Dear Editor,

We enthusiastically submit our manuscript “Power outages and cardiovascular and respiratory hospitalizations among US older adults” for consideration for publication in PNAS.

Our study represents, to our knowledge, the first nationwide study of power outage exposure and health. Our team recently developed hourly, county-level power outage exposure estimates[[1]](#endnote-1), which enabled this investigation. We focus on older adults who, due to functional limitations, comorbidities, and less social support, may be at special risk from power outage exposure. We studied 23 million older adult Medicare beneficiaries and found that power outages increased acute cardiorespiratory hospitalization rates by 2-3%, with the increase in risk rising to 6% for larger power outages.

We believe that readers of PNAS will find these results of major interest as climate change-driven severe weather has increased power outage frequency and duration. Older adults in our study experienced, on average, seven 8+ hour power outages during the year-long study period, a number anticipated to further increase in coming decades. Our study results suggest that power outages are an extremely prevalent and understudied exposure with major health consequences.

All authors have reviewed the manuscript, and the manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration for other journals.

Sincerely,  
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1. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-38084-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)