

The Study on Risk Awareness and Tsunami Evacuation Behavior: The Case of the Great East Japan Earthquake

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Evacuation behavior depends on risk awareness, but what affects awareness? The study focuses on the evacuation behavior of people living in the Hirota-town, Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture, Japan, which affected by the 2011.3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake. Hirota-town is a small town which repeatedly affected by tsunamis: 1896 Meiji Sanriku Tsunami, 1933 Showa Sanriku Tsunami and 1960 Chile Earthquake Tsunami. People living in the Hirota-town had knowledge on tsunamis, knew well about historical tsunamis which attacked their town, had hazard maps, heard tsunami evacuation alerts, but those were not sufficient to raise their awareness to let them to evacuate. Then, what should we do to raise their risk awareness? The study clarifies elements affected risk awareness based on questionnaires and interviews, and discusses the effective approaches for tsunami evacuation.

Keywords: tsunami, The Great East Japan Earthquake, risk awareness, evacuation