

**VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL FACULTY**

The Final thesis

**Domestic violence before and during the Covid-19 pandemic
A narrative review of the dynamics of risk factors for domestic violence during covid-19
pandemic**

Teresa Schwind, VI year, 2. group

Department/ Clinic: **Institute of Health Sciences Department of Public Health and
Nursing**

Supervisor

Prof. Natalja Fatkulina, PhD _____
signature

The Head of Department/Clinic

Prof. Natalja Fatkulina, PhD _____
signature

2022

Email of the student: Teresa.schwind@mf.stud.vu.lt

Contents

SUMMARY 1

 Background..... 1

 Purpose 1

 Methods 1

 Results 1

 Conclusion..... 1

INTRODUCTION..... 1

KEYWORDS 3

LITERATURE SELECTION 3

CLINICAL DISCRIPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE..... 4

 Definitions 4

 Epidemiology..... 5

 Risk factors 5

 Outcomes of domestic violence..... 6

RESULTS..... 7

 Intimate partner violence 7

 Child abuse 8

 Alcohol 11

 Money, job loss..... 11

 School closure..... 12

 Pol. Instability: less investigations 13

 Cramped housing 14

Conclusion..... 14

References 15

SUMMARY

Background

Domestic violence is a multifactorial and complex form of violence, that typically incorporates certain degrees of dependency on the perpetrator. This makes this type of violence hard to detect and prosecute. Risk factors for domestic violence can be substance abuse, low socioeconomic levels, a restricted housing situation or a failing support and detection system.

Purpose

The burden of domestic violence is high. Long term consequences of domestic abuse include high governmental expenditures and massive mental and physical health problems for the victims. If the situation of domestic violence aggravated during the Covid-19 pandemic will be the object of this review.

Methods

Recent studies about the correlation of the Covid-19 pandemic and domestic violence risk factors were selected in medical data bases like PubMed and Psych Med.

Results

During the pandemic, studies showed higher levels of intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect. The severity of these incidents increased meanwhile reports of some domestic violence aspects declined.

Conclusion

The dangerous combination of an worsen of the risk factors for domestic violence and the decrease tendencies in reports of it needs to be further investigated. To protect victims of domestic violence and to draw the appropriate conclusion from the current pandemic it is important to be aware of aggravated situations for victims during these times. Future measures for prevention of spread of the pandemic should include careful consideration and maybe even exemptions for special programs to protect victims.

INTRODUCTION

One in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (1). The World health organization (WHO) estimates that 1 billion children between the age of 2

and 17 years all around the world are affected by child abuse (2). Affected female victims between the age of 15 and 44 lose one year of healthy life years (DALY, disability adjusted life years) due to domestic violence (3). In 2015 Intimate partner violence (IPV) contributed 41% of homicides and violence in Australia (4). Domestic violence has been a sensitive and important topic ever since and it is still during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus in China 2019, the WHO counted 517,648,631 infected people and 6.261,708 deaths (5). To prevent a further spread and covid-19 related deaths, but also to relieve the health systems, a stay-at-home policy was established in many countries. Non-essential shops, schools, kindergartens, cinemas, restaurants, and bars were closed (6). All effort was put in preventive measures and societally important topics remained in oblivion, which is not only true for domestic violence.

We saw that the crisis in the health care sector became even more obvious during the pandemic, a problem, that preexisted and was ignored before (7).

Climate change and global warming have been a big topic before the pandemic, with kids protesting in the streets for their future (8). Now it's being forced in the background of the everyday news with Covid-19 and its hazards.

But the fact, that the coronavirus was more visible in our everyday lives during the last two years doesn't mean the severity of these problems disappeared. If this phenomenon is also applied for domestic violence and what consequences this could have will be part of this thesis.

Victims of domestic violence, especially children, are highly dependent on a watchful surrounding. If this watchful surrounding is lacking due to pandemic measures, the situation for victims can exacerbate.

So why is it important to not forget about domestic violence during pandemic times?

To experience domestic violence is a traumatic event. Often this is not a single experience, it happens repeatedly. It can lead to enormous physical and psychological health issues, that may accompany the victims for their whole lives. First, the consequences are worst for the victims themselves. They may lose their physical and psychological health, their dreams of the future, a normal relationship to their body and sexuality, trust in (future) partners and in worst cases their will to live. Domestic violence is much more than just a frustrated husband slapping their wife from time to time. It creates a net of dependency, either physically, emotionally, or economically, from where evading is hard.

But domestic violence does also have an impact on our socioeconomic system. In the year 2016/2017 the costs spend on domestic abuse victims totaled 66 billion pound in Great Britain, resulting in 34.015 pounds per victim (9). The extent of the costs can easily be underestimated. They include medical costs for immediate health care, psychological counseling and treatment, drugs, rehabilitation, and dentist treatments. In a lot of cases of domestic violence, the police are repeatedly involved; Police operations and investigations are costly. The costs also involve a potentially trial and its costs. Social workers at help hotlines, women shelters, schools, and community meeting points are also part of the calculation. Domestic violence is not just the private fate of some victims but a responsibility for the whole society and an expensive burden as well.

Domestic violence is a very complex topic with many reasons and interlocking circumstances. Nevertheless, some risk factors can be identified in increasing the risk of being either a victim or a perpetrator in domestic violence. Alcohol abuse, difficult family situations, cramped housing, missing support systems and political instable times are just some factors to be mentioned. All these factors may be affected and worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore have indirect influence on domestic violence. This thesis will have a closer look to risk factors of domestic violence and their dynamics during the pandemic.

The purpose was to investigate the influence of the pandemic on domestic violence and to sensitize about the topic especially in times like these, where Covid-19 is the predominant topics in politics and our all lives.

The research questions were: Was there more child abuse and neglect and intimate partner violence during the pandemic? And why? What are risk factors of domestic violence? How were their dynamics during the pandemic?

KEYWORDS

Domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, child neglect, pandemic, violence

LITERATURE SELECTION

An electronic search for articles of English literature databases as PubMed, PubPsych and Google Scholar was performed. The articles were searched from the last 5 years, general information about basic knowledge of the topic may be older. There have been case reports, reviews, clinical trials, and meta-analysis included. Information was just gathered in English

language. Search terms were domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, child neglect, pandemic, Covid-19, natural disasters, alcohol abuse.

Four studies were selected for detection of differences in domestic violence before and during the pandemic. Nine resources were found on risk factors for domestic violence and their situation during the pandemic. Studies were selected for full text articles. As this a relatively recent topic and study groups for domestic violence victims are in general hard to find, there weren't abundant studies available. These few studies stand presentively for the situation and should just give a short overview.

CLINICAL DISCRPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Definitions

The term domestic violence subsumes different dimensions of violence like physical, emotional, sexual, and economical abuse from one individuum to another, while sharing one household. This affects mostly sexual partners or children, but it could also affect siblings or other dependent person (10) . The behavioral pattern is gaining power over another person. To simplify the terms, we will talk about Intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect as the two main categories of domestic violence in the following text. Intimate partner violence describes violence performed by a former or current (sexual) partner to another person, including sexual violence, physical violence, emotional violence and economic violence (11). These different forms of violence can either occur combined or just one single form of it. Child abuse is the physical and psychological abuse of an underaged, also including passive actions like neglect (11). The thesis concentrates on child abuse by parents, to fulfill the term of domestic violence.

As in the definitions already mentioned, domestic violence can be of very different kind.

These different dimensions of domestic violence are most likely to occur combined.

Physical violence, which can also include sexual violence, as being any kind of physical force on another person without their consent.

Additionally, emotional violence is an important part of the system of domestic violence. It can be defined as a behavior of a person, that makes another intimate partner or child feel less worth, unloved, or unwanted (12). A study from 2020 of 748 participants showed, that

emotional abuse has an even worse outcome for later in life mental health compared to experience other types of violence, like sexual or physical violence (12).

Economical violence is a behavioral pattern of a partner and/or person, that aims to gain financial control over their victim. By controlling resources and restricting the possibilities to build up financial self-sufficiency, the partner becomes more dependent on the perpetrator (13).

Epidemiology

Domestic violence occurs throughout the world and affects both males and females, all races and every age (14). Getting valid numbers of prevalence of domestic violence is difficult, the number of unreported cases is estimated as being very high. This is due to several reasons: fear of the partner, financial dependency, to protect the family and the fear of social victimization (15). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the worldwide life time prevalence of women experience Intimate partner violence is about 27%, 21% within the European Union, while the prevalence of non-partner sexual violence is around 6% in the EU and 7% worldwide (16). It is still more likely do be physically abused by a person close to you than by a stranger.

Domestic violence mostly effects women and children. But also, men can be victims of domestic abuse. 3.4 – 20.3% prevalence rates for domestic violence in men were found in studies, in half of these cases the man also abused their partner themselves (17).

Risk factors

The reasons for violence in general, and as in this review covered for domestic abuse, are multifactorial and it is nearly impossible to define a particular factor, that causes it. The World health organization described the different levels of risk factors of violence in four levels. The first level is the individual level, which includes a history of abuse as a child, substance abuse, especially alcohol and drugs, or mental health problems.

The next level subsumes relational risk factors for violence like conflicts with the partner, jealousy within the relationship, conflicts within the family or a cramped housing situation.

The community and third level includes poverty, low socioeconomic level, job loss, a lacking support system, high crime rates, access to drugs and alcohol, high unemployment rates and low sanctions against violence (18). On the society level, the fourth level, political instability and challenging times are described as major risk factors (19).

In most cases a combination of problems on the different level lead to domestic violence situations (18). A cross-sectional study (2021) including 978 women from the Oman showed, that after divorce, at low income and alcohol abuse of the partner, the risk was significantly higher to experience domestic violence. (20). Other risk factors discovered by the study included low educational levels, past physical assault, a borderline personality, depressions, economic dependance and many other reasons.

Of course, these are just some examples for risk factors contributing to a setting, where domestic violence can take place. But some of these risk factors are important ones, regarding their aggravation in pandemic times and therefore contribute to an increase in domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. The risk factors can work as an indicator or predictor for domestic violence and are very important in the detection of it.

Outcomes of domestic violence

To get an impression of the importance of the of topic domestic violence and its worsening due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to understand all dimension of outcome of domestic violence. Its not just a personal tragedy for all victims, but also a burden for future generations and a cost factor for a society.

The most straight forward outcome my be the physical disadvantages seen in victims. These can reach from temporary injuries like bruises, fractures, luxation and burns to more severe injuries like internal bleedings and craniocerebral trauma. The long time span of abuse can also result in chronic diseases like ano-genital fistula, HIV/AIDS, other chronic courses of sexually transmitted diseases and resulting infertility, disabilities due to repeated physical trauma and sexual dysfunction. (19) The victims may tend to visit less frequently screening appointments, for example for cervical cancers. But in case of sexual violence, victims have an increased risk of infection with Human Papilloma Virus. Some precancerous lesion could be missed without preventive medical examinations and end up in high stages of cervical carcinoma due to its late discovery (21).

Another dimension of outcome is the psychological outcome of domestic abuse. Levels of depressive and anxiety disorders are higher in women experiencing domestic violence, whether physical or non-physical violence, compared to women without these experiences (22). In general, the risk for all other mental health issues are increased in (domestic) violence victims (19).

Children, that have been abused are also more likely to experience ongoing violence in their adulthood. Furthermore, their children are also at a higher risk of being abused during childhood. This phenomenon is called intergenerational violence and it is a big problem in terms of domestic violence outcomes.

In cases of prenatal domestic violence carried out on pregnant women, the physical health outcome for the baby can even be worse than that of pregnant women, that didn't experience domestic violence (23).

The worst outcome may be the lethal outcome, either from homicide, suicide, or deathly injuries. In the United States of America in the year 2019, 1840 children died due to child abuse and neglect (24). In the same year 394 persons died due to IPV in Germany, 301 were women, 93 were men. In the following year of 2020 460 persons died due to IPV in Germany, 359 women, 101 men (25). That's a slight increase in deaths in pandemic. Domestic abuse victims have a doubled risk to attempt suicide compared to those who did not experience domestic violence (26).

RESULTS

Violence as a construct is multifactorial. Not one distinguished reason promotes it. In the following we want to take a deeper look at some of the major reasons for domestic violence and how they changed during the Covid-19 pandemic. First, we look at numbers and the situation regarding intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect, further we will have a more precise look at the major risk factors for domestic violence and their development during the pandemic.

Intimate partner violence

By looking at the crime statistics of Germany, in 2020, 148,031 people became victim of intimate partner violence, with 28,867 being male and 119,164 being female victims. Compared to 2019, a year without any lockdown restriction due to the pandemic, the total number was 141.792, with 26,889 male and 114,903 female. These numbers subsumed all kind of partner violence. If these violent attacks are seen within their subgroups, we see an increase in IPV related deaths from 394 in 2019 to 460 in 2020. Grievous bodily injuries increased from 17,160 in 2019 to 18,019 in 2020. The most significant expansion in total numbers is seen in simple assault: from 86,812 in 2019 to 91,212 cases in 2020 (25).

All these cases are just the ones being reported. The number of unreported cases is probably multiple times higher. Reasons for that, were mentioned in the section above.

The report from women's shelter in Germany published the following numbers in their statement from 2020: In 182 women's shelter throughout the country accommodated 6614 women and 7676 children, 431 women less than 2019 (27).

A study from a domestic violence prevention and intervention program taking place in a hospital in the northeast of the United States showed decreased rates of overall domestic violence. The report compared the time from March 11, 2020, to May 3, 2020, with the same period of the years 2017-2019. As said, total numbers of domestic violence were lower in 2020 with 62 victims compared to 2019 with 104, 2018 with 106 and 2017 with 146. The ratio of physical violence from these numbers was higher in 2020. From these 62 cases 26 were physical, which leads to a percentage of 42%, meanwhile in 2017-2019 it was 42 out of 342 (12%). The severity of injuries symbolized in grades was also seen worse in the cases from 2020 during pandemic. Grade III injuries, which are called severe injuries, were seen in 19% of injuries in 2020, meanwhile in the other years it's been just accountable for 10% of the cases. In very severe injuries from grade IV, it showed 19% of injuries from that type in 2020. Compared to the other three years, grade IV was just seen in 7% of the victims. The report also showed more frequently used high risk abuse mechanisms like strangulation, weapons, stabs and burns compared to the years before the lockdown (28).

In Asian and African Arabic countries an online questionnaire-based survey with 490 adults was conducted. The participants were married women above the age of 18 living with their husbands. Half of the women participating experienced intimate partner violence (of any kind) ever. The questionnaire showed an increase in any type of intimate partner violence during lockdown compared to before the lockdown. Before lockdown 194 women (39,6%) said they experienced any kind of intimate partner violence, during the lockdown this number increased to 230 (46,9%) women. The biggest increase during lockdown is seen in physical violence, where numbers are almost doubled. Whereas before the lockdown only 6,9% of women stated they experienced physical violence in their marriage, it's been 13,1% during lockdown measures. To determine the differences before and during the lockdown regarding experiences in intimate partner violence McNemar's test was used (29).

Child abuse

To detect if the incidence of child abuse increased during lockdown, the pediatric trauma emergency department in Orange, California, investigated all cases in their emergency room

for pediatric patients, that ever filled up a child abuse report or were diagnosed with a sentinel injury at their first visit (30). A sentinel injury is a first warning sign for child maltreatment. It can be a superficial injury, whose cause cannot be explained any other way. Examples could be bruises in children, that are non-mobile, minor burns without any valid explanation, subconjunctival hemorrhages, and oral injuries (31).

The retrospective review then compared the cases of sentinel injuries in children under the age of 6 months and reported child abuse from children between 0 and 18 years from March 15 to July 31 of the years 2017-2019 with the time of the same period in 2020. In the study the sentinel injuries were classified by severity: non-severe injuries were for example bruises, superficial injuries, open wounds, or genital injuries. As severe injuries were considered things like intracranial hemorrhages, abdominal trauma, and fractures. The study showed that the rate of sentinel injuries increased during Covid-19 pandemic and was higher in May and June 2020 compared to the three years before. But key-point of the study was a significant increase and shift from physical abuse to more non-medical neglect (31.5% to 40%) and emotional abuse (from 2.52% to 7%).

Another retrospective observational study with data from all private and public hospitals in France showed an overall decrease of hospitalization in children aged 0-5 years during lockdown in March and April 2020 compared to the years 2017-2019. Proportionally the number of children hospitalized because of physical abuse was higher in 2020 compared to the control years 2017-2019. Due to a decrease in hospitalization of any reason, the estimated number of children hospitalized due to physical abuse should have also decreased in the same manner (figure 1). In fact, the number of physically abused children was 40% higher than expected when taking into account that the admissions in general dropped (32).

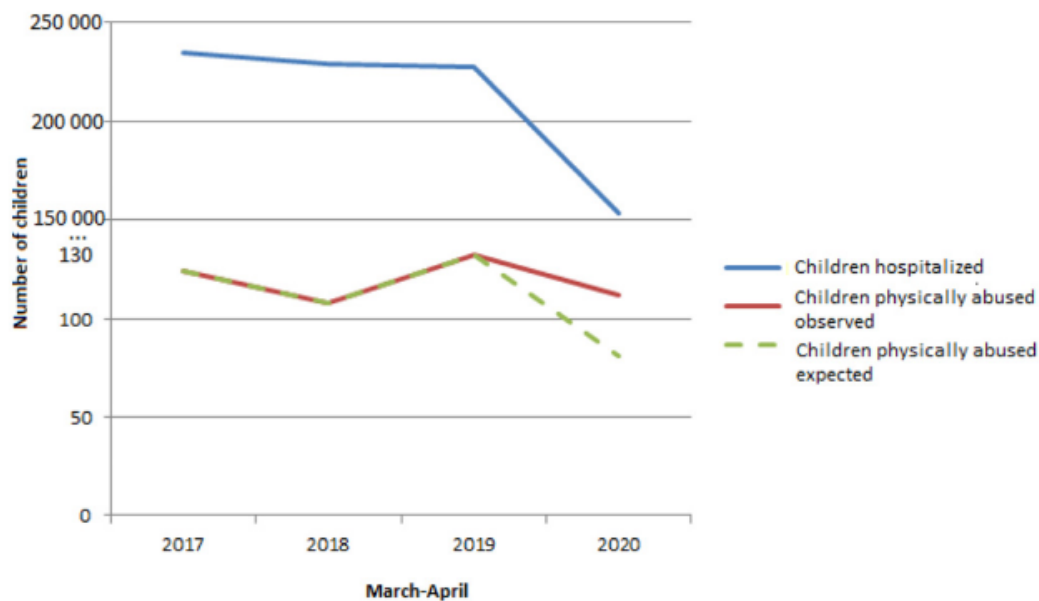


Figure 1: Loiseau M, Cottenet J, Bechraoui-Quantin S, Gilard-Pioc S, Mikaeloff Y, Jollant F, u. a. Physical abuse of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic: Alarming increase in the relative frequency of hospitalizations during the lockdown period.

The question is: does an exceptional situation as a pandemic have bad consequences on the risk factors for domestic violence and therefore aggravate the situation?

Past disasters like other pandemics or natural disasters displayed an exacerbation of the domestic violence situation.

During and after the Ebola pandemic in Guinea and Sierra Leone from 2014-2016, 28,600 people were infected with the Ebolavirus and 11,325 died (33). Schools were closed during that time as a prevention measure. UNICEF registered in the aftermath of these school closures increased cases of child neglect, child labor, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and marriage (34).

Hurricane Katrina was one of the costliest storms that ever hit the US. The devastation in the southeast of the country was enormous. After this natural disaster, studies showed an increased incidence of intimate partner violence among the American population in the affected regions. In a population-based study, that investigated the incidence of intimate partner violence six month before and after the hurricane, 445 married people were interviewed about their life conditions. Before the hurricane 33.6 % of the women and 36.7 % of men reported that they experienced psychological violence within their partnership. After the hurricane these numbers increased to 45.2 % in women and 43.1% in men. Physical intimate partner violence increased from 4.2% six month prior to Katrina to 8.3% after the

natural disaster. Pre-hurricane intimate partner violence and hurricane-related stressors were considered to be the most important risk factors for this rise in numbers (35).

Is the pandemic and lockdown a catalyst for domestic violence?

In the section before, a broad overview of numbers and cases during lockdown was given.

Now we want to have a closer look to the reasons for this. What are risk factors for domestic violence? What could be reasons for even decreased numbers of intimate partner violence or child abuse and neglect during the pandemic? Are risk factors worsened because of the pandemic?

We should have a closer look at the risk factors of domestic violence and their dynamics during the pandemic.

Alcohol

In our western society, alcohol is considered a normal part of social gathering in our everyday lives. But due to alcohol 3 million people worldwide die each year (36). Harmful alcohol consume is a risk factor for many diseases, mental and physical (37). Alcohol abuse is also a risk factor for intimate partner violence and child abuse and neglect.

A study from child protection service (CPS) in Victoria, Australia investigated rates of child abuse and neglect between 2001 and 2005 in connection with alcohol abuse of the primary care giver. They collected data from 29,455 children registered to the CPS data system.

Results showed a link between alcohol and drug abuse of the care giver and a higher risk for recurrent maltreatment of the child. Children whose primary care givers abused alcohol were more likely to suffer from multiple incidences during the investigated time (38).

During the Covid-19 pandemic some data showed an increase in alcohol consumption. The frequency of drinking per month increased by 33 % and also the amount of alcohol consumed increased by 36% compared to pre-pandemic times (39). A geographic ecological momentary assessment of 342 parents via an app, the parents reported their parenting behavior of 14 days during the stay-at-home order in the US. Those parents who were monthly drinkers reported using more-likely punitive parenting than non-drinkers, especially in combination with higher stress levels (40). Alcohol may act as an accelerator for child maltreatment.

Money, job loss

Financial instability within a family and/or job loss is a main stressor, that could subsequently lead to domestic violence. During Covid-19 pandemic every fourth adult had difficulties to

pay their bills due to the financial situation during the Covid-19 pandemic. In lower income families even half of the adults had these difficulties. 25% of adults in the US reported that they or another household member lost their jobs since the outbreak (40, 41).

An online questionnaire, conducted with 342 parents of 4- to 10-year-old children, demonstrated very clearly a positive correlation between a family's financial status and their risk for child maltreatment within the family. Children of parents, who lost their job during the Covid-19 pandemic were 5 times more likely to be psychologically abused than children, whose parents did not lose their jobs.

The study showed the more financially stable a family was, the less likely children were abused in these households. Children of parents, that did not lost their jobs were physically abused in 15.05%, whereby children of parents that did lost their job were in 37.21% (43).

But also, intimate partner violence is related to financial aspects.

The study of Arab women, that was mentioned before, also showed a positive correlation of intimate partner violence and bad financial situation of the family and job loss of the husband (29).

School closure

To stop the corona virus from spreading very invasive measures were taken. Schools and kindergartens were closed during lockdown for some time. But these so-called bright spots are important in detection of child abuse. Children, especially at younger age, are not yet able to stand up for themselves. Therefore, these bright spots are even more important. Bright spots are places, where children are regularly seen by educational staff and could be monitored. There are some warning signs of child abuse and neglect, which can be detected by educational staff. Such warning signs could be a sudden change in the behavior of a child, anxiousness, lack of social skills and aggressiveness (44). Schools and kindergartens act as a control instance, which then were lacking during the lockdown. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services published numbers of reporters of child maltreatment in their report from 2018 (45). 20 % of cases of child abuse and neglect were reported by educational personnel, like school and kindergarten teachers. With these numbers they are the number one reporters of child maltreatment, and therefore important in detection. This 20% could be underreported in case of school and kindergarten closures. A cross-sectional study investigated differences in reports of child maltreatment over a time of 7 years. They observed if numbers of reports decreased during routine school closure. In times of routine school closure, like holidays, the report rates from educational personnel were 42.1 % lower than

during school sessions. The overall reports in any type of child abuse were 16% lower during school closure (46). These numbers show the importance of educational personnel reports to detect child maltreatment and to open these institutions as soon as possible, if the pandemic situation allows it.

Pol. Instability: less investigations

In the year 2019, the last year before the pandemic and lockdown, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services reported 7.8 million cases of child maltreatment from child protective services. From these cases 3.47 million cases were reported for further investigations (47). The study compared the monthly rate of screened-in investigations of child abuse and neglect in four states: New York, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Florida. Observed were an accumulated value of investigations of the years 2013 to 2019 compared to investigation rates in 2020. The highest drop in investigations was seen in New Jersey, where 55% less investigations against child abuse and neglect were initiated compared to pre-pandemic times. The least decrease was seen in Wisconsin with 24.2% less investigations, but still fewer rates of investigations than in non-pandemic situation (48).

In times of political instability and when prosecution authorities are assigned to other tasks like the enforcement of lockdown rules, other tasks are put into background.

Missed child abuse and neglect cases during Covid-19 pandemic

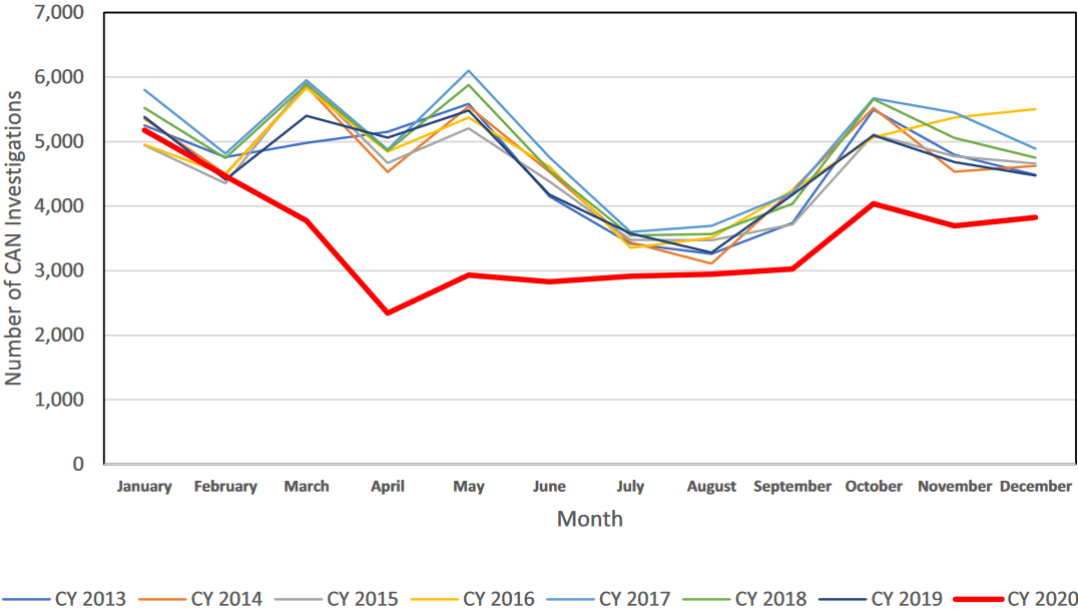


Figure 2: Nguyen LH. Calculating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on child abuse and neglect in the U.S. Child Abuse Negl

Cramped housing

Spending most of the time at home with the prosecutor is known to be a major risk factor for domestic violence. But spending most of the time at home is also the key message for spread prevention in times of the Covid-19 pandemic. The public antiviolence service in Milan, Italy, observed a phenomenon, that could be linked to the stay-at-home policies during lockdown. The in-person requests at their service dropped during lockdown from 69 women seeking for help from February 24th to April 21st in 2019 to only 34 in the same period in 2020. In contrast to these numbers the phone requests increased from 397 request from 1st to 18th of April in 2019 to 1039 requests at the same time in 2020. These numbers could lead to the assumption, that there are not less cases of domestic violence during pandemic, but the opportunity for in-person consultation was lacking. The women were just able to have a short phone request for help but not the occasion to leave the house for hours to have an in-person consulting meeting (49). This displays the acute emergency for domestic violence victims, as they are not able to de-escalate the situation by leaving the house for some time. As mentioned already in a higher section, the severity of physical injuries also increased during the pandemic (28), which reflects the increased aggressiveness, that accumulates in the absence of alternatives to go.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men (1). It is a globally important topic and can affect anyone. The dynamic of domestic violence is so complicated and complex, because compared to other forms of violence, the dependency on the perpetrator is the key element of it. To understand domestic violence, we need to check for risk factors, like alcohol abuse, mental health disorders, poverty and unemployment and difficult housing situations. All these risk factors were directly or indirectly affected by the measures to control the Covid-19 pandemic. Alcohol consumption increased in pandemic; people lost their jobs due to lockdown. The stay-at-home policy made it nearly impossible for victims to get some time outside the dangerous household. Closed schools and kindergartens could not act as detection and control instances anymore. All these factors lead to alarming rises in domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, which are sometime difficult to detect. On the other hand, reports of child maltreatment and consultations from abused women decreased. These data lack could

be a blind spot in the detection of domestic violence and therefore be even more alarming. The divergence in some of the results stands symbolic for the complexity of the topic of domestic violence.

The assumption from this review should be an alarming one. There are signs of increased incidences of domestic violence and signs for possible underreporting of it.

Careful considerations should be done, to strike a balance between the possible benefit of a lockdown and the potential harm for domestic violence victims. Suggestions could be exemptions for child and youth facilities. There must be bright spots for victims even in these times in future possible lockdowns and pandemics.

REFERENCES

1. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief — Updated Release. :32.
2. Violence against children [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>
3. Brzank P. (Häusliche) Gewalt gegen Frauen: sozioökonomische Folgen und gesellschaftliche Kosten: Einführung und Überblick. Bundesgesundheitsblatt - Gesundheitsforschung - Gesundheitsschutz [Internet]. 2009 Mar [cited 2022 Apr 28];52(3):330–8. Available from: <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s00103-009-0795-7>
4. Australian Burden of Disease Study 2015: Interactive data on risk factor burden, Intimate partner violence [Internet]. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. [cited 2022 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/interactive-data-risk-factor-burden/contents/intimate-partner-violence>
5. WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard [Internet]. [cited 2022 May 14]. Available from: <https://covid19.who.int>
6. Timeline of UK government coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions [Internet]. The Institute for Government. 2021 [cited 2022 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/charts/uk-government-coronavirus-lockdowns>
7. Is this NHS crisis really worse than ones before? BBC News [Internet]. 2022 Jan 8 [cited 2022 Apr 30]; Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-59909860>
8. Climate strike: Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future strike returns on Friday - CBBC Newsround. [cited 2022 Apr 30]; Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/58634982>
9. Anderton L. The economic and social costs of domestic abuse. :77.
10. Walker-Descartes I, Mineo M, Condado LV, Agrawal N. Domestic Violence and Its Effects on Women, Children, and Families. *Pediatr Clin North Am*. 2021 Apr;68(2):455–64.

11. Houseman B, Semien G. Florida Domestic Violence. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 [cited 2022 Apr 9]. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493194/>

12. Dye HL. Is Emotional Abuse As Harmful as Physical and/or Sexual Abuse? *J Child Adolesc Trauma* [Internet]. 2019 Dec 10 [cited 2022 Apr 10];13(4):399–407. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7683637/>

13. Adams AE, Sullivan CM, Bybee D, Greeson MR. Development of the Scale of Economic Abuse. *Violence Women* [Internet]. 2008 May 1 [cited 2022 Apr 12];14(5):563–88. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801208315529>

14. Nations U. What Is Domestic Abuse? [Internet]. United Nations. United Nations; [cited 2022 Apr 12]. Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

15. Gracia E. Unreported cases of domestic violence against women: towards an epidemiology of social silence, tolerance, and inhibition. *J Epidemiol Community Health* [Internet]. 2004 Jul 1 [cited 2022 Apr 30];58(7):536–7. Available from: <https://jech.bmj.com/content/58/7/536>

16. Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018 – WHO European Region [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 12]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/WHO-SRH-21.9>

17. Ärzteblatt DÄG Redaktion Deutsches. Domestic Violence Against Men— Prevalence and Risk Factors (03.08.2020) [Internet]. Deutsches Ärzteblatt. [cited 2022 Apr 8]. Available from: <https://www.aerzteblatt.de/int/archive/article?id=214902>

18. Risk and Protective Factors|Intimate Partner Violence|Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC [Internet]. 2021 [cited 2022 Apr 30]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>

19. The World Health Report 2002 - Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life. *Educ Health Change Learn Pract* [Internet]. 2003 Jan 1 [cited 2022 Apr 16];16(2):230–230. Available from: <http://www.informaworld.com/openurl?genre=article&doi=10.1080/1357628031000116808&magic=crossref||D404A21C5BB053405B1A640AFFD44AE3>

20. Al Kendi A, Al Shidhan N, Al Kiyumi M. Domestic violence among Omani women: prevalence, risk factors and help-seeking behaviour. *East Mediterr Health J* [Internet]. 2021 Mar 23 [cited 2022 Apr 30];27(3):242–9. Available from: <https://applications.emro.who.int/emhj/v27/03/1020-3397-2021-2703-242-249-eng.pdf>

21. Bagwell-Gray ME, Ramaswamy M. Cervical Cancer Screening and Prevention among Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. *Health Soc Work* [Internet]. 2022 May 1 [cited 2022 Apr 16];47(2):102–12. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlac009>

22. Ahmadzad-Asl M, Davoudi F, Zarei N, Mohammad-Sadeghi H, Rasoulilian M. Domestic violence against women as a risk factor for depressive and anxiety disorders: findings from domestic violence household survey in Tehran, Iran. *Arch Womens Ment Health* [Internet]. 2016 Oct 1 [cited 2022 Apr 8];19(5):861–9. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00737-016-0626-4>

23. Do HP, Baker PRA, Van Vo T, Murray A, Murray L, Valdebenito S, et al. Intergenerational effects of violence on women's perinatal wellbeing and infant health outcomes: evidence from a birth cohort study in Central Vietnam. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*. 2021 Sep 23;21(1):648.
24. Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities 2019: Statistics and Interventions. :9.
25. BKA - Partnerschaftsgewalt - Kriminalstatistische Auswertung [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 22]. Available from: https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/partnerschaftsgewalt_node.html
26. Suicide and intimate partner violence [Internet]. <https://www.apa.org>. [cited 2022 May 15]. Available from: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/11/suicide-violence>
27. FHK-Bewohner_innenstatistik - Frauenhauskoordinierung [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 22]. Available from: <https://www.frauenhauskoordinierung.de/publikationen/fhk-bewohner-innenstatistik/>
28. Gosangi B, Park H, Thomas R, Gujrathi R, Bay CP, Raja AS, et al. Exacerbation of Physical Intimate Partner Violence during COVID-19 Lockdown. *Radiology* [Internet]. 2020 Aug 13 [cited 2022 Apr 17];202866. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7427119/>
29. El-Nimr NA, Mamdouh HM, Ramadan A, El Saeh HM, Shata ZN. Intimate partner violence among Arab women before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. *J Egypt Public Health Assoc* [Internet]. 2021 Jun 16 [cited 2022 Apr 17];96:15. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8206903/>
30. Sharma S, Wong D, Schomberg J, Knudsen-Robbins C, Gibbs D, Berkowitz C, et al. COVID-19: Differences in sentinel injury and child abuse reporting during a pandemic. *Child Abuse Negl*. 2021 Jun;116(Pt 2):104990.
31. Henry MK, Wood JN. What's in a name? Sentinel injuries in abused infants. *Pediatr Radiol* [Internet]. 2021 May 1 [cited 2022 Apr 23];51(6):861–5. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00247-020-04915-7>
32. Loiseau M, Cottenet J, Bechraoui-Quantin S, Gilard-Pioc S, Mikaeloff Y, Jollant F, et al. Physical abuse of young children during the COVID-19 pandemic: Alarming increase in the relative frequency of hospitalizations during the lockdown period. *Child Abuse Negl* [Internet]. 2021 Dec 1 [cited 2022 Apr 20];122:105299. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213421003689>
33. 2014-2016 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa | History | Ebola (Ebola Virus Disease) | CDC [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2022 Apr 26]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/history/2014-2016-outbreak/index.html>
34. COVID-19: Children at heightened risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence amidst intensifying containment measures [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 19]. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-children-heightened-risk-abuse-neglect-exploitation-and-violence-amidst>
35. Schumacher JA, Coffey SF, Norris FH, Tracy M, Clements K, Galea S. Intimate partner violence and Hurricane Katrina: Predictors and associated mental health outcomes. *Violence Vict* [Internet]. 2010 [cited 2022 Apr 26];25(5):588–603. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3394178/>
36. Alcohol [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 27]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/alcohol>

37. Drinking too much alcohol can harm your health. Learn the facts | CDC [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2022 Apr 27]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

38. Laslett AM, Room R, Dietze P, Ferris J. Alcohol's involvement in recurrent child abuse and neglect cases. *Addiction* [Internet]. 2012 [cited 2022 Apr 23];107(10):1786–93. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2012.03917.x>

39. GDS COVID-19 Special Edition: Key Findings Report | Global Drug Survey [Internet]. [cited 2022 Apr 27]. Available from: <https://www.globaldrugsurvey.com/gds-covid-19-special-edition-key-findings-report/>
40. Wolf JP, Freisthler B, Chadwick C. Stress, alcohol use, and punitive parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Child Abuse Negl* [Internet]. 2021 Jul 1 [cited 2022 Apr 21];117:105090. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213421001630>

41. Parker K, Minkin R, Bennett J. Economic Fallout From COVID-19 Continues To Hit Lower-Income Americans the Hardest [Internet]. Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. 2020 [cited 2022 Apr 27]. Available from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>

42. Covid inequality: "I struggled with the bills and my health." BBC News [Internet]. 2021 Mar 22 [cited 2022 Apr 30]; Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56359863>

43. Lawson M, Piel MH, Simon M. Child Maltreatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Consequences of Parental Job Loss on Psychological and Physical Abuse Towards Children. *Child Abuse Negl* [Internet]. 2020 Dec 1 [cited 2022 Apr 8];110:104709. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213420303641>

44. NSPCC. Spotting the signs of child abuse [Internet]. NSPCC. [cited 2022 Apr 30]. Available from: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/>

45. Stedt EV. Child Maltreatment 2018. *Child Maltreat*. 2018;274.

46. Puls HT, Hall M, Frazier T, Schultz K, Anderst JD. Association of routine school closures with child maltreatment reporting and substantiation in the United States; 2010–2017. *Child Abuse Negl* [Internet]. 2021 Oct 1 [cited 2022 Apr 27];120:105257. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213421003306>

47. Kelly C, Street C, Building MES. Child Maltreatment 2019. *Child Maltreat*. 2019;306.

48. Nguyen LH. Calculating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on child abuse and neglect in the U.S. *Child Abuse Negl* [Internet]. 2021 Aug 1 [cited 2022 Apr 19];118:105136. Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014521342100209X>

49. Barbara G, Facchin F, Micci L, Rendiniello M, Giulini P, Cattaneo C, et al. COVID-19, Lockdown, and Intimate Partner Violence: Some Data from an Italian Service and Suggestions for Future Approaches. *J Womens Health* [Internet]. 2020 Oct [cited 2022 Apr 17];29(10):1239–42. Available from: <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/jwh.2020.8590>