

Beat: Miscellaneous

Elderly man dies as moderate quake hits southern Italy

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USPA News - An elderly man died of a heart attack early Friday when a moderate earthquake shook southern Italy, seismologists and local authorities said. The earthquake caused some damage and prompted panic-stricken residents to flee into the streets.

The 5.0-magnitude earthquake at 01:05 a.m. local time (2305 GMT Thursday) was centered about 2 kilometers (1.2 mile) southeast of Mormanno, a town in the southern province of Cosenza, or about 374 kilometers (232 miles) southeast of Rome. It struck about 6.3 kilometers (3.9 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV). The moderate tremor was widely felt across small towns in northern Calabria and southern Basilicata and prompted scores of residents to flee into the streets in fear their building would collapse. A hospital near the epicenter was briefly evacuated as a precaution after some cracks were found. "Damage was localized in particular houses and old buildings, but technicians are still carrying out their assessments," said civil protection chief Franco Gabrielli. "Infrastructure and essential services were not damaged. Patients at the hospital in Mormanno and nursing home Laino were partially discharged and partially transferred to other medical facilities in the area." There were no reports of significant damage or casualties directly caused by the earthquake, but an 84-year-old man in the town of Scalea, which is located about 22 kilometers (13 miles) west of the epicenter, died after having a heart attack likely caused by the moderate tremor. On May 20, seven people were killed and some 50 others were injured when a 6.1-magnitude earthquake struck 7.5 kilometers (4.6 miles) northwest of Finale Emilia, a town in the northern province of Modena. It was followed days later by a 5.8-magnitude earthquake in the same region, killing 17 people and injuring more than 350 others. The earthquakes in May were the deadliest to hit Italy since a 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck the central region of the country in April 2009, killing at least 308 people and injuring more than 1,500 others. It was the country's worst earthquake since a 6.8-magnitude earthquake in November 1980, killing nearly 3,000 people.

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