

Imaging the distribution of transient viscosity after the 2016 M_W 7.1 Kumamoto earthquake

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Crustal rock strength from outer space

The response of crustal rock to stresses is challenging to estimate yet vital for determining risks from events such as earthquakes. Moore *et al.* take advantage of the recent M_W 7.1 Kumamoto earthquake in Japan to determine the rheology of crustal rocks in the region. The observed inversion of the crustal strain rates demonstrates that certain areas have stiff rock and others (e.g., under the Aso volcanic complex) have much weaker rock. The results match up with expectations, which means that the method can successfully measure rock properties over a wide range of strength and large spatial and temporal scales.

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