

**THE THREE MILE ISLAND INCIDENT:
A STUDY OF BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
OF HUMAN STRESS***

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This work sought to specify stress levels induced in the local population around Three Mile Island from the accident in 1979. Unobstrusive behavioral indicators of stress for the population as a whole were compared before, during and after the accident. The conclusions reached were that: (1) the Three Mile Island incident did produce stress in people, (2) the stresses detected through the indicators used in this study were short-lived, not severe enough to manifest themselves in dramatic indicators like psychiatric admissions or suicide, (3) stress was obviously reflected in indicators of mild stress like alcohol consumption, and (4) stress detected was well within the limits of stress that occur annually in that local population from stress inducing events like the occurrence of a major holiday. The conclusions of this study are best interpreted in concert with findings from studies using obstrusive indicators of stress, and with studies on special local sub-populations.

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