**AIMS**

Little is known about how visually impaired individuals deal with hazards and potential traumatic events.

The aim of the present study was to explore

- what kind of risks and hazards is experienced by visually impaired individuals
- how visual impaired individuals deal with potential threats
- how reactions to traumatic events are manifested and coped with.

**METHODS**

We conducted two focus group interviews and 13 individual semi-structured interviews

The thematic scope of the analysis was how the participants dealt with hazards and potential traumatic events, reactions to such events, and how post-traumatic reactions and fear of future events were coped with.

**RESULTS**

Fear of daily accidents was more dominating than fear of disasters. Participants were for example concerned about fall accidents in public space (holes, pavements, stairs), traffic accidents, fire, and assaults.

Several participants called for more universal design.

"... like a barrier at a construction site. If the trail that goes around were illuminated and labeled correctly ... ... you could have been spared a lot of trouble later on..."

White cane or other signs of visual impairment were commonly avoided due to fear of negative labeling.

"I lost my sight when I was 23 ... ... I would never use a white cane, that's for sure".

"... I try to carry a visible cane whenever it makes sense. It is not stigmatizing to me anymore ..... Many of us find it difficult to be identified as impaired]. ... The hardest part is to deal with people when they feel pity for me".

When referring to unsafe situations, some reported avoidance of help seeking due to shame of not being able to cope, while others highlighted the importance of self-reliance and control.

"I could walk around for hours rather then ask somebody for help".

"...you are so afraid that the same thing will happen again ... some of the worst scenarios, is to make a fool of yourself "

**CONCLUSION**

Daily life as visual impaired includes a diversity of hazards and potential threats. This calls for a higher emphasis on universal design in the public space to ensure safety and predictability in all settings.

In general, visual impression is the key modality in the perception of risk. Lack of vision means need of predictability and adequate information in dangerous situations. Being independent and able to cope and handle potential threatening situations seems important.

Posttraumatic help seeking for visual impaired individuals can be performed in the ordinary mental health care system. However, professionals’ knowledge about the need for information and predictability are crucial and should be prioritized. The possibility of social withdrawal and isolation should be addressed.

"To be visual impaired is no problem - it is just very inconvenient!" (female participant)