



**A changed America? The effects of September 11<sup>th</sup> on depressive symptoms and alcohol consumption**

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In the weeks following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, social commentators argued that America had profoundly “changed.” In light of these arguments and the literature on disasters, we examine the immediate and longer-term mental health consequences of September 11<sup>th</sup> using a national sample of full-time American workers. We model the effects of temporal proximity to the attacks on depressive symptoms and alcohol consumption, while controlling for demographic characteristics. Our data revealed a significant increase in the number of depressive symptoms reported during the 4 weeks after the attacks. In the subsequent weeks, levels of depressive symptoms returned to pre-September 11<sup>th</sup> levels. Contrary to expectations, there was some indication of decreased alcohol consumption after September 11<sup>th</sup>, although these effects were modest. These analyses provide little support for popular assertions that September 11<sup>th</sup> resulted in lasting and measurable impacts on Americans’ well-being.