

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research trends on intimate partner violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic: A bibliometric analysis and thematic research opportunities

DOI: 10.29063/ajrh2026/v30i17.4

Fotarisman Zaluchu^{1*}, Farold G. Zaluchu², Finley EF. Zaluchu³ and Mira MY. Zendrato⁴

Social Anthropology Department, Faculty of Social Science and Political Science, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia¹; Department of Industrial Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia²; Computer Science Department, Faculty of Computer Science, Universitas Bina Nusantara, Indonesia³; Centre for Culture and Health Behavior Research, Indonesia⁴

*For Correspondence: Email: fotarisman.zaluchu@usu.ac.id

Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women constituted a profound humanitarian tragedy, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, mapping the scholarly literature produced on this topic is essential. This study aimed to map existing publications on IPV during the pandemic to develop a thematic template to inform post-pandemic actions and preparedness for future crises. A total of 425 documents met the eligibility criteria. The database search indicated an annual growth rate of 17.08% across these documents, with an average of 22.45 citations per document and an international co-authorship rate of 29.41%. IPV-related research featured 10 highly influential documents, while *BMC Public Health* emerged as the most productive journal. The United States was the largest contributor, with the University of California being the most prominent affiliated institution. Across the five assessed periods, the dominant motor themes included mental health, depression, and social support. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2026; 30 [17]: 46-61).

Keywords: : intimate partner violence; abuse; domestic violence; women; bibliometric analysis

Résumé

La violence exercée par un partenaire intime (VPI) à l'encontre des femmes a constitué une tragédie humanitaire majeure, en particulier durant la pandémie de COVID-19. Il est donc essentiel de cartographier la littérature scientifique produite sur ce sujet. Cette étude visait à recenser les publications existantes concernant la VPI pendant la pandémie afin d'élaborer un cadre thématique susceptible d'orienter les actions post-pandémie et la préparation aux crises futures. Au total, 425 documents répondaient aux critères d'inclusion. L'analyse des bases de données a révélé un taux de croissance annuel de 17,08 % pour ces publications, avec une moyenne de 22,45 citations par document et un taux de co-auteurs internationaux de 29,41 %. Dix documents particulièrement influents ont été identifiés dans ce domaine de recherche, et la revue *BMC Public Health* s'est distinguée comme la plus prolifique. Les États-Unis ont été le principal contributeur, l'Université de Californie étant l'institution de rattachement la plus représentée. Sur les cinq périodes analysées, les thèmes moteurs dominants comprenaient la santé mentale, la dépression et le soutien social. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2026; 30 [17]:46-61).

Mots-clés: violence entre partenaires intimes ; maltraitance ; violence conjugale ; femmes ; analyse bibliométrique

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most significant global crises in modern human history. In its early stages, lockdown policies were widely adopted as a primary global response, followed by various forms of mobility restrictions.^{1,2} In accordance with recommendations from international organizations, such as the World

Health Organization (WHO), these control strategies primarily focused on limiting human-to-human contact to reduce viral transmission.³

However, despite the public health justification for these policies, their unintended consequences extended far beyond the containment of SARS-CoV-2. The outbreak not only triggered a health crisis but also exacerbated a humanitarian crisis in the form of intimate partner violence (IPV),

particularly affecting women in domestic settings.⁴ Containment measures produced multidimensional consequences that culminated in increased IPV. Specifically, mobility restrictions intensified contact between perpetrators and victims while simultaneously severing victims' access to essential physical and psychological support services.^{5–8}

To date, numerous studies have examined this issue, but often from fragmented and isolated perspectives. Consequently, a systematic effort is required to synthesize this evidence into a comprehensive knowledge base. Beyond identifying existing knowledge, it is essential to determine which research areas remain underexplored and hold potential for further investigation. This study aims to systematically map publications on all forms of violence against women during the pandemic to develop a thematic framework for post-pandemic action strategies. By identifying both established research themes and actionable priorities, this framework offers critical knowledge to support proactive responses to similar crises in the future.

Methods

Study design. This study adopted a bibliometric research design to quantitatively assess publication trends, citation patterns, and collaborative networks within the selected body of literature.

Data source and search strategy: Bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database in January 2026. The literature search was executed using the following search string: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("intimate partner violence" OR "intimate partner abuse") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("covid 19" OR "covid 19 pandemic").

Inclusion criteria and data extraction: The initial search yielded 819 documents. These records were subsequently refined based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) publications from the 2020–2025 period; (2) English-language documents; (3) original research articles; (4) documents at the final publication stage; (5) journal-based source types; and (6) open-access availability. No geographic restrictions were applied.

Data extraction was performed independently by two reviewers (FZ and FGZ) with expertise in bibliometric analysis. Any

discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus, with the involvement of a third reviewer when necessary. Following this screening process, 425 documents were deemed eligible for inclusion. Comprehensive metadata (including author details, affiliations, journals, keywords, research areas, citation metrics, titles, abstracts, and funding information) were downloaded from the Scopus database. The raw data were exported to Microsoft Excel 2021 for preliminary data cleaning and preparation.

Data statistics and visualization. The bibliographic data were analyzed and visualized using two specialized software tools: the *Biblioshiny* interface of the *Bibliometrix* package in RStudio (version 2025.05.0) and VOSviewer. *Bibliometrix* was utilized to map publication trends, citation structures, and thematic evolution.⁹ Additional visualizations were generated using VOSviewer (developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman) to construct and analyze complex bibliometric networks.¹⁰

Results

A summary of studies focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) against women during the pandemic is presented in Table 1. During the 2020–2025 period, a total of 425 research articles were published in the Scopus database. In this study, we focused exclusively on original research articles in order to provide a clear picture of the scholarly impact and collective efforts of the global academic community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1: Primary information of the documents

Overview	Results
Timespan	2020:2025
Documents	425
Annual Growth Rate %	17.08
Document Average Age	3.28
Average citations per doc	22.45
References	2981
Keywords Plus (ID)	1546
Author's Keywords (DE)	897
Authors	2181
Authors of single-authored docs	17
Single-authored docs	17
Co-Authors per Doc	6
International co-authorships %	29.41
Article number	425

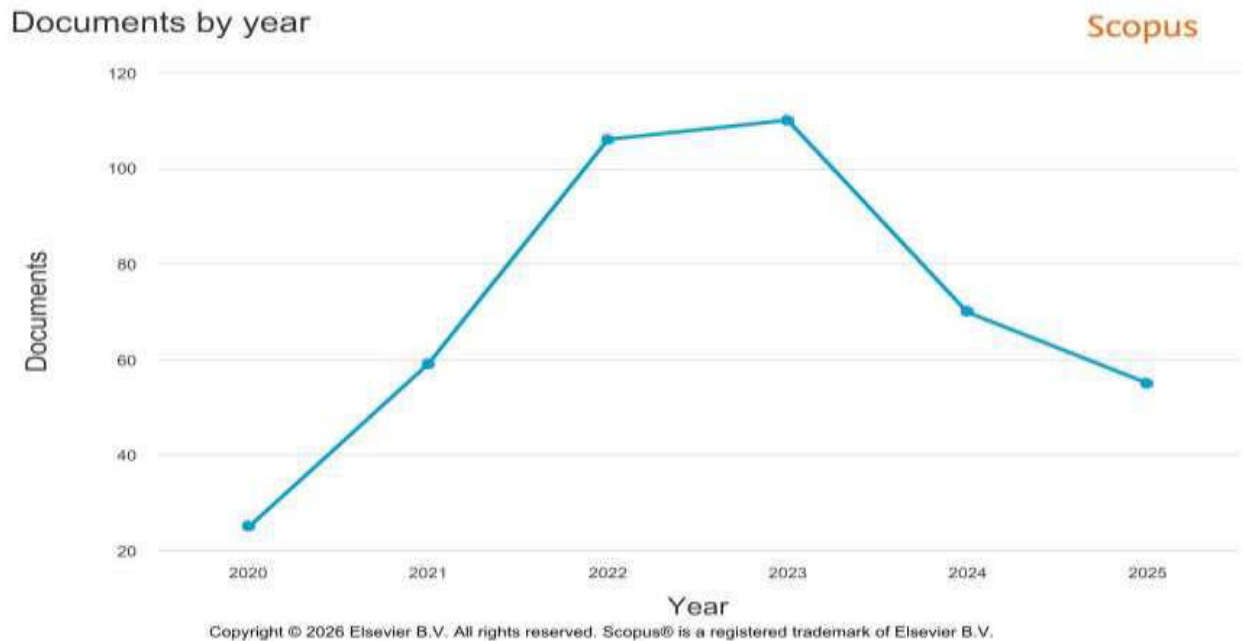


Figure 1: Annual publication trends of documents related to IPV against women during the pandemic

A summary of the studies focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) against women during the pandemic is presented in Table 1. During the 2020–2025 period, 425 research articles were published in the Scopus database. This study focuses exclusively on original research articles to provide a clear representation of the scholarly impact and collective efforts of the global academic community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bibliometric analysis summarized in Table 1 indicates a substantial growth in publications over the study period, with an annual growth rate of 17.08%. The average age of the documents was 3.28 years. Each article received an average of 22.45 citations, reflecting a relatively high level of scientific visibility and impact within a short five-year timeframe. Overall, the analyzed publications cited a total of 2,981 references. From a content perspective, keyword analysis identified 1,546 *Keywords Plus* and 897 *author-provided keywords*, reflecting thematic diversity and the broad spectrum of issues addressed, encompassing conceptual, methodological, and applied dimensions.

A total of 2,181 authors contributed to these publications, with only 17 articles written by a single author. The average number of authors in co-authored documents was six, indicating a high level of collaborative research activity.

Furthermore, 29.41% of the articles involved international collaboration, suggesting the presence of a relatively strong cross-national academic network in this research area, although nationally based collaborations remained predominant.

Annual publication trends

Based on Scopus data presented in Figure 1, publication output over the five-year period demonstrates a pronounced growth pattern from 2020 to 2023, followed by a moderate decline in the final two years. In 2020, the number of publications was relatively low, with approximately 25 articles, reflecting the early phase of scholarly engagement with IPV during the pandemic. A notable increase occurred in 2021 (around 60 publications), indicating growing academic attention. The most substantial surge was observed in 2022 (over 100 articles), peaking in 2023 at approximately 110 documents. In 2024, the number of publications declined to around 70, with a further decrease to approximately 55 articles in 2025. This downward trend does not necessarily indicate a weakening of the research field; rather, it likely reflects a shift in global research priorities as the acute phase of the pandemic eased. Nonetheless, the overall trend underscores the heightened concern of the global research community regarding IPV in pandemic

contexts, reflecting a collective awareness of this critical social consequence of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak and its subsequent policies.

Citation analysis by year of publication

Table 2 provides detailed information on publications addressing IPV against women during the pandemic, including the total number of publications, total citations (TC) per document, overall citation counts, and citable years. The results indicate that articles published during the early stages of the pandemic, particularly in 2020 and 2021, achieved the highest citation impact. Publications from 2020 recorded an average of 110.56 citations per document, while those from 2021 received an average of 49.44 citations per document. These findings suggest that early publications played a pivotal role as foundational references, shaping the trajectory of subsequent research.

As publication volume increased during 2022–2023, the average citations per document and citations per year declined markedly. Although the number of articles peaked in 2023 (110 documents), their citation impact remained relatively low (6.79 citations per document), indicating a phase characterized more by quantitative expansion than by citation consolidation. The low citation counts observed for publications from 2024–2025 are likely attributable to limited citation exposure time (*citable years*). This pattern is typical in bibliometric analyses, as earlier publications produced during the initial phase of the pandemic tend to exert the greatest influence, while more recent articles are still in the early stages of citation accumulation.

The papers with the highest number of citation

Figure 2 and Table 3 present scholarly works that have received significant citation counts in the field of IPV against women during the pandemic. The dynamics of IPV were first observed at scale in the United States by Holland KM (2021)¹¹, whose study has received 454 citations.

This paper reported that although emergency department visits for IPV declined, there was a sharp increase in help-seeking for mental health crises and suicide attempts. This

Table 2: Citation analysis of annual publication trend of documents related to IPV against women during the pandemic

Year	N	TC/ D	C/ Y	Citable Years
2020	25	110.56	15.79	7
2021	59	49.44	8.24	6
2022	106	26.55	5.31	5
2023	110	6.79	1.7	4
2024	70	3.54	1.18	3
2025	55	0.96	0.48	2

Note: N=number of documents; TC/D=total citations per documents; C/Y=citations per year

decline in physical visits is further contextualized by Hamadani JD (2020)¹² in Bangladesh, who demonstrated that 96% of rural households experienced income loss, triggering severe stress and increased violence that often remained unreported. The psychological consequences of confinement were elaborated in "Danger in Danger: Interpersonal Violence during COVID-19 Quarantine"¹³ by Mazza M (2020), which has received 363 citations. The study described how frustration and aggression transformed the home into a dangerous environment for victims. This dynamic was further reinforced by Moreira DN (2020)¹⁴ and Kofman YB (2020)¹⁵, who highlighted how lockdown policies granted perpetrators increased control by restricting victims' access to support services.

Concerning clinical evidence, Gosangi B (2021)¹⁶ in "Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic," which has received 231 citations, reported that while the number of IPV patients presenting to hospitals declined, the severity of physical injuries increased 1.8-fold. This suggests that victims only sought medical care when their conditions became critical. As a response to barriers in physical access, Agüero JM (2021)¹⁷ documented a dramatic 48% increase in helpline calls in Peru, indicating a shift toward remote help-seeking mechanisms.

The systemic psychological impact was mapped by Sediri S (2020)¹⁸ in Tunisia, where 57.3% of female respondents reported severe psychological distress. These findings are complemented by Mahmud M (2021)¹⁹ in Uganda, which showed that a significant decline in income was directly associated with increased household conflicts and heightened perceptions of violence.

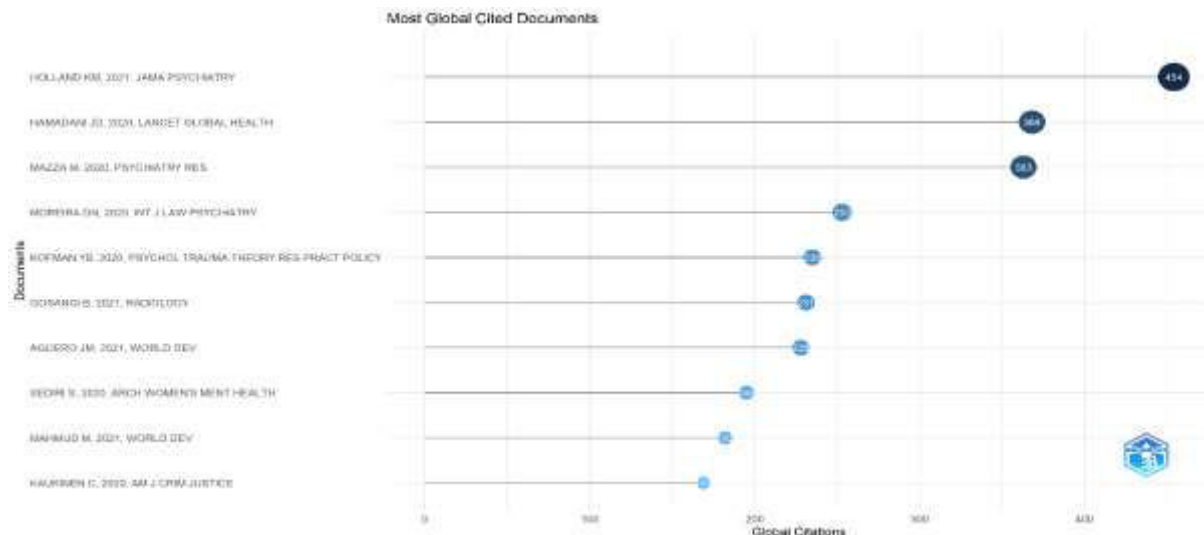


Figure 2: Most globally cited documents on intimate partner violence against women during the pandemic

Table 3: Significant citation documents on intimate partner violence against women during the pandemic

Paper	Title	TC	TC per Year
HOLLAND KM, 2021, JAMA PSYCHIATRY	Trends in US Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health, Overdose, and Violence Outcomes Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic	454	75.6
HAMADANI JD, 2020, LANCET GLOBAL HEALTH	Immediate impact of stay-at-home orders to control COVID-19 transmission on socioeconomic conditions, food insecurity, mental health, and intimate partner violence in Bangladeshi women and their families: an interrupted time series	368	52.5
MAZZA M, 2020, PSYCHIATRY RES	Danger in danger: Interpersonal violence during COVID-19 quarantine	363	51.8
MOREIRA DN, 2020, INT J LAW PSYCHIATRY	The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the precipitation of intimate partner violence	253	36.1
KOFMAN YB, 2020, PSYCHOL TRAUMA THEORY RES PRACT POLICY	Home is not always a haven: The domestic violence crisis amid the COVID-19 pandemic	235	33.5
GOSANGI B, 2021, RADIOLOGY	Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic	231	38.5
AGÜERO JM, 2021, WORLD DEV	COVID-19 and the rise of intimate partner violence	228	38
SEDIRI S, 2020, ARCH WOMEN'S MENT HEALTH	Women's mental health: acute impact of COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence	195	27.8
MAHMUD M, 2021, WORLD DEV	Household response to an extreme shock: Evidence on the immediate impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on economic outcomes and well-being in rural Uganda	182	30.3
KAUKINEN C, 2020, AM J CRIM JUSTICE	When Stay-at-Home Orders Leave Victims Unsafe at Home: Exploring the Risk and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic	169	24.1

Note: TC=total citations per documents

Table 4: Top ten most productive authors publishing on IPV during the pandemic

Author (s)	TP	TC	YFP
WOOD L	9	187	2022
MANTLER T	8	68	2022
MILLER E	7	134	2020
RAGAVAN MI	7	134	2020
CHANG JC	6	198	2022
JACKSON KT	6	48	2022
RANDELL KA	6	96	2022
VOTH SCHRAG RJ	6	101	2022
DECKER MR	5	74	2022
DEGUE S	5	74	2022

Note: TP=total publications; TC=total citations; YFP=year of first publication

Table 5: Most productive sources on the article titles publishing on IPV during the pandemic

Document's Sources	N
BMC PUBLIC HEALTH	33
JOURNAL OF FAMILY VIOLENCE	24
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH	21
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	16
JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE	15
PLOS ONE	15

As a concluding perspective from the ten most cited papers, Kaukinen C (2020)²⁰, in “*When Stay-at-Home Orders Leave Victims Unsafe at Home: Exploring the Risk and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic*,” warned that the combination of unemployment, stress, and isolation threatens to reverse decades of progress in protecting women. Collectively, these studies indicate that a decline in medical visits should be interpreted as evidence of victims being trapped in isolation, only becoming visible through severe injuries or emergency helpline calls.

Studies conducted within the first few months of the pandemic documented the early emergence of IPV, particularly among women experiencing economic pressure.^{21,22} Ironically, the home ceased to be a safe space for many victims as they were compelled to cohabit continuously with perpetrators.²³ These lived experiences reveal profound suffering, ultimately constituting a humanitarian tragedy²⁴ as an unintended consequence of pandemic control measures.²⁵

Main contributors

Most productive authors

Table 4 presents the ten most productive authors publishing on intimate partner violence (IPV) during the COVID-19 pandemic, including their total number of publications (TP), aggregate citation counts (TC), and the year of their first publication (YFP) in the database. Among these leading contributors, Wood L emerged as the most prolific author addressing IPV during the pandemic. This was followed by Mantler T, and subsequently by Miller E and Ragavan MI, both of whom made substantial contributions to this research area.

Author-level analysis reveals heterogeneous publication patterns. Two authors, Miller E and Ragavan MI, demonstrated sustained, long-term engagement with this research topic, maintaining consistent output since 2020. In 2022, Voth Schrag RJ began producing publications with significant citation impact, followed by Wood L, Miller E, and Ragavan MI. By 2025, authors such as Wood L, Chang JC, and DeGue S continued to publish consistently, although their more recent outputs exhibited a comparatively lower citation impact. This pattern likely reflects the combined effects of publication timing, where newer articles have had less time to accumulate citations, and potential shifts in research focus as the pandemic context evolved.

Most productive sources

An overview of the most productive publication sources is presented in Table 5. The results indicate that *BMC Public Health* emerged as the leading source, contributing the highest number of documents to the field. Furthermore, three journals specifically focused on violence: the *Journal of Family Violence*, *Violence Against Women*, and the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* made substantial contributions. Collectively, these three journals accounted for 55 documents among the most productive outlets.

Figure 4 illustrates the cumulative publication trajectories of six major journals from 2020 to 2025: *BMC Public Health*, the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (IJERPH)*, the *Journal of Family Violence*, the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *PLOS ONE*, and *Violence Against Women*. During

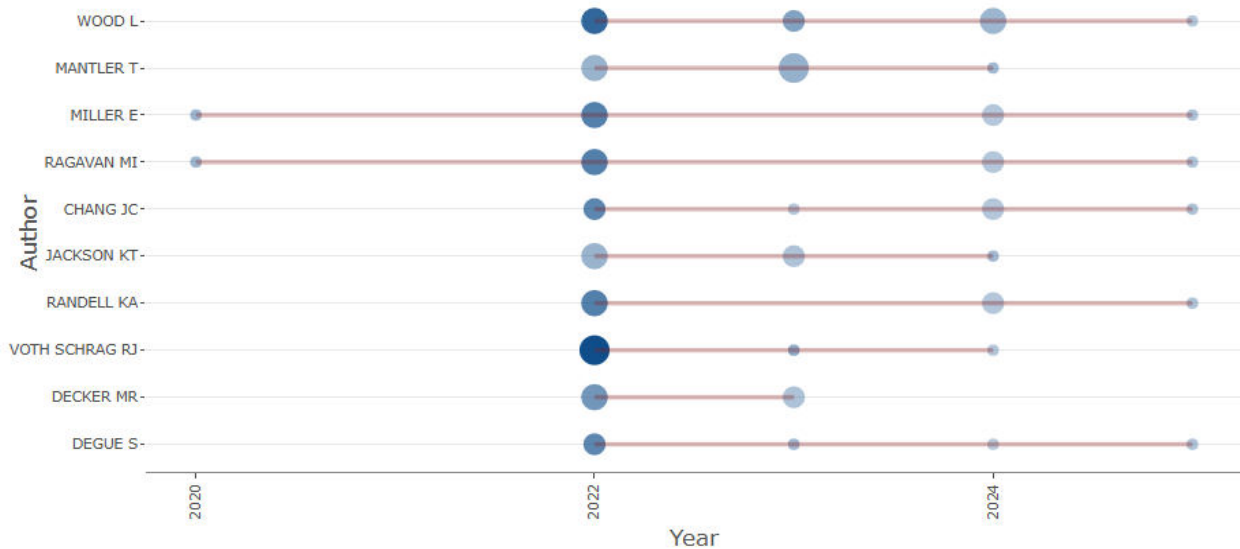


Figure 3: Evolution of individual authors' research contributions over time (2020–2025)

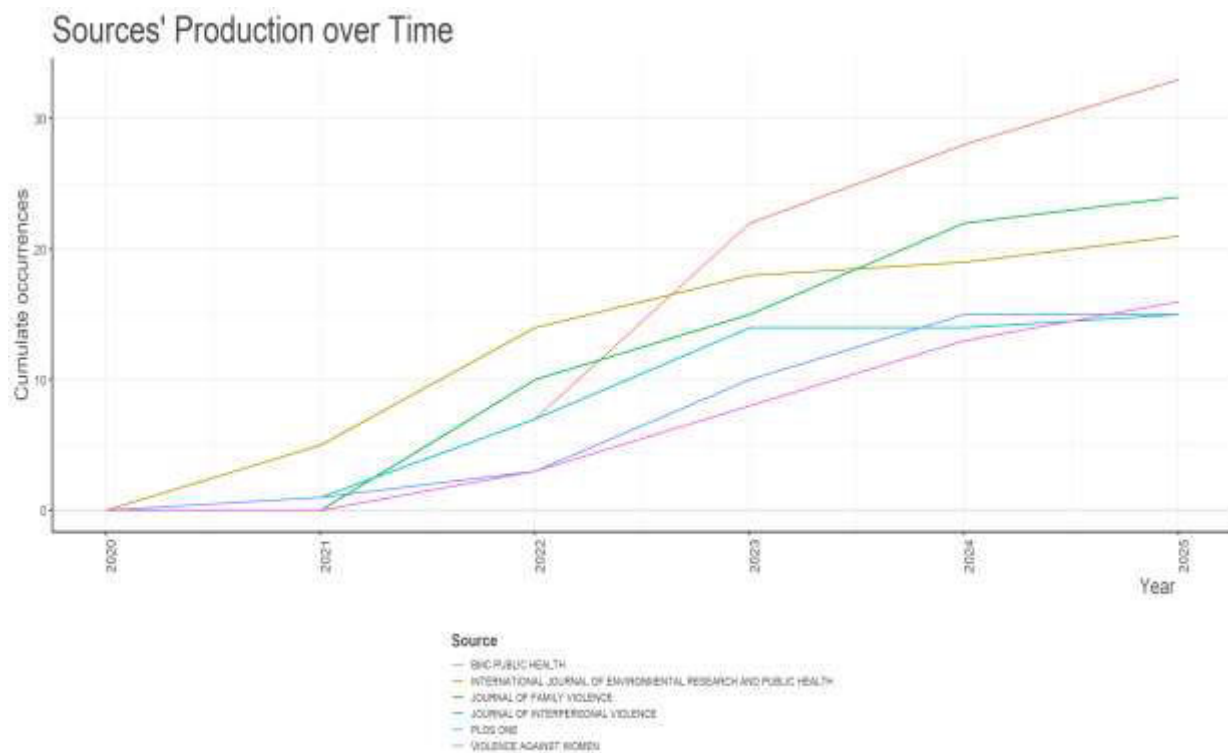


Figure 4: Publication output of major sources over time (2020–2025)

the initial phase (2020–2021), all six journals exhibited limited publication output. However, *IJERPH* demonstrated an earlier increase compared to the other sources, indicating its role as an early platform for research addressing IPV during the pandemic. A marked rise in publication activity

across all sources was observed beginning in 2022. During that year, the *Journal of Family Violence* and *BMC Public Health* showed relatively rapid growth, reflecting increasing scholarly interest from both public health and family violence research perspectives.

Table 6: Ten top affiliation

Affiliation	Articles
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA	29
WESTERN UNIVERSITY	28
BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL	15
KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET	15
JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH	14
SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL	14
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE	13
LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE	12
MCMASTER UNIVERSITY	12
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN	12

Table 7: Ten top countries

Region	Frequency
USA	635
CANADA	184
UK	106
SOUTH AFRICA	65
AUSTRALIA	58
SPAIN	46
BRAZIL	36
CHINA	36
SWEDEN	27
UGANDA	27

Publication output peaked in 2023, when *BMC Public Health* experienced the steepest increase and emerged as the journal with the highest cumulative number of publications addressing IPV against women. This trend suggests that *BMC Public Health* served as a primary outlet for research on this topic.

Between 2024 and 2025, all journals continued to demonstrate cumulative growth, albeit at a more stable rate. The *Journal of Family Violence* and *IJERPH* maintained strong contributions, while *PLOS ONE* and *Violence Against Women* exhibited more gradual yet consistent growth. Overall, as shown in Table 5, the three most productive journals were *BMC Public Health*, the *Journal of Family Violence*, and *IJERPH*, contributing 33, 24, and 21 documents, respectively, during the 2020–2025 period.

Most productive affiliations

Analysis of institutional affiliations indicates that the University of California and Western University were the most productive contributors to the literature on intimate partner violence (IPV) during the pandemic, with 29 and 28 publications, respectively (Table 6). Other prominent research and healthcare institutions, including Brigham and

Women's Hospital, the Karolinska Institutet, and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, also played significant roles in advancing scholarship in this field. Notably, the inclusion of African institutions, such as the South African Medical Research Council and the University of Cape Town, provides vital perspectives from the Global South, reflecting the increasing geographical diversity and inclusiveness of research on IPV during the pandemic.

Most productive countries

The United States dominated the geographic distribution of publications with 635 articles, followed by Canada (184) and the United Kingdom (106). Substantial contributions from South Africa (65) and Australia (58) demonstrate active scholarly engagement from regions beyond North America and Europe. Furthermore, the inclusion of countries such as Brazil, China, and Uganda reflects a growing geographical diversity in research on intimate partner violence (IPV) during the pandemic (Table 7).

Networks

Using VOSviewer, a co-authorship analysis was performed with a minimum threshold of three documents per author. The resulting collaboration network, illustrated in Figure 5, revealed two primary clusters. The red cluster was characterized by a dense and intensive network of authors, including Chang JC, Randell KA, Ragavan MI, Miller EP, Duplessis V, and DeGue SA. This high density suggests a robust research group with strong internal connectivity, likely facilitated by shared institutional affiliations or coordinated research initiatives.

The green cluster consisted of authors such as Wood LG, Voth Schrag RJ, Leat SR, Temple JR,

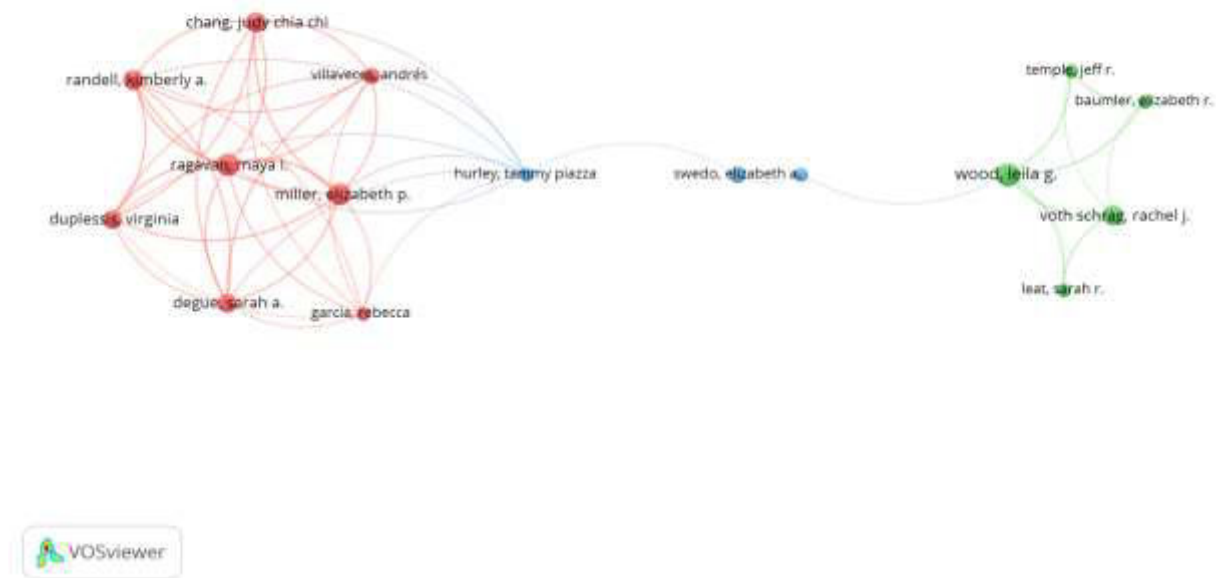


Figure 5: Network visualization of author collaborations

and Baumler ER. While smaller in scale, this cluster also exhibited consistent collaborative patterns within a shared research theme. Notably, these two clusters were interconnected by several key authors, particularly Hurley TP and Swedo EA, who served as bridging nodes. By linking otherwise distinct research groups, these authors played a crucial role in facilitating knowledge exchange across the collaborative networks.

Corresponding author's countries

The United States dominates publication output as the primary country of origin for corresponding authors (Figure 6), with the vast majority of its articles classified as Single Country Publications (SCP). Even within Multiple Country Publications (MCP), the USA remains highly prominent. Overall, SCPs are significantly more prevalent across all analyzed countries. Other nations with notable contributions include Canada and the United Kingdom, reflecting the well-established state of IPV research infrastructure in these contexts. Nevertheless, contributions from the

Global South are also evident through MCP-based collaborations involving countries such as Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India, and Uganda, indicating that scholarly attention to this issue spans a broad global scale.

The preeminence of high-income nations, particularly the United States, is further evidenced in Figure 7, which depicts international collaboration networks based on author affiliations. The United States functions as the central global hub of collaboration, maintaining strong links to Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. This pattern likely reflects superior research capacity or the accelerated development and application of analytical methodologies in addressing IPV-related challenges during the pandemic.

Main phrases

The primary keywords were identified based on author-provided terms with a minimum occurrence of five to establish the principal keyword phrases, as detailed in Table 8. During the data cleaning process, redundant entries were consolidated; for

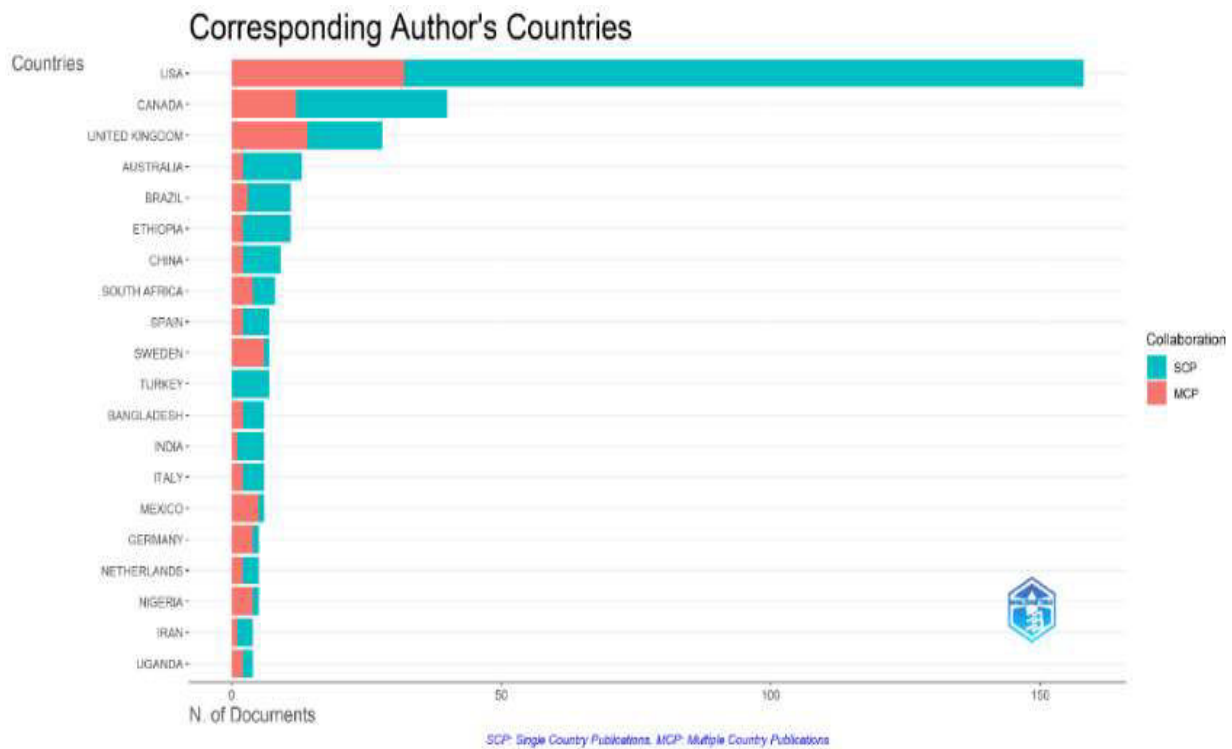


Figure 6: Corresponding author's network



Figure 7: World map of countries' collaboration

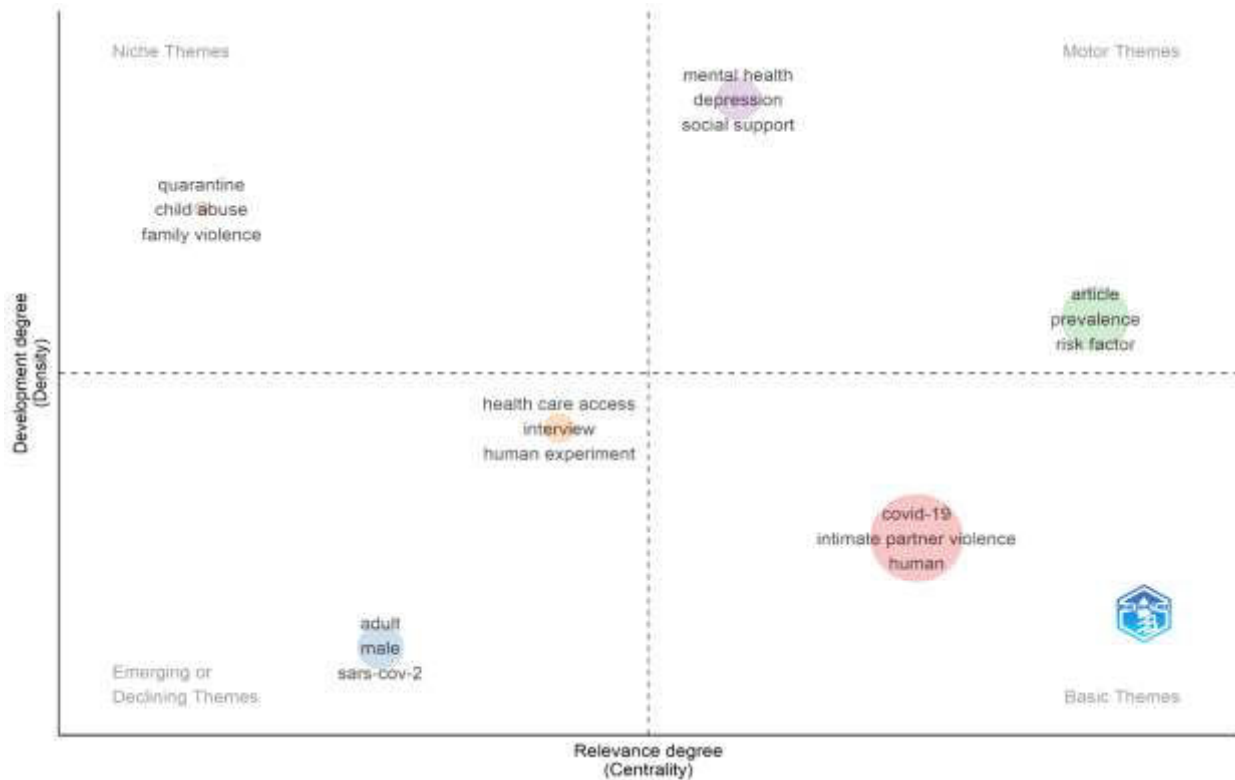
instance, the abbreviation "IPV" was merged into the full phrase "intimate partner violence," while terms referring to specific country names were excluded from the analysis to maintain thematic focus.

Intimate partner violence and COVID-19 emerged as the most frequently associated topics

within the reviewed literature. The third cluster is represented by mental health, a highly pertinent index given that the increased psychological stress induced by lockdown policies has been shown to exacerbate IPV risks. In the fourth cluster, family violence, which encompasses child abuse, is identified as a significant theme. However, research

Table 8: Clusters of author keywords

Cluster number	Cluster color	Keywords	Occurrences
1	Red	Intimate partner violence	241
2	Green	Covid-19	222
3	Blue	Mental health	29
4	Yellow	Family violence	9
5	Purple	Violence against women	24
6	Light blue	Stress	6

**Figure 8:** Keyword-based thematic development

reports in this specific area remain sparse, necessitating further exploration to better understand the frequent co-occurrence of IPV and child abuse through more integrated studies.

The fifth cluster highlights violence against women as a prominent trending keyword frequently selected by authors. Finally, stress occupies a central role in the sixth cluster. This concept provides substantial opportunities for future investigation, particularly regarding its intersection with related issues such as alcohol abuse.

Keyword-based thematic development and future themes

We examined the emerging themes within these IPV-related articles to identify their potential as

research templates for future studies in the event of subsequent pandemics (Figure 8). In the upper-right quadrant, the Motor Themes represent topics that are highly relevant, well-developed, and serve as the primary drivers of IPV research during the pandemic. These themes specifically encompass mental health, depression, and social support.

The psychological impacts, particularly depression and the critical role of social support, have emerged as central focal points in scholarship regarding IPV during the pandemic. These themes constitute the backbone of the scientific discourse on this subject and must remain a key consideration in the design of future pandemic response policies. Evidence suggests that mobility restriction policies tend to induce significant psychological stress, which consequently increases the risk of IPV, with

women remaining the primary victims of such dynamics. In the upper-left quadrant, representing Niche Themes, several specialized topics emerge, specifically quarantine, child abuse, and family violence. Although these themes under conceptual development between 2020 and 2025, they remain relatively specialized and isolated within the literature. While IPV and intra-familial violence (including violence against children) have been examined in depth, they have not yet been fully integrated into the mainstream of IPV scholarship. This gap underscores a significant opportunity for future research to better anticipate these interlinked issues. Consequently, scholarly attention should broaden its scope from a singular focus on violence against women to include child abuse, necessitating more comprehensive preparedness in psychological and emergency services.

Furthermore, the Emerging or Declining Themes quadrant includes keywords such as adult, male, and SARS-CoV-2. These topics appear to be declining in prominence as research focus has shifted toward the specific social and psychological impacts on women or the environmental conditions that foster violence.

The Basic Themes quadrant encompasses "COVID-19," "intimate partner violence," and "human." These themes served as the essential foundation for research on IPV and violence against women throughout the pandemic. This finding indicates that COVID-19 and IPV have become the core themes linking the entire body of scholarship in this field. Consequently, should future pandemics occur, these issues must receive prioritized attention. The academic community now possesses critical foundational knowledge regarding the potential humanitarian crises that may arise during such periods; therefore, future responses aimed at anticipating and mitigating these problems can be implemented more rapidly and effectively.

This thematic mapping is also noteworthy for identifying several themes positioned near the center of the quadrants, including health care access, interview, and human experiment. Methodologically and conceptually, these themes occupy a transitional position, offering new exploratory directions for future research. This suggests that in the event of subsequent pandemics, qualitative methods, as represented by the "interview" theme, will play a vital role in

understanding the complexities of these issues. Additionally, research approaches focused on health care access proved essential during the COVID-19 era, signaling a readiness to address similar systemic challenges in the future

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV). The substantial volume of documents and citations demonstrates the intense focus this issue has garnered from global researchers. IPV during the pandemic is attributed to the synergistic effects of economic instability, rising unemployment, and increased household stress associated with childcare and home-based learning. Furthermore, the implementation of social restrictions curtailed available safe spaces for women and children,^{26,27} creating pressures that exacerbated violent conduct among perpetrators.²⁸

Research indicates that the global prevalence of IPV during the pandemic reached 31%, with significant disparities ranging from as high as 68% in Uganda to as low as 10% in the United States.²⁹ Although other studies have reported varying figures across different settings and timeframes,³⁰ the consistently elevated prevalence underscores that a humanitarian tragedy in the form of violence against women unfolded during the pandemic.³¹⁻³³ Furthermore, these figures are likely subject to substantial underreporting, particularly during the initial stages of the outbreak.³⁴

Monitoring the occurrence of IPV during the pandemic proved challenging, as mobility restriction policies hindered victims' ability to report incidents to the police, seek assistance, and utilize social services.³⁵ Consequently, numerous cases remained undetected and lacked adequate intervention. Notably, while other forms of public crime declined, serious domestic offenses such as IPV remained stable or even intensified, underscoring the unintended adverse consequences of lockdown policies on the safety of household members.³⁶

The prevalence of domestic violence, as evidenced by the high volume of victim reports, indicates that the pandemic effectively served as a mechanism of control for perpetrators and a profound psychological stressor that exacerbated victims' circumstances.³⁷ Many victims

experienced acute distress, with some even developing suicidal ideation.^{38,39} From the victims' perspective, the threat of IPV was often perceived as far more perilous than the virus itself. Simultaneously, access to essential assistance was severely restricted⁴⁰; victims were frequently unable to reach preventive services because healthcare institutions prioritized pandemic management.⁴¹ Consequently, this convergence of factors created a chaotic and traumatic environment for women experiencing IPV.⁴²

Potential future research

It is imperative to ensure that women do not remain the most vulnerable group, particularly regarding the risk of IPV during future pandemics. The findings of this study provide a critical research template for pandemic preparedness, or at the very least, for any context involving the implementation of large-scale mobility restrictions. This template underscores a vital consideration: mobility restrictions frequently precipitate secondary social crises, which must be proactively anticipated and mitigated within future policy frameworks.⁴³

At a minimum, health authorities should prioritize strengthening the capacity of women in high-risk areas to implement prevention efforts and utilize improved reporting mechanisms for future IPV cases. Given that population mobility control is intrinsically linked to intensified interactions between perpetrators and victims, supportive services must be developed proactively. Recently, these interventions have demonstrated promising growth through the integration of telehealth and e-health technologies.^{44,45}

Consequently, although the acute phase of the pandemic has subsided, efforts to address intimate partner violence (IPV) must persist, particularly by strengthening research collaboration networks that currently remain concentrated in a limited number of high-income nations. Strategic encouragement of Multiple Country Publications (MCP) is essential to foster a more inclusive and global scholarly exchange.

Furthermore, research addressing the long-term consequences of IPV must be disseminated to a global audience, as its deleterious impacts extend beyond the individual to compromise the well-being of children and the overall health of the family unit.

Limitations

While this study maps publications on intimate partner violence (IPV) during the pandemic, the selected timeframe might not fully capture the most recent developments due to inherent delays in the publication process. Consequently, the findings may not entirely reflect the current post-pandemic landscape. To address this, future reviews are encouraged to identify and incorporate a more extended temporal scope to provide a comprehensive longitudinal perspective on the evolution of IPV research.

A significant limitation of this study is its exclusive reliance on a single database, specifically Scopus. Although Scopus offers a robust collection of highly relevant literature, the use of a single data source may introduce selection bias. Furthermore, because the analysis was confined to English-language original articles, the scope may have been narrowed, potentially overlooking valuable research published in other languages or within different disciplinary boundaries.

The exclusion of gray literature, such as institutional reports and conventional field documents, represents an additional constraint, as these sources often contain vital information not found in peer-reviewed journals. Moreover, the study focused exclusively on open-access publications, meaning that significant scholarly contributions protected by subscription barriers were not captured in this review. These methodological constraints should be carefully considered when interpreting the broader implications of our findings.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis of 425 documents published between 2020 and 2025 in the Scopus database underscores the intensity of global research efforts addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) against women during the pandemic. The reviewed literature consistently highlights critical themes such as victims' mental health and the profound disruption of support services caused by mobility restrictions. Consequently, future research should prioritize the long-term consequences of IPV and its sustained impact on women's overall well-being to better understand the enduring nature of this humanitarian crisis. To enhance preparedness for future

pandemics or similar crises involving mobility restrictions, it is essential to proactively strengthen support systems. This includes the greater integration of advanced technologies, such as telehealth and e-health, to ensure uninterrupted access to protection and care services for vulnerable populations.

Contribution of authors

Fotarisman Zaluchu (Conceptualization, Methodology, Organizing data collection and Writing—Review and editing). Farold Graxio Zaluchu (Conceptualization, Supervision, and validation, Original draft; and Writing—Review and editing). Finley Eiwan Franklin Zaluchu (Supervision, and validation, Original draft; and Writing—Review and editing). Mira Meily Yesni Zendrato (Supervision and validation). All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Conflict of interest

The Authors declared no conflict of interest

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability

The data are available upon reasonable request from the authors.

References

1. Verma BK, Verma M, Verma VK, Abdullah RB, Nath DC, Khan HTA, et al. Global lockdown: An effective safeguard in responding to the threat of COVID-19. *J Eval Clin Pract.* 2020 Dec;26(6):1592–8. doi:10.1111/jep.13483 PubMed PMID: 32970386.
2. Gargoum SA, Gargoum AS. Limiting mobility during COVID-19, when and to what level? An international comparative study using change point analysis. *J Transp Health.* 2021 Mar;20:101019. doi:10.1016/j.jth.2021.101019 PubMed PMID: 33777694.
3. WHO. COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, Country Preparedness and Response Status for COVID-19 Country as of 19 March 2020 [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2020 Aug 29]. Available from: [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-country-preparedness-and-response-status-for-covid-19-as-of-19-march-2020)

[country-preparedness-and-response-status-for-covid-19-as-of-19-march-2020](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-country-preparedness-and-response-status-for-covid-19-as-of-19-march-2020)

4. Sarumpaet S, Zaluchu F, Eyanoer PC, Simanjuntak NH. Fighting against COVID-19 and Fighting against Stigma: A. *Open Access Maced J Med Sci.* 2020;8(T1):522–5.
5. Muldoon KA, Denize KM, Talarico R, Boisvert C, Frank O, Harvey ALJ, et al. COVID-19 and perinatal intimate partner violence: a cross-sectional survey of pregnant and postpartum individuals in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMJ Open.* 2021;11(5):e049295. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-049295 PubMed PMID: rayyan-260179223.
6. Savvoudi DM, Orovou E, Dagla M, Kirkou G, Iatrakis G, Antoniou E. Domestic Violence in Pregnancy during the Pandemic Era: a Systematic Review. *Maedica (Bucur).* 2024;19(2):400–9. doi:10.26574/maedica.2024.19.2.4002024; PubMed PMID: rayyan-260178798.
7. Savvoudi DM, Orovou E, Dagla M, Kirkou G, Iatrakis G, Antoniou E. Domestic Violence in Pregnancy during the Pandemic Era: a Systematic Review. *Maedica - A Journal of Clinical Medicine.* 2024 Jun 15;19(2). doi:10.26574/maedica.2024.19.2.400
8. White SJ, Sin J, Sweeney A, Salisbury T, Wahlich C, Montesinos Guevara CM, et al. Global Prevalence and Mental Health Outcomes of Intimate Partner Violence Among Women: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Trauma Violence Abuse.* 2024 Jan 24;25(1):494–511. doi:10.1177/15248380231155529
9. Aria M, Cuccurullo C. bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *J Informetr.* 2017 Nov;11(4):959–75. doi:10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007
10. van Eck NJ, Waltman L. Software survey: VOSviewer, a computer program for bibliometric mapping. *Scientometrics.* 2010 Aug 31;84(2):523–38. doi:10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3
11. Holland KM, Jones C, Vivolo-Kantor AM, Idaikkadar N, Zwald M, Hoots B, et al. Trends in US Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health, Overdose, and Violence Outcomes Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Psychiatry.* 2021 Apr 1;78(4):372. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.4402
12. Hamadani JD, Hasan MI, Baldi AJ, Hossain SJ, Shiraji S, Bhuiyan MSA, et al. Immediate impact of stay-at-home orders to control COVID-19 transmission on socioeconomic conditions, food insecurity, mental health, and intimate partner violence in Bangladeshi women and their families: an interrupted time series. *Lancet Glob Health.* 2020 Nov;8(11):e1380–9. doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30366-1
13. Mazza M, Marano G, Lai C, Janiri L, Sani G. Danger in danger: Interpersonal violence during COVID-19 quarantine. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020 Jul;289:113046. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113046
14. Moreira DN, Pinto da Costa M. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the precipitation of intimate partner violence. *Int J Law Psychiatry.* 2020 Jul;71:101606. doi:10.1016/j.ijlp.2020.101606
15. Kofman YB, Garfin DR. Home is not always a haven: The domestic violence crisis amid the COVID-19

- pandemic. *Psychol Trauma*. 2020 Aug;12(S1):S199–201. doi:10.1037/tra0000866
16. Gosangi B, Park H, Thomas R, Gujrathi R, Bay CP, Raja AS, et al. Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Radiology*. 2021 Jan;298(1):E38–45. doi:10.1148/radiol.2020202866
 17. Agüero JM. COVID-19 and the rise of intimate partner violence. *World Dev*. 2021 Jan;137:105217. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105217
 18. Sediri S, Zgueb Y, Ouanes S, Ouali U, Bourgou S, Jomli R, et al. Women's mental health: acute impact of COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence. *Arch Womens Ment Health*. 2020 Dec 17;23(6):749–56. doi:10.1007/s00737-020-01082-4
 19. Mahmud M, Riley E. Household response to an extreme shock: Evidence on the immediate impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on economic outcomes and well-being in rural Uganda. *World Dev*. 2021 Apr;140:105318. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105318
 20. Kaukinen C. When Stay-at-Home Orders Leave Victims Unsafe at Home: Exploring the Risk and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2020 Aug 6;45(4):668–79. doi:10.1007/s12103-020-09533-5
 21. Hamadani JD, Hasan MI, Baldi AJ, Hossain SJ, Shiraji S, Bhuiyan MSA, et al. Immediate impact of stay-at-home orders to control COVID-19 transmission on socioeconomic conditions, food insecurity, mental health, and intimate partner violence in Bangladeshi women and their families: an interrupted time series. *Lancet Glob Health*. 2020 Nov;8(11):e1380–9. doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30366-1
 22. Kaukinen C. When Stay-at-Home Orders Leave Victims Unsafe at Home: Exploring the Risk and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2020 Aug 6;45(4):668–79. doi:10.1007/s12103-020-09533-5
 23. Kofman YB, Garfin DR. Home is not always a haven: The domestic violence crisis amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychol Trauma*. 2020 Aug;12(S1):S199–201. doi:10.1037/tra0000866
 24. Lyons M, Brewer G. Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence during Lockdown and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *J Fam Violence*. 2022 Aug 26;37(6):969–77. doi:10.1007/s10896-021-00260-x
 25. Holland KM, Jones C, Vivolo-Kantor AM, Idaikkadar N, Zwald M, Hoots B, et al. Trends in US Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health, Overdose, and Violence Outcomes Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2021 Apr 1;78(4):372. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.4402
 26. Kaukinen C. When Stay-at-Home Orders Leave Victims Unsafe at Home: Exploring the Risk and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2020 Aug 6;45(4):668–79. doi:10.1007/s12103-020-09533-5
 27. Moore BC, Clements C, Turton E. Intimate Partner Violence Victimization, Mental Health, and Unemployment: Year One of the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Violence Against Women*. 2024 Nov 2;30(14):3474–97. doi:10.1177/10778012231182413
 28. Cunha O, Caridade S, de Castro Rodrigues A, Cruz AR, Peixoto MM. Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence and COVID-19-Related Anxiety During the Second Lockdown in Portugal: The Mediating Role of Anxiety, Depression, and Stress. *J Fam Violence*. 2024 Apr 24;39(3):397–408. doi:10.1007/s10896-023-00498-7
 29. Kifle ME, Aychiluhm SB, Anbesu EW. Global prevalence of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic among women: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Womens Health*. 2024 Feb 17;24(1):127. doi:10.1186/s12905-023-02845-8
 30. Hodgkinson S, Dixon A, Halford E, Farrell G. Domestic abuse in the Covid-19 pandemic: measures designed to overcome common limitations of trend measurement. *Crime Sci*. 2023 Jun 13;12(1):12. doi:10.1186/s40163-023-00190-7
 31. Costa D, Scharpf F, Weiss A, Ayanian AH, Bozorgmehr K. Intimate partner violence during COVID-19: systematic review and meta-analysis according to methodological choices. *BMC Public Health*. 2024 Jan 29;24(1):313. doi:10.1186/s12889-024-17802-9
 32. Ghahramani S, Najjari B, Bayattork R, Arab-Zozani M. Prevalence and Factor Influencing Intimate Partner Violence against Women during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Med J Islam Repub Iran*. 2024 Oct 20. doi:10.47176/mjiri.38.104
 33. Cantor E, Salas R, Torres R. Femicide and Attempted Femicide before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Chile. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2022 Jun 30;19(13):8012. doi:10.3390/ijerph19138012
 34. Mahmood N, Kamruzzaman M, Rahman A, Reidpath DD, Akhter S. Impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on intimate partner violence: Issues of non-reporting in Bangladesh. *Women's Health*. 2022 Jan 24;18. doi:10.1177/17455057221087888
 35. Williams EE, Arant KR, Leifer VP, Balcom MC, Levy-Carrick NC, Lewis-O'Connor A, et al. Provider perspectives on the provision of safe, equitable, trauma-informed care for intimate partner violence survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic: a qualitative study. *BMC Womens Health*. 2021 Dec 27;21(1):315. doi:10.1186/s12905-021-01460-9
 36. Boman JH, Gallupe O. Has COVID-19 Changed Crime? Crime Rates in the United States during the Pandemic. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 2020 Aug 8;45(4):537–45. doi:10.1007/s12103-020-09551-3
 37. Wyckoff KG, Narasimhan S, Stephenson K, Zeidan AJ, Smith RN, Evans DP. "COVID gave him an opportunity to tighten the reins around my throat": perceptions of COVID-19 movement restrictions among survivors of intimate partner violence. *BMC Public Health*. 2023 Jan 30;23(1):199. doi:10.1186/s12889-023-15137-5
 38. de Baumont AC, Oliveira GS, de Figueiredo JB, dos Santos JF, Genro BP, Habigzang LF, et al. Intimate partner

- violence and women's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. *Trends Psychiatry Psychother.* 2024. doi:10.47626/2237-6089-2022-0594
39. Anguzu R, Kabagenyi A, Kasasa S, Abbo C, Shour AR, Dickson-Gomez J, et al. Effect of intimate partner violence on depression severity among women in informal settlements of Uganda. *BMC Psychol.* 2025 Sep 26;13(1):1054. doi:10.1186/s40359-025-03397-2
 40. Goodman LA, Epstein D. Loneliness and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Intimate Partner Violence Survivors. *J Fam Violence.* 2022 Jul 5;37(5):767–74. doi:10.1007/s10896-020-00215-8
 41. Davies RL, Rice K, Rock AJ. The Effects of COVID-19 Social Restrictions and Subsequent Informal Support Limitations on Intimate Partner Violence: An Opinion Piece. *Front Glob Womens Health.* 2022 Jun 13;3. doi:10.3389/fgwh.2022.829559
 42. McKinlay AR, Simon YR, May T, Fancourt D, Burton A. How did UK social distancing restrictions affect the lives of women experiencing intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic? A qualitative exploration of survivor views. *BMC Public Health.* 2023 Jan 18;23(1):123. doi:10.1186/s12889-023-14987-3
 43. Ikhsan E, Zaluchu F. The Control of Population Mobility since the Early Pandemic Era to the End of 2021: Lessons from Indonesia. *F1000Res.* 2023 Feb 9;12:147. doi:10.12688/f1000research.128705.1
 44. Jack SM, Munro-Kramer ML, Williams JR, Schminkey D, Tomlinson E, Jennings Mayo-Wilson L, et al. Recognising and responding to intimate partner violence using telehealth: Practical guidance for nurses and midwives. *J Clin Nurs.* 2021 Feb 27;30(3–4):588–602. doi:10.1111/jocn.15554
 45. Hoss L, Richardson LS, Axelrod AD, Cravens Pickens J. Clinical Guidelines When Addressing Abuse over Telemental Health. *Contemp Fam Ther.* 2023 Sep 29;45(3):287–97. doi:10.1007/s10591-023-09665-w