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Hazard estimates for El Chichón volcano, Chiapas México: a statistical approach for complex erupt histories

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Abstract. The El Chichón volcano (Chiapas, México) most recent eruption occurred in 1982 causing the worst volcanic disaster in the recorded history of Mexico. Prior to the eruption, El Chichón volcano was not considered a very hazardous volcano, a perception mostly caused by the low eruption rate of the past eruptions. The correct assessment of volcanic hazard is the first step to prevent a disaster. In this paper, we analyze two periods of the reported eruptive history of El Chichón volcano: the Holocene, searching for the eruption rates of different VEI magnitude categories and testing their time dependence. One period accounts for eruptions of the last 3707 years before the last eruption (BLE) is assumed to be complete, with no missing relevant events. More scarce information of a period extending to 7772 years BLE is then added. We then apply a Non-Homogeneous Generalized Pareto-Poisson Process (NHGPPP) and a Mixture of Exponentials Distribution (MOED) methods to estimate the volcanic hazard of El Chichón considering both periods. The results are compared with the probabilities obtained from the homogeneous Poisson and Weibull distributions. In this case the MOED and the Weibull distribution are rather insensitive to the inclusion of the extended period. In contrast, the NHGPPP is strongly influenced by the extended period.

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