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**Public Education and Communication**

**DEBUNKING THE PANIC MYTH  
AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR NEO COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

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**Keywords:** *panic, disaster response, communication, strategy*

**ABSTRACT**

It is a common assumption, both depicted in Hollywood movies as well as described in scientific papers, that the public would react to the news of an impending asteroid impact with panic, causing chaos and civil unrest, aggravating the situation.

Research in fields such as social psychology and psychiatry studying the responses of people during past disasters and associated warnings concluded that this assumption is largely false. Panic is quite rare and limited to certain situations for a brief time.

This paper summarizes the current models predicting how people will react and respond to disasters and their warnings and discusses what it means for communication strategies related to warnings and updates of potential asteroid impacts and their consequences as well as any associated disaster management efforts, concluding with some recommendations.

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