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**Psychological Outcomes for Adolescents after the
Canterbury Earthquakes: Posttraumatic Stress,
Resilience and Related Factors**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

This study investigated the psychological response of adolescents to several significant earthquakes in Canterbury, New Zealand. The most destructive of these earthquakes resulted in 185 casualties. A survey was conducted with 570 adolescents at secondary schools in Christchurch 6 months after the most destructive earthquake. A quantitative methodology was utilized where questionnaires were completed online and in paper format. Participants were surveyed in relation to the constructs of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological resilience, trauma exposure, the level of fear experienced, and the psychosocial support accessed. The age of the participants ranged from 13 to 20 years ($M = 15.2$ years; $SD = 1.48$). Statistical analyses were completed to establish the base rates of PTSD, the relationship between psychological resilience and PTSD, the relationship between trauma exposure and PTSD, and the relationship between fear and PTSD. Additionally, the moderating effect of psychological resilience was analysed. Results established statistical significant relationships between psychological resilience and PTSD, trauma exposure and PTSD, and fear and PTSD. Furthermore, a base rate of 24% for PTSD was established within this sample. Psychological resilience was found to moderate the relationship between fear and PTSD, but did not moderate the relationship between trauma exposure and PTSD. These results are discussed in relation to earthquake-related traumatic exposure. This research project has important clinical and theoretical implications for people working with adolescents who have been exposed to the trauma of an earthquake.

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