

**Sigma's VIRTUAL 31st International Nursing Research Congress (Wednesday, 22 July - Friday, 24 July)**

## **Lived Experience of Traumatic Amputation for Haitian Adults**

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**Purpose:** Traumatic limb loss occurs as a result of a sudden physical injury and severity, which requires immediate medical attention, as the body part is entirely or partially cut off due to an accident or violent incident (U.S. Library of Medicine, 2015). The earthquake of 2010 in Haiti resulted in one of the most significant losses of limbs in a single natural disaster (Aleccia, 2010). Based on documented research studies (Redmond et al., 2011, Chu et al., 2011, Marie et al., 2013) 1200 to 1500 amputations were performed as a result of crushing injuries, within the first five weeks following the earthquake. An estimated 4000 suffered amputations or had to have limbs amputated. There is a paucity of research that addresses the lived experience of the earthquake survivors who sustained a traumatic amputation as a result of this earthquake. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to investigate the phenomenon of traumatic amputations as talked about by eight female Haitian adults who suffered an amputation as a result of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

**Methods:** Descriptive phenomenological methodology, as described by Amedeo Giorgi (2010) guided this study. This methodology provided the means to understand the lived experience for Haitian adults and to discover the meaning of the phenomenon of traumatic amputation as described by eight female Haitian adults.

**Results:** The study uncovered four interconnected essential themes-ordeals of physical and emotional instability, marginalized to the fringes of society, pulled to security and safety by family and friends and deprived of norms and possessing hope- that illuminated the experience.

The structural statement and findings from this research study of the lived experience of Haitian adult women who sustained a traumatic amputation, is of living a life filled with the ordeals of physical and emotional instability while being marginalized to the fringe of society and pulled to security and safety by family and friends into a network of untreaured norms and relentless hope.

This study highlighted ordeals of physical and emotional instability for those with disabilities, as well as the way in which Haitian individuals living with amputations are often viewed by society as a burden and incapable of contributing.

**Conclusion:** As findings uncovered a lack of communication between providers and patients, it is particularly important that nurses be educated in appropriate communication styles and bedside manner to enable them to more effectively convey information to patients and their families and to become more empathetic practitioners. Faculty can incorporate the knowledge gained from this study to influence curriculum development which integrates disaster preparedness courses and training. Academic organizations can work on making access to education for the disabled a priority; as well as curriculum that is geared to preparing healthcare first responders and communities in disaster preparedness and training. These types of preparations may help in the reduction of loss of lives and disabilities.

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**Title:**

Lived Experience of Traumatic Amputation for Haitian Adults

**Keywords:**

Haiti 2010 Earthquake, Phenomenology and Traumatic Amputation

**Abstract Summary:**

Little is known about the experience of traumatic amputation for Haitian Adults. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to investigate the lived experience of traumatic amputations as talked about by eight female Haitian adults who suffered an amputation as a result of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

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**Author Summary:** Margarett Alexandre earned her PhD from The CUNY Graduate Center and a Master's Degree from Adelphi University in Nursing Administration with a minor in Education. Areas of expertise include Medical/Surgical Nursing and Nursing Administration. Research interest involves disability in the post 2010 Haiti Earthquake. Dr. Alexandre other interests includes: student mentoring and community initiatives both nationally and internationally. She also shares interest in transcultural nursing education, community engagement, service-learning, active learning strategies and health disparities.