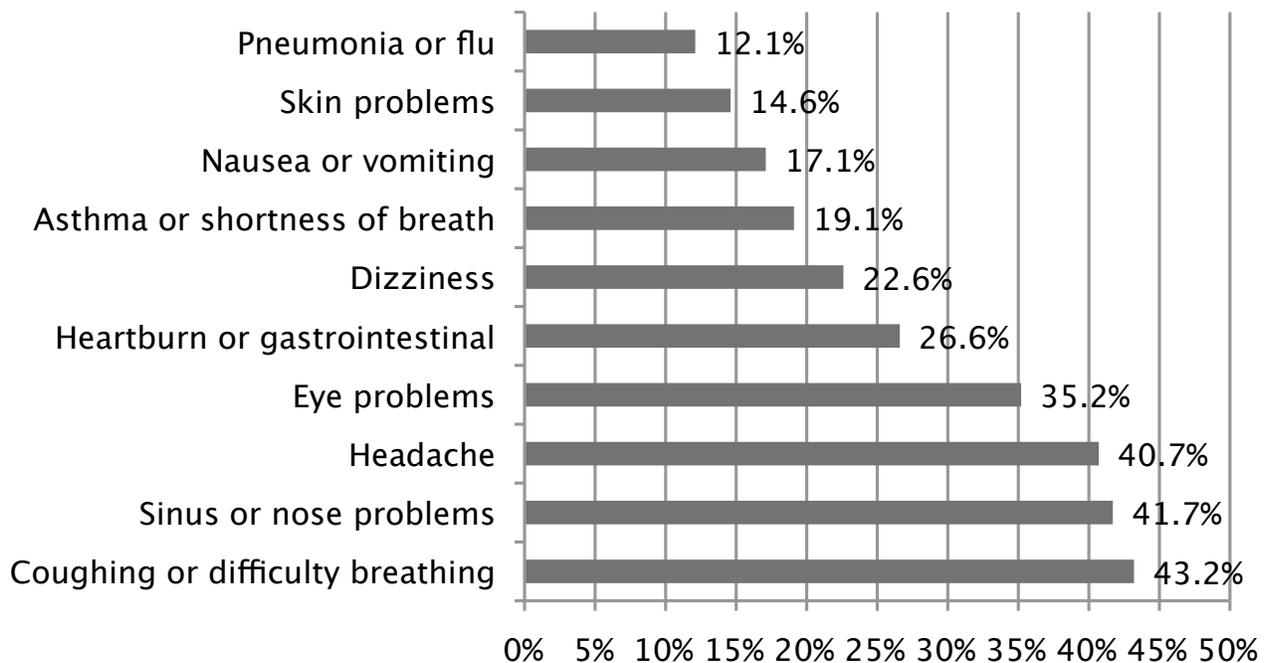
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 66%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 23%

Have health insurance: 57%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 45%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Buras to Venice

Perspectives on how the community has changed since the oil spill

- Katrina brought everyone together and the oil spill has split everyone apart. (Restaurant Owner: 9.29.10)
- Afraid for the health, to lose BP jobs. Can't fish, shrimp, crab or swim anymore. Aggravated by all the lying, knew there was much more than oil (dispersants). "You could see the dispersants in the air." (Fisherman: 9.28.10)

Perspectives on how livelihoods are impacted

- "I'm waiting for money from BP. They gave me a check but it bounced. I don't have any work. I'm cutting grass to make ends meet. I got two little girls; one needs a bone marrow transplant. Haven't gotten a check since July. Nothing for August or September. Can't go to the show, can't go roller-skating, can't give anything to my girls. My girl turned 17 this month and I couldn't give her anything. I'm hurting, and I need help." (Commercial fisherman/unemployed: 9.30.10)
- "We worry about when the seafood will sell like normal again and I need to take care of my family. Everyone is worried about how to survive." (Fisherman/unemployed: 9.29.10)

Statements on odor and potential exposure

- Resident would like to see a community health center opened in this location because it is too far to get health care. (9.28.10)
- Feels sick, zombie-ish. It's gotten worse – there are too many people and store prices have gone up. (Boat captain: 9.28.10)



Dulac, Terrebonne Parish

Survey dates: August 16–20, 2010

By the numbers

Surveys collected: 157

Permanent residents: 94%

Livelihood impacted: 44%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 25%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 22%

Considered moving: 10%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 13%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 0.6%

Believe exposed to both: 10%

Unusual increase in odors: 31%

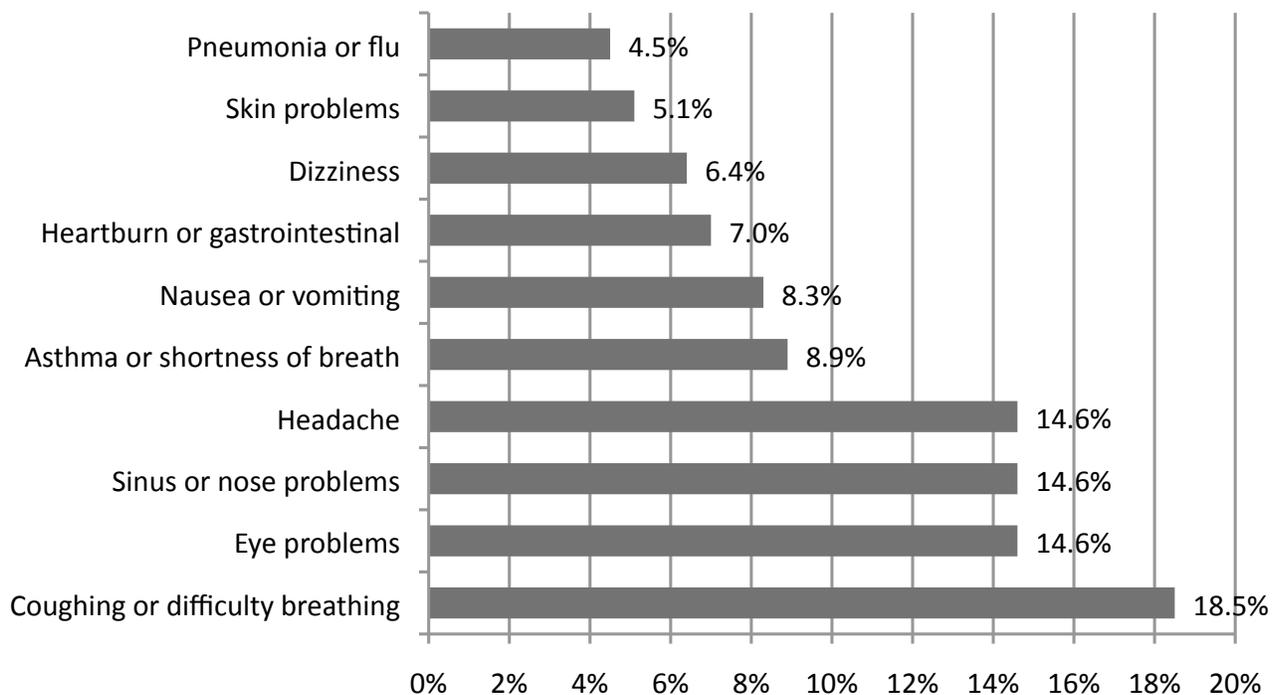
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 30%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 8%

Have health insurance: 61%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 18%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Dulac

- He thinks it's a matter of time before things are totally back to normal and the local news is less dramatic. He only watches the world news feeling they are less biased than the local reporters. (Home remodeling: 8.17.10)

Perspectives on how livelihoods are impacted

- Tried to shrimp/trawl in June, but was sick directly after. Nervous about going out to shrimp now because they may have to throw out the catch if there is oil on them. There might not even be shrimp to get. (Shrimper/unemployed: 8.17.10)
- The couple is afraid of losing buyers and clients so they are staying open through the oil spill clean-up. BP has taken several of their employees and they do feel it may have been easier to receive claims had they shut down. However, shutting down to receive claims would have made them lose most of their business from other states like Maryland. They feel stuck and are very stressed. (Own crab business: 8.18.10)
- Working in the oyster industry. He has been shut down and unable to work. Depressed from being unable to work. Used to get up at 4 a.m. to go to work. Concerned about the oil that is still out there and worried about what the effects of the dispersant will be on the area. (Packer in the oyster industry/living on BP claim check: 8.18.10)
- Concerned about the next few years' breeds of shrimp in terms of health. (Shrimper: 8.19.10)

Disaster assistance experiences or needs

- No one wants a handout. He wants to be back on the water. Wants to fish in the closed area. But needs the financial assistance since the mortgage is due. He can't save money right now. Usually by this time of the year he is able to put money away for the winter. Right now he isn't making enough to save. (Offshore fisherman/shrimper: 8.18.10)
- BP said they'd give \$2,500 a month, but this is an insult. It's insufficient because we could potentially have made so much more. (Commercial fisherman/odd jobs, unemployed: 8.17.10)
- Financially subsidizing the loss of her oyster business. Don't know who would be able to help her. (Widow with 11 acres of oyster beds: 8.17.10)

Statements on odor, potential exposure and food safety

- Say they are afraid of a high storm surge because if the oil gets in their community, it will be no good to live in. Worried that dispersants will have a long-term effect on sea life. May not see the effects now, but generations down the line, definitely will. (Shrimpers, family business/oil spill clean-up: 8.17.10)
- Son is working with the clean-up and doesn't want him to work on clean-up because the smell is so bad. (Shrimper/unemployed: 8.18.10)

Cocodrie and Chauvin, Terrebonne Parish

Survey dates: August 23–27, 2010

By the numbers

Surveys collected: 92

Permanent residents: 73%

Livelihood impacted: 37%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 4%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 12%

Considered moving: 8%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 15%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 1%

Believe exposed to both: 16%

Unusual increase in odors: 28%

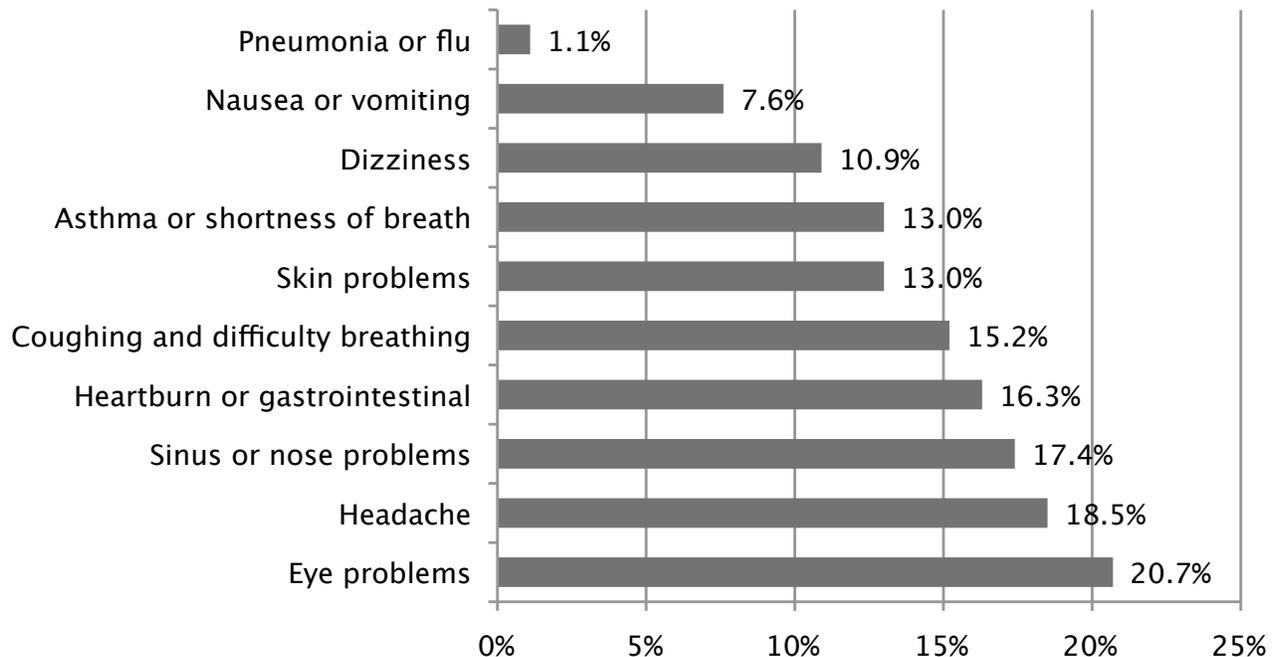
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 34%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 9%

Have health insurance: 61%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 25%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Cocodrie and Chauvin

Perspectives on how the community has changed since the oil spill

- Change for the better. People are coming into the community to work for the oil spill and bringing money into the community. (House keeping: 8.25.10)
- Used to catch food and live off the water. Can't do this anymore. Work has gone down 50%. (Truck driver: 8.26.10)

Perspectives on how livelihoods are impacted

- He owns a charter company. His business has lost 90% of its revenue due to the spill. Since the spill, he still takes his boat out and has experienced severe health problems. While on a boat trip without any visible oil, he and his crew felt burning in their eyes and nasal cavities. He developed skin rashes and severe nausea, which lasted a month. (Charter fishing/marine owner: 8.24.10)



Lafitte, Jefferson Parish

Survey dates: September 6–10, 2010

By the Numbers

Surveys collected: 123

Permanent residents: 87%

Livelihood impacted: 37%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 20%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 11%

Considered moving: 10%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 14.6%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 2%

Believe exposed to both: 20%

Unusual increase in odors: 40%

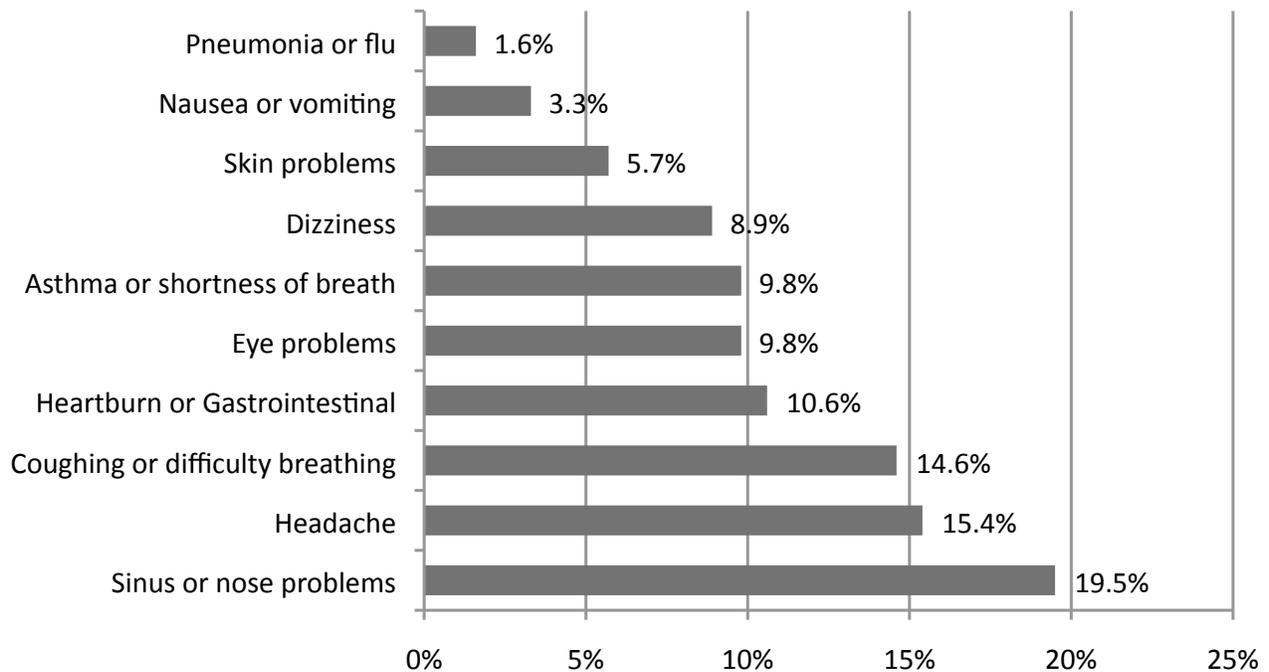
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 33%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 5%

Have health insurance: 40%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 12%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from Lafitte

Perspectives on how the community has changed since the oil spill

- People are completely depressed and frustrated. People depend on fishing; it's their life. (Fisherman: 9.9.10)
- Friends and neighbors (shrimpers and fishermen) are extremely stressed financially. BP is slow in giving out checks. Our son worked on a tugboat; after the oil spill he became sick from dispersant/oil vapors. He spent three days vomiting with flu-like symptoms. (Retired: 9.8.10)
- "Big yes" (regarding community changes). Property is now worth zero; it's a domino effect. People are out of work, seafood plant is closed; grocery store is impacted. (No occupation: 9.7.10)
- Changed for the better; it gave a lot of people jobs. (No occupation given: 9.7.10)

Perspectives on how livelihoods are impacted

- Bayou livelihood will take a long time to recover. A large number of uneducated people who can't find work outside of bayou work. (Teacher: 9.9.10)
- The oil spill affected him positively, but he is worried about the next generations of fishermen. (Fishing/superintendent for oil platforms: 9.10.10)

Disaster assistance experiences or needs

- Grocery bills are higher. People are mad but feel helpless. People are very frustrated and get angry easily. Catholic organizations are giving to the fishing industry people. Relies on her kids to live. (School Crossing Guard: 9.7.10)

Statements on odor and potential exposure

- Booms are being double-bagged in clear white bags and dropped in Grand Isle. Doesn't believe that 75% of the oil is picked up. You can't even see it. It's all sunk. Don't even know what you're battling. (Fisherman/picking up booms: 9.8.10)
- Had a friend die from an upper respiratory infection. Lots of his crewmembers also suffered pneumonia symptoms. Exposed seven days a week to crude oil vapors and the oil itself. (Warehouse worker/oil response worker: 9.7.10)
- What happens later if we develop symptoms? Or if there are strange smells? Who can we contact? Who will respond? Unsure of this. Would like to be more confident about knowing how/who/where for contact. (No occupation given: 9.7.10)

Delacroix, Vero, Shell Beach, Yscloskey and Hopedale, St. Bernard Parish Phoenix, Plaquemines Parish

Survey dates: September 13–17, 2010

By the Numbers

Surveys collected: 109

Permanent residents: 77%

Livelihood impacted: 62%

Receiving economic or disaster assistance: 10%

Not receiving assistance but in need: 36%

Considered moving: 12%

Believe exposed to crude oil: 22%

Believe exposed to dispersant: 8.3%

Believe exposed to both: 25%

Unusual increase in odors: 50%

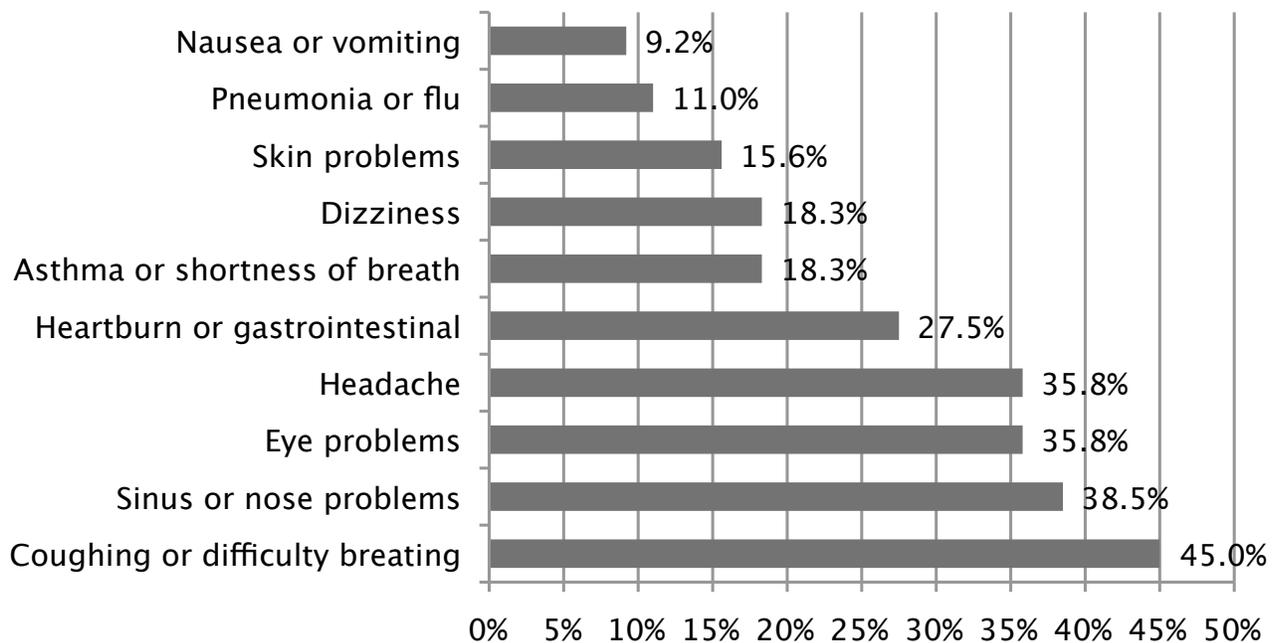
Unusual increase in cough, skin irritation, nausea or other symptoms: 63%

Sought medical care for symptoms: 23%

Have health insurance: 55%

Use over-the-counter medication more than usual: 45%

Reported Symptoms



Points of View from St. Bernard Parish

Perspectives on how the community has changed since the oil spill

- People are depressed and angry at each other. “We can’t fish and we’ve lost all income.” (Commercial fisherman/unemployed: 9.15.10)
- Change in food availability and diet. (Insulator for boats: 9.14.10)

Perspectives on how livelihoods are impacted

- Can’t go fishing for fear of getting someone sick. Many people have moved and they need to be paid for lost work. Worried about what will happen if the fishing doesn’t return. (Fisherman: 9.14.10)
- Affected everyone; price of shrimp is too low. (Commercial fisherman/handy man: 9.14.10)

Statements on odor and potential exposure

- Very concerned about her family’s health now and in the future. Clean-up workers are making money quickly, but that will soon end. She feels that they are taking advantage of BP. (Electrician: 9.15.10)
- Brother-in-law has been working on the oil spill and puking everyday. He has hair falling out in handfuls. (Oil rigs and salvage work: 9.15.10)



Lessons Learned From Other Disasters

9/11

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, fire fighters rushed to the scene in their role as first responders. “Researchers have found that people exposed to the thick clouds of pulverized building materials at the Trade Center site have high rates of asthma and sinus problems. Many firefighters also suffered a reduction in lung power.”¹ Other people have been impacted as well. “Nearly 16,000 responders and 2,700 people living near Ground Zero are currently sick and receiving treatment, supporters of the bill said.”² On December 22, 2010, nine years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, a bill to address the health problems of the first responders was finally passed.

If it took nine years for 9/11 first responders to get the help they need, what is the likelihood that clean-up crews from a poor Southern state will receive attention for their health concerns?

The lesson of 9/11 is two fold:

- 1/ Workers and residents are today plagued by chronic illnesses from environmental exposure, some of them fatal.
- 2/ The problem of exposure related illnesses requires urgent action. In New York, it was the congressional delegation that sponsored legislation to help the first responders.

Exxon Valdez

The lesson learned from Exxon Valdez is that, unless the workers are treated now, some are likely to become chronically ill.

“In an under-the-radar release of new test results for its Gulf of Mexico oil spill workers, BP PLC is reporting potentially hazardous exposures to a now-discontinued dispersant chemical – a substance blamed for contributing to chronic health problems after the Exxon Valdez clean up – among more than 20 percent of offshore responders.”³

1. Miga, Andrew. “Congress passes aid package for 9/11 first responders”. Associated Press. December 22, 2010. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101222/ap_on_go_co/us_congress_health_attacks.

2 Ibid.

3. Schor, Elana. “New BP Data Show 20% of Offshore Responders Exposed to Chemical That Sickened Valdez Workers”. The New York Times: Greenwire. July 9, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/07/09/09greenwire-new-bp-data-show-20-of-gulf-spill-responders-e-82494.html>.

One of the chemicals of concern is 2-butoxyethanol, a chemical in dispersant. While BP eventually phased out use of the chemical, clean-up workers were exposed. During the clean up, BP offered consistent assurances of worker safety despite their internal knowledge of use of 2-butoxyethanol.

BP did conduct sampling during clean up to determine if workers were exposed.

“However, the company’s continued use of bar graphs that encompass ranges of exposures – without including where and under what conditions the Gulf tests are performed – left several occupational safety experts with more questions than answers.”¹

“Thousands of people are suffering from the Valdez clean up with no compensation. And there were Exxon officials on each barge.”²

Hurricane Katrina

Compensation for loss, health care and employment is needed quickly to prevent the associated problems: illness, loss of homes and the impacts of anxiety and stress. People will languish if there is no urgent intervention. Many people are not in their homes today because, after Hurricane Katrina, the remedies simply came too slowly. Another important lesson from Hurricane Katrina is that officials should listen to, and follow up on, community concerns. Complaints about toxic trailers were made long before the government finally took action on formaldehyde. We should not wait for people to get sick before acting.

1. Schor, Elana. “New BP Data Show 20% of Offshore Responders Exposed to Chemical That Sickened Valdez Workers”. The New York Times: Greenwire. July 9, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/07/09/09greenwire-new-bp-data-show-20-of-gulf-spill-responders-e-82494.html>.

2. Rogers, Keith. “Exxon Valdez oil risks spur warning for gulf cleanup crews”. Las Vegas Review Journal. May 10, 2010. <http://www.lvrj.com/news/exxon-valdez-oil-risks-spur-warning-for-gulf-cleanup-crews-93258964.html>.

Recommendations

These recommendations come directly from the 954 people surveyed for this report.

1. Create access to long-term health care for mental health and exposure-related illnesses

Among respondents who believed they had been exposed to crude oil and dispersants, 72% reported an unusual increase in symptoms including headaches, eye irritation, difficulty breathing and nausea. These coastal residents reported that their medical providers have not been able to help them. The lack of medical personnel means impacted residents are not receiving proper medical care. An unprecedented disaster warrants an unprecedented response.

An infrastructure, including trained personnel, needs to be created and made available in the coastal parishes. This is an opportunity for the medical industry. Environmental health training, treatment and surveillance represent a growth industry for the state.

In the short term, mobile medical units with appropriate personnel should be dispatched to impacted parishes weekly until such infrastructure can be created.

Depression and anxiety were consistently mentioned in conversations with coastal residents. Suicides and domestic violence increased after the Exxon Valdez oil spill (Associated Press, May 3, 2010).¹ Mental health services are needed to prevent such problems in Louisiana.

2. Don't study people – treat their health problems

Residents are tired of being studied. The need for health care has been clearly expressed. Funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Science Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency and other groups will soon be pouring into the region. There is already solid evidence about the deaths that occurred after the Exxon Valdez and 9/11. Work regarding the oil spill should have a treatment component.

1. Associated Press. "In Alaska, Painful Memories of Exxon Valdez". May 3, 2010. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/05/03/national/main6456927.shtml>.

3. Train and hire local residents to conduct environmental monitoring, including seafood sampling

Despite government assurances that the oil is gone and the seafood is safe, 64% of respondents report concern about the safety of seafood. The training and employment of local residents to sample the air, water, soil and seafood should be prioritized in recovery funding allocations. As with medical care, this represents an economic growth opportunity. It would also provide meaningful employment to those most impacted by the spill, especially fishermen, shrimpers and others whose livelihoods have been impacted.

4. Pursue a restoration economy

There is work that needs to be done in the wake of the BP Oil Disaster, making it an employment opportunity for those whose livelihoods are at risk or destroyed. Among the possible jobs: an environmental health medical industry, environmental monitoring for the presence of oil, cleaning up the oil as it appears, and ongoing sampling of seafood, water, air and sediment. Thwarting coastal loss is another aspect of a restoration economy. Employment possibilities include barrier island reinforcement, planting of marsh grasses and oyster reef construction.

This crisis needs to be squarely recognized as an opportunity, but doing so requires acknowledging that our health and environment has been seriously degraded. To date, policy makers at the state and federal level seem unwilling to do this. However, the 954 people surveyed have good ideas regarding health and environmental protections. Their experiences and suggestions should be heeded.

5. Improve the claims process

In signing BP claims contracts, individuals have given up their rights to independently or collectively pursue BP for potentially more money than they would receive through the claims process. The claims process in many cases encourages residents to settle claims payments because of the immediate necessity of financial support for job loss. As Kenneth Feinberg is now required to state that he is a contractor of BP, it is urged that there be an appeals process involving local Gulf Coast representation.

Survey Tool

Date _____

Staff Initials _____

Parish _____

ZIP _____

Q1. What town or area do you live in? _____ **Q2.** Work in? _____

Q3. Address or Nearest Intersection to your home _____

Q4. Are you a: (circle one) Permanent area resident Seasonal area resident Visitor/Tourist
 Oil response worker Locally employed

Q5. Are your days spent predominately **outside** in an open environment, exposed to the elements, or **inside** a building or structure protected from the elements? (Circle one) Outside or Inside or About equal

Q6. Do you believe you have been exposed to crude oil or vapors? (Circle one) Yes No No-response

Q7. Do you believe you have been exposed to dispersant or Corexit? (Circle one) Yes No No-response
 Describe your exposure:

7b. Are you worried about dispersant spraying in your community post-well closure? Yes No No-response
 If **yes**, please describe:

Q8. Have you sought medical treatment for this? Yes No N/A No Response **from a** MD Other-Professional

Q9. Do you have health insurance? Yes No No-Response **Q10.** Do you have seasonal allergies? Yes No No-Response

Q11. Since the Oil Spill, Have you experienced any of these symptoms **more often than usual**

	Y/N	Sudden Severe	Chronic Constant		Y/N	Sudden Severe	Chronic Constant
Coughing bouts or difficulty breathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headache	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heartburn or similar stomach problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dizziness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Itching, Watering or Burning Eyes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nausea or Vomiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strange rashes or other skin irritations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pneumonia or flu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asthma or shortness of breath	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sinus or Nose irritation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12. Have you been treated by a physician for any of these **unusual** symptoms?(circle) Yes No No-Response N/A

Q13. Did you ask your physician about exposure to crude oil or associated vapors(circle) Yes No No-Response N/A

Q14. Related to these symptoms has a doctor or other medical professional advised the use of:

Prescription medications: Yes No No-Response N/A **by an** MD other professional

Over-the-counter medications: Yes No No-Response N/A **by an** MD other professional

Q15. Have you used any of the following **over-the-counter** medications **more often than usual**? (Check all that apply)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Eye Drops for Allergy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heartburn or Indigestion Medication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pepto-Bismol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bausch and Lomb's Opcon-A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear Eyes (ACR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maalox	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allergy & Other Medications					
Clairton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mucinex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benadryl	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delsym	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robitussin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Antihistamine (Brand _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tylenol Products (type: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrocortisone Cream(brand _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q16. Other Medications(optional):

Date _____

Staff Initials _____

*****Optional Demographic Information*****

Age____ Sex____ Ethnicity_____ Highest level of education_____ Marital Status_____

Are you the Primary Provider for your Household? Y or N How many people live in your household (including you)____

How many people in your household are above 18 years old?_____ How many are younger?_____

Annual household income (circle one) N/A No-response
\$0-25,000 \$25,000-50,000 \$50,000-75,000 \$75,000-100,000 +\$100,000

Q17. Since the Oil Spill, did you notice an unusual increase in smells or odors? Yes No No-Response
(*examples:* Citrus-type Cleaner, Rotten Eggs, Gasoline, Fuel, Liquid Dish Soap, or Dry-cleaning Chemicals)
If so, please describe:

* Are you concerned about seafood contamination? Yes No No-Response
If **yes**, please describe (including contamination in which types of seafood)

Please answer for your Household's Primary Provider: (indicate if *No Response* or Not applicable)

Q18. Has your livelihood been impacted by the Oil Spill? Yes No No-response N/A
Occupation/Main Source of Income *before the spill*? _____
Current Occupation/Main Source of Income? _____
If unemployed, do you anticipate finding work within the next 3-months 6-months 12-months More
Please describe the impact on your livelihood:

Q19. Due to the oil spill are you or your family considering moving? Yes No No-response
If yes, are you able to move within: 3-months 6-months 12-months Unable N/A
Are you considering a move to a different: town parish state country N/A
Please Describe:

Q20. Is your household currently accepting economic or disaster assistance? Yes No No-response N/A
Is your household currently in need of economic or disaster assistance? Yes No No-response N/A
If desired, what kinds of assistance would you consider accepting? And from what organizations or agencies?

Q21. Do you feel that your community has changed since the oil spill? Yes No No-response N/A
If so, how much has it changed? Not Much Somewhat A lot Drastically
Please describe the change:

Q22. Please describe any specific activities that you or your family is no longer able to do because of the oil spill

The Information you have provided will be used to better understand the effects of an oil spill and its economic affect on communities. Every effort will be made to protect the anonymity and integrity of the information you have provided. Your name and any information specific to your identity will not be published, shared or sold in order to protect your privacy. Analysis of the data collected and portions of this survey response may be reproduced on the LABB website as well as other media. Your signature below acknowledges that you have read and understood this survey and will allow the LABB to use this information for the purpose of this study, the oil spill crisis map, and any other lawful purpose.

Signature _____ Date _____



The full report can be found at: <http://www.labucketbrigade.org/article.php?id=709>

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