

Japan: Stress-induced deaths in Fukushima top those from 2011 natural disasters

Monday 23 September 2013, by [Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Date first published: 9 September 2013).

The number of deaths in Fukushima Prefecture caused mainly by stress from the nuclear disaster reached 1,539 at the end of August, almost equaling the 1,599 fatalities due directly to the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, the *Mainichi Shimbun* has learned.

In addition, bereaved families have filed condolence money applications for at least 109 victims who they say died due to fatigue, stress and aggravated health conditions while living in evacuation shelters and temporary housing. If this number is added, deaths attributable to post-disaster conditions surpass the number of those killed directly by the March 11, 2011 quake and tsunami.

There have been cases of Fukushima residents whose health conditions worsened due to extended periods living as evacuees, as well as those who were driven to suicide.

The Reconstruction Agency had put the total number of these deaths at 1,383 at the end of March this year. According to a Mainichi survey of 25 cities, towns and villages in Fukushima that have certified disaster aftermath-related fatalities, a further 156 people passed away from such causes from April through August.

The city of Minamisoma led the tally at 431, followed by the town of Namie at 291, and the town of Tomioka at 190.

But many municipalities declined to specify the causes of those disaster aftermath-related deaths, saying they would affect future screenings of applications for condolence money.

The Reconstruction Agency's investigations into the causes of 734 deaths in Fukushima Prefecture based on data at the end of March last year show that 33.7 percent died from fatigue due to life in evacuation centers, 29.5 percent died from exhaustion due to relocation to evacuation centers or other locations, and 14.5 percent died of worsening illnesses after hospitals treating them stopped functioning. Nine people took their own lives.

As of the end of August this year, such aftermath-related deaths totaled 869 in Miyagi Prefecture and 413 in Iwate Prefecture.

P.S.

* Mainichi Shimbun, September 9, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130909p2a00m0na009000c.html>