University of Kentucky | College of Public Health
Epidemiology and Environmental Health

University of Kentucky East Palestine Train Derailment Health Tracking Study

Preliminary findings – August 21, 2024

In April 2023, the University of Kentucky launched the East Palestine Train Derailment Health Tracking Study. The goals of the research are to 1) establish a cohort of residents to evaluate potential long-term health impacts related to the derailment and 2) answer residents' questions about their exposures and health. A few representative preliminary findings are provided below.

Health Tracking Survey

Approximately 380 residents of East Palestine and the surrounding area completed the initial survey to share their experiences, concerns, and health symptoms. Most of these have continued to participate by completing a second and third follow up survey in Fall 2023 and Summer 2024.

In Summer 2024…

- Approximately half of the participants indicated they continue to experience upper airway symptoms and non-sinus headaches.
- Many participants, including children, continue to report lower airway symptoms, gastrointestinal issues, and rashes.
- Half continue to experience elevated levels of stress, and 1/3 still had symptoms of PTSD.
- Nearly half are still relying on bottled water as their primary drinking source
- 30% report odors in the community that they believe are related to the derailment
- 10% report odors in their homes that they believe are related to the derailment
- Some participants have not permanently returned home since the derailment

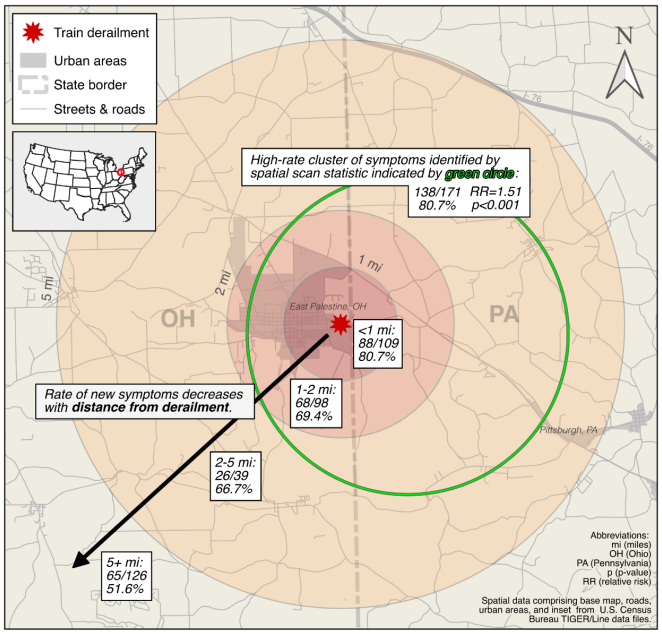

Figure 1. New upper respiratory symptoms after train derailment.

In Spring 2023, over 80% of participants who live within one mile of the derailment site reported new upper respiratory symptoms.

Funding for this research

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