

## From Out of the Ruins

Evan B. Doule, PhD, Associate Chief of Research, Radiation Effects Research Foundation

**W**ithin 2 years of the first atomic bombings, which took place in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, the National Academy of Sciences began plans to learn as much as possible about the health effects that were associated with ionizing radiations, the high-energy gamma rays and neutrons that accompanied the intense heat and massive blast forces that destroyed the 2 cities. The Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, which was an outgrowth of those plans, would later become the Radiation Effects Research Foundation. Its mission, “to conduct research, for peaceful purposes, on the medical effects of radiation on man, with a view to contributing to the health and welfare of the atomic-bomb survivors and to the enhancement of the health of mankind,” has continued for 64 years.



The photograph on the cover depicts the destruction of Hiroshima about 3 months after the bombings. In the foreground is a branch of the Ota River and the lake in Shukkeien Garden (located 1300 m from the bomb’s hypocenter). Only a few stone and concrete buildings survived the blast in the city center. The dark building in the center is the NHK Radio Station (located 1000 m from the bomb’s hypocenter) and behind it is a row of buildings on what today is the main business street, Aioi Dori, of a rebuilt Hiroshima. The cluster of tall buildings in the upper-right corner is the Fukuya Department Store (located 700 m from the bomb’s hypocenter).



Although few people survived within 1000 m of the bomb’s hypocenter, a large cohort of approximately 120 000 from the 2 cities, mostly comprising survivors exposed at increasing distances from the 2 bombs’ hypocenters (eg, left-hand side and far distance in the photograph) and with individual reconstructed radiation dose estimates, has been followed up, providing the world’s best epidemiological estimates of health risks after radiation exposures. From out of the ruins have emerged findings and lessons learned, which are detailed throughout this special issue of *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*.

Have your photograph of a disaster event/response effort considered for the cover of *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*. See the Instructions for Authors at [www.dmphp.org](http://www.dmphp.org) details.