



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

Violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic: scoping review of the literature in collaboration with the World Health Organization protocol

Ain, Q. U., Ozkaya, C., Amin, A., Garcia Moreno, C., Brennan-Wilson, A., Thurston, A., MacKenzie, A., Comrie-Thomson, L., Lagdon, S., Stark, P., & Lohan, M. (2023). Violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic: scoping review of the literature in collaboration with the World Health Organization protocol. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 5, Article 100267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100267>

Published in:

International Journal of Educational Research Open

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:

[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

Publisher rights

Copyright 2023 The Authors.

This is an open access article published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits distribution and reproduction for non-commercial purposes, provided the author and source are cited.

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Queen's University Belfast Research Portal is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The Research Portal is Queen's institutional repository that provides access to Queen's research output. Every effort has been made to ensure that content in the Research Portal does not infringe any person's rights, or applicable UK laws. If you discover content in the Research Portal that you believe breaches copyright or violates any law, please contact openaccess@qub.ac.uk.

Open Access

This research has been made openly available by Queen's academics and its Open Research team. We would love to hear how access to this research benefits you. – Share your feedback with us: <http://go.qub.ac.uk/oa-feedback>



Violence against women during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Scoping review of the literature in collaboration with the World Health Organization protocol

Qurat Ul Ain^a, Ozkaya Canan^a, Avni Amin^b, Claudia Garcia Moreno^b,
Aoiobheann Brennan-Wilson^a, Allen Thurston^a, Alison Mackenzie^a, Liz Comrie-Thomson^c,
Susan Lagdon^d, Patrick Stark^a, Maria Lohan^{a,*}

^a Queen's University Belfast, University Road, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland

^b World Health Organisation, WHO Headquarters, Avenue Appia 20, Geneva 1211, Switzerland

^c International Women's Development Agency, Flinders Lane, Victoria 8009, Australia

^d Ulster University, Cromore Road, Coleraine BT52 1SA, Northern Ireland

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Violence against women
VAW
COVID-19
Scoping review

ABSTRACT

The World Health Organization estimates that almost one in three women were subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by someone other than their partner at least once in their lifetime. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were increased reports of violence against women in some countries, whereas others reported reductions, in part due to inaccessibility of services. The aim of this scoping review is to first document the available research evidence on violence against women during the COVID-19 epidemic, both in terms of its impact on violence against women and how it was addressed through services and interventions. This scoping review will begin with a search of six databases, using search strategies developed by the review team: MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Social Science Citation Index–expanded, Cochrane Library (including CENTRAL), Campbell Systematic Reviews Journal, and Scopus. Predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria will be applied to identified studies to determine eligibility as part of a two-stage process (title and abstract; full text). Following data screening, data from included studies will be synthesised and presented in descriptive, tabular format and accompanied by a narrative description of the characteristics of those studies and their findings. The findings of this review will contribute to ongoing efforts of the World Health Organization to build evidence on how outbreaks like COVID-19 impact violence against women and identify strategies to address this and ensure access to services is protected. The scoping review will facilitate a follow-on deeper analysis of the available evidence through systematic review methods.

Background

Globally, intimate partner violence (IPV) and/or sexual violence are reported as the most prevalent forms of violence against women (VAW). The World Health Organization estimates that almost one in three women were subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by someone other than the partner at least once in their lifetime (WHO, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were increased reports of violence against women to shelters and police in some countries, whereas others reported reductions, in part due to inaccessibility of services. Lockdowns, it is said, provided the perfect conditions for exposure to violence to increase. UN Women

(2021) described the increased violence against women and girls as the 'Shadow Pandemic'. At the same time, the pandemic, and measures to address it, resulted in reduced service access due to, for example, physical distancing, the diversion of services, or general reductions in service availability and social support for survivors. It is therefore necessary to understand through research how the reporting of violence against women and services to address this were impacted during Covid-19. This review will help to better understand the scale and scope of the research undertaken on this important topic during the Covid-19 pandemic and help lay the groundwork for deeper examination of this literature to answer questions on impact on prevalence, reporting and services for future pandemic preparedness.

We declare that we have all contributed to this manuscript and are included as co-authors as per the Vancouver convention.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: m.lohan@qub.ac.uk (M. Lohan).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100267>

Available online 12 September 2023

2666-3740/© 2023 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Existing reviews

In the last three years, there has been an increase in studies attempting to document the impact of COVID-19 and measures taken to address it on violence against women. This includes studies examining prevalence, severity, and frequency), availability of health services and/or specialized services responding to violence against women and studies on efforts to prevent and respond to such violence in the context of physical distancing.

Searches of Campbell, Cochrane and PROSPERO indicate that most registered or ongoing reviews on VAW and Covid-19 focus on one specific aspect of Violence Against Women (i.e. domestic violence or intimate partner violence), or have been conducted in specific countries or contexts. For example, a recently published review by Weeks et al. (2023) synthesised evidence on how interventions for intimate partner violence could be adapted in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, while an ongoing review by Tsusaki et al. (2022) has a more general focus on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on intimate partner violence. A number of ongoing reviews also explored intimate partner violence or domestic violence but with a focus on specific contexts including Africa (Tadesse, Gebrewahd & Gerensea, 2020), Australia (Addo et al., 2020) and Latin America (Gonzales Alvarez et al., 2021). See Table 1 for an overview of existing reviews.

Why is it important to do this review?

While there is some overlap between the current review and existing or ongoing reviews, the scope of the current review is broader. It is designed as a scoping review (Tricco et al., 2015; Tricco et al., 2018) to offer an overview assessment of the themes addressed in VAW research and Covid-19, the nature of evidence, the location of studies, the population groups involved, and gaps in available evidence on VAW in the context of COVID-19.

A scoping review method has also been selected as a form of rapid review (Tricco et al., 2015) designed to provide a timelier synthesis in 2023 of the available research evidence. Further, a scoping review has been selected as our initial investigations suggest the field of study is very large. Hence, a scoping review will help to better define the available pool of studies through a systematic search of the literature. This search can then form the basis of potential future systematic reviews which are targeted to more specific questions such as prevalence, reporting, severity of violence and new or adapted intervention responses. This method of a broad scoping search of the evidence followed by targeted systematic reviews is based on prior systematic review processes conducted with the WHO (Ruane-McAteer et al., 2018; 2019; 2020).

The purpose of the review is to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the WHO to build evidence on how outbreaks like COVID-19 impact violence against women and identify strategies to address this and ensure access to services is protected.

To aid more timely synthesis, rapid reviews are limited in their methods compared with other types of systematic reviews, for instance, by searching only peer-reviewed literature and by not undertaking a risk of bias assessment which would be appropriate were this a systematic review of effectiveness of interventions (Tricco et al., 2015). However, evidence suggests that the results of scoping reviews largely coincide with those of full systematic reviews of the same topic while offering more timely completion to aid decision making (Plüddemann et al., 2018; Robinson et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2023).

Review question(s)

The aim of this review is to document research evidence on violence against women during the COVID-19 epidemic, both in terms of its impact on violence against women and how it was addressed through services and interventions.

The following questions will be addressed as part of the review:

1. What are the thematic topics or foci that have been addressed in the literature on Violence Against Women (VAW) (e.g., prevalence, types of violence, types of perpetrators, reported cases, services, impacts)?
2. What are the research methods (for example, in relation to research designs and sample sizes) of studies?
3. What are the gaps in evidence, for example in relation to understudied thematic topics, groups, or understudied regions?

Design

The current study is designed as a scoping review (Tricco et al., 2015) and will follow the PRISMA-ScR reporting guidelines (Tricco et al. 2018) to ensure methodological rigor and reporting transparency.

Searches

The following databases will be searched: MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Social Science Citation Index–expanded, Cochrane Library (including CENTRAL), Campbell Systematic Reviews Journal, and Scopus. These databases were selected to ensure algorithm bias was minimised and is greater than the minimum recommendation of three databases made by PRISMA (Page, McKenzie, Bossuyt et al., 2021). This scoping review will not include a grey literature search. The search will not be limited by publication status and will include studies if they are available ‘on-line first’. Sources published since 01/01/2020 to present will be included. This start date coincides with the earliest possible mention of the Covid-19 pandemic as a novel respiratory infection. Sources in the English language only will be included. The search strategy, including search terms, is presented in Appendix A. The strategy uses combined search strings using Boolean operator AND for terms relating to violence AND women AND Covid-19.

Types of study to be included

The review will include all quantitative study designs, including randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before-and-after studies, and interrupted time-series studies.

In addition, analytical cohort studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies, along with observational, and longitudinal studies, and studies of descriptive administrative data will be considered for inclusion.

Qualitative studies will also be included. As we expect to detect a substantial number of qualitative studies, we will limit inclusion in the review to larger qualitative studies to maximize rich data specifically addressing review objectives and those that are likely to reach saturation. Therefore, qualitative studies that have at least $N = 18$ interviews or focus group interviews, or at least three months ethnographic observational research will be considered for inclusion. Inclusion criteria based on a purposive sampling of qualitative studies in order to conduct a rich but manageable review has previously been used in systematic reviews to inform WHO guidelines (Comrie-Thomson et al. 2021). Selecting 18 as a minimum sample size will minimize the risk of sampling error in the work by hopefully ensuring saturation in the data reviewed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Condition or domain being studied

The current scoping review will focus on research relating to Violence Against Women, which is defined by the United Nations as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether

Table 1

Overview of registered, ongoing and completed reviews relating to Violence Against Women and Covid-19.

Title	Author(s) & Year	Status	Topics Covered and Population(s)	Country/Region	Language(s)	Type of Review	Types Of Studies Included
Violence against Women during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Scoping Review of the Literature	Ain, Canan, Amin, Garcia Moreno, Brennan-Wilson, Thurston, Mackenzie, Comrie-Thomas, Lagdon, Stark, & Lohan (2023)	Current Review	<i>Violence Against Women (VAW)</i> (e.g. prevalence, reported cases, services, impacts etc.) <i>Focus is not on violence against children more broadly or impact of covid on children.</i>	Global	English	Scoping Review	<i>All quantitative study designs, including randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before-and-after studies, and interrupted time-series studies. Analytical cohort studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies along with observational, and longitudinal studies, and studies of descriptive administrative data will be considered for inclusion. Qualitative studies that have at least N = 18 interviews or focus group interviews, or at least 3 months ethnographic observational research.</i>
A systematic review of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on inter-personal violence (IPRV) against women	Tsusaki et al. (2022)	Ongoing	Corona Virus, Co V2, novel CoV, NCoV, 2019, nCoV, covid19, wuhan virus, Deltacoronavirus, Delta-CoV, severe acute respiratory syndrome 2, SARS-CoV-2, Omicron, variant, combined with Domestic Violence/ or Intimate Partner Violence/ Inter-personal violence/ interpersonal violence. Women >age 18, pregnant or not pregnant experiencing any type of IPRV in any country during the Covid-19 pandemic	Global	No language-based inclusion/exclusion specified	Systematic review	Qualitative studies, RCT, non-randomized experimental, cohort studies, longitudinal studies, observational, descriptive studies and mixed-method studies.
Gender-based violence among urban poor during COVID-19 pandemic in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review	Negi et al. (2022)	Ongoing	Gender-based violence (defined as any act that violates someone's rights that is motivated by gender norms and unjust power dynamics) Urban poor of LMICs	LMICs	English	Systematic review	Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies
Exploring the domestic violence status in the COVID-19 period and its determinants: a systematic review, meta-analysis and meta-regression study	Yarandi (2022)	Ongoing	("domestic violence" OR domestic abuse OR family violence OR Intimate partner violence) AND ("COVID-19" OR "SARS-CoV-2" OR "Coronavirus disease 2019"). Mixed-gender studies	Global	No language-based inclusion/exclusion specified	Systematic review	Cross-sectional and cohort studies
Assessment of prevalence of domestic violence in covid19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis	Shahhosseini et al. (2021)	Ongoing	"Domestic violence" (defined as a pattern of behavior to gain or maintain power and control in any relationship and it can include physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological acts, or threats of actions that affect others and it can even lead to serious bodily harm or death) And Covid-19 Individuals of any gender (male and female aged between 18 and 65) who have been undergone any kind of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Global	No language restrictions	Systematic review	Primary studies in which the prevalence of domestic violence is reported and studies that the time of conducting them is during covid19 pandemic. observational studies (including cohort and case-control studies) for the assessment of domestic violence.

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Title	Author(s) & Year	Status	Topics Covered and Population(s)	Country/Region	Language(s)	Type of Review	Types Of Studies Included
Domestic violence against Latin American women - frequency and trends in the Covid-19 pandemic context: a systematic review	Gonzalez Alvarez (2021)	Ongoing	Intimate partner violence (defined as any type of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial violence, or harassment within the framework of an intimate, past, or current relationship). And Covid-19 Women (+18 years) living in Latin America and migrant women born in Latin America.	Latin America	No language-based inclusion/exclusion specified	Systematic review	Primary studies including observational studies (cohort studies, case-control studies, nested case-control studies, ecological studies, registries-based studies, case reports, case series)
A systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic	Emilian et al. (2021)	Ongoing	1) Domestic violence against women and girls 2) Sexual violence outside of the domestic setting. 4) Female genital cutting. 5) Child marriage. And Covid-19 Women and girls of any age will be included. Studies of men will be excluded. Mixed-gender studies will be included if data on women and girls is provided separately. Studies of children will be included if data on boys and girls is provided separately.	Global	English	Systematic Review	Quantitative primary studies including; randomised control trials, quasi-RCTs, controlled before-and-after studies, cross sectional studies, interrupted time series, cohort studies and case-control studies, ecological studies
Global prevalence of domestic violence towards woman during COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis	Priyanti et al. (2021)	Ongoing	Domestic violence And Covid-19 Women experiencing domestic violence during COVID-19.	Global	No language-based inclusion/exclusion specified	Prevalence meta-analysis	Cross-sectional, case control, and cohort studies
Intimate partner violence during COVID-19: systematic review of methodological choices and their impact on problem magnitude	Costa et al. (2021)	Ongoing	Any type or form of intimate partner violence (or domestic violence, partner abuse, battered women/men, or any other definition fitting the criteria for this type of interpersonal violence); and Covid-19 General population or specific population groups (e.g., risk/vulnerable groups), community samples, clinical samples, sheltered sample, of men and women.	Global	English, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese	Systematic review	All empirical quantitative and qualitative studies as well as mixed-methods studies (observational or interventional/experimental); Qualitative studies documenting health outcomes or impact of lockdown measures and strategies enacted to tackle domestic violence/intimate partner; Rapid or systematic reviews and meta-analysis will only be screened for their included articles
A systematic review of COVID-19 pandemic and associated domestic violence in Australia	Addo et al. (2020)	Completed	Domestic violence (defined as “an abuse of power including domination, coercion, intimidation, and victimization of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within intimate relationships”) and Covid-19 Males, females, other genders, and children across the life course	Australia	English	Systematic review	Media reports, case series, cohort studies, individual case reports, and descriptive cross-sectional studies on domestic violence and COVID-19 in Australia. Studies that used both quantitative and qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research, and feminist research will be considered
Intimate partner violence during Covid-19 pandemic: a review on the	Lausi et al. (2020)	Completed	(“abuse” OR “violence” OR “IPV”) AND (“Coronavirus” OR “Covid-19” OR “2019-ncov” OR “sars-cov-2” OR	Global	English, Italian, French, Spanish	Systematic review	Cross-sectional studies, correlation studies, cohort studies, event-study methods, case-control studies, audits

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Title	Author(s) & Year	Status	Topics Covered and Population(s)	Country/Region	Language(s)	Type of Review	Types Of Studies Included
phenomenon's perception among help professionals			“pandemic”) AND (“Lockdown” OR “lock-down” OR “isolation” OR “Quarantine” OR “social distanc*” OR “stay* home” OR “cohabitation”) Studies examining intimate partner violence and abuse patterns during COVID-19 pandemic with respect to the helping professions will be included.				and prospective studies and trials where other inclusion criteria are met
A Systematic Review of Intimate Partner Violence Interventions Relevant to Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Weeks et al. (2020)	Ongoing	Intimate partner violence (IPV; any type of abusive behavior (e.g. emotional, verbal, physical, sexual) that occurs between intimate partners, such as spouses, or those in a dating relationship). And Covid-19 Women across the life course, including older women (in this rapid review, we are not focusing on girls or those who do not identify as a woman) in need of IPV services.	Global	French English	Rapid Review	Randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before-and-after studies, and interrupted time-series studies. analytical observational studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies descriptive observational study designs including case series, individual case reports and descriptive cross-sectional studies
Intimate partner violence against women during COVID-19 pandemic in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis	Tadesse et al. (2020)	Ongoing	Intimate partner violence (IPV; any type of abusive behavior (e.g. emotional, verbal, physical, sexual) that occurs between intimate partners, such as spouses, or those in a dating relationship). Women across the life course, including older women (in this rapid review, we are not focusing on girls or those who do not identify as a woman) in need of IPV services.	Africa	English	Systematic review	Randomized controlled trials, non-randomized controlled trials, before-and-after studies, and interrupted time-series studies. analytical observational studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and analytical cross-sectional studies descriptive observational study designs including case series, individual case reports and descriptive cross-sectional studies phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research and feminist research, systematic reviews that meet the inclusion criteria, and media reports
Reports of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review	Breivik et al. (2020)	Ongoing	Exposure to IPV overall (physical and/or sexual and/or psychological violence) or type-specific violence (physical or psychological or sexual violence in a current or former relationship. “Intimate partner violence”, or “Spouse abuse” or “partner violence” etc., and combined with “COVID-19” or “Coronavirus” or “Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome” or “SARS-Cov-2” women >16 years of age.	Global	No restrictions	Systematic review	All study types

occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations, 1993).

Participants/Population

The review will target studies reporting research on violence against women aged 15 years or older. This age range aligns with the age range on which the WHO estimates of Violence Against Women are based.

Studies involving men will be included where the focus is an intervention involving men as perpetrators of VAW, or men as service providers to female victims, or on studies of men’s attitudes to violence against women.

Types of interventions

Any intervention that involves providing services to women who experienced violence in the context of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Any behavioural and service-level interventions or services aiming to reduce Violence Against Women (including interventions with perpetrators of VAW).

This review will also consider all evidence relating to Violence Against Women, including prevalence, frequency, and severity of VAW and types of violence.

Control

Comparison/control groups will be documented in studies where these are used.

Main outcomes

Reviewing the previously published research, we hope to report the range of available studies addressing:

Prevalence/incidence, frequency, severity and reports of experience of violence against women during the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Types of violence against women during the Covid-19 global pandemic (including but not limited to physical violence, emotional/psychological violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, acid attacks, femicide, forced marriage, and coercive control).

Availability of services, adaption to services, and uptake of services or interventions for women who experienced violence during the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Record screening and collation

The flow of review data screening and inclusion will be reported in accordance with PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). Records identified from the search of each database will be imported into EPPI Reviewer (version 4.14.1.0). Initial screening will be undertaken to ensure duplicates are removed. During the initial screening phase, any records that clearly do not relate to the research questions will be removed (e.g., those that clearly do not relate to Violence Against Women or are not situated during the Covid-19 pandemic). This process will be undertaken by two reviewers, operating independently.

After removal of duplicates and irrelevant records, initial screening for inclusion by title and abstract will be undertaken by three reviewers, using the EPPI Reviewer software. To help build quality control into the initial screening processes 100 records, selected at random, will be independently dual screened. Agreements and disagreements will be discussed by the three reviewers to come to consensus about decisions.

Once initial screening decisions based on titles and abstracts has been completed, the full text of all articles selected for inclusion at this stage will be retrieved. At this stage inter-rater reliability between the screeners for inclusion after assessment of full-text will again be established by double blind screening 10 full-text articles for inclusion. Again, decisions will be reviewed, and discrepancies and agreements recorded. Any disagreements will be discussed with a third screener, to establish

agreements and tighten protocols and decisions around inclusion/exclusion. If agreement cannot be reached around inclusion by the involvement of a third reviewer, then the wider team will become involved and consensus for moving forward will be established. The final decision on this will be taken by the grant holder (ML).

Data charting

Once all eligible studies have been selected, then double blind data extraction will take place for five per-cent of the included studies. During this process, two researchers will independently undertake data extraction, and the results will be compared to establish understandings and inter-rater reliability. Data extraction for the remaining papers will not be extracted in duplicate. Coding will be carried out by trained researchers. Any discrepancies will be discussed with other members of the team of authors until a consensus is reached.

Details of study coding categories

- Study characteristics: sample sizes, measures, funder of the study (if any), country of study; and any details in study setting such as urban/rural; clinical/educational/domestic/justice/church or religious/workplace setting
- Research design (with coding of data collection methods e.g., online, telephone, postal survey or face-to-face):
 - Experimental (Includes control group and random assignment)
 - Quasi-experimental (no random assignment of control group - for example matched control groups but not randomly assigned (e.g., propensity scoring studies, before and after studies)
 - Quantitative (e.g., cohort studies, surveys)
 - Multi-stage quantitative study
 - Longitudinal quantitative
 - Qualitative ($N=$ or > 18 participants)
 - Multi-stage qualitative study
 - Longitudinal qualitative
 - Mixed Methods (where any mixed methods are used)
 - Mixed methods primary method
 - Mixed methods secondary method
 - Not specified/ Unclear
- For studies that include interventions or service delivery: intervention/service details, who delivers, who is the intended recipient, and intervention setting, if delivered online or face to face or both.
- Data type:
 - Primary
 - Secondary
 - Administrative
- Demographic variables relating to the participants for example, country, age (older women > 50 years, younger women < 25 years, adolescent women 15–25 years, or mixed), ethnicity (specifically whether the focus of the work was on an ethnic minority within the context of the study), sexual orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and more (LGBTIQ+), not specified), reported gender identity (women, men, transgender women, transgender men, non-binary/gender fluid) and/or reported sex (male/female/intersex).
- Thematic topics covered for example:
 - Prevalence/incidence/severity of VAW during the Covid-19 global pandemic;
 - Types of violence against women during the Covid-19 global pandemic (including but not limited to physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence, femicide, forced marriage, and coercive control).

Risk of bias assessment

As this is a scoping review, the use of quality assessment tools will

not be feasible. We recognize that publication bias may exist, and this limitation will be acknowledged when the results are reported.

Strategy for data synthesis

Given the heterogeneity of included records and the objectives of this review, the data will be analysed using narrative synthesis methods (Snilstveit, 2012). Data will be synthesised and presented in descriptive, tabular format which will be accompanied by narrative description of characteristics of included studies and findings. The narrative synthesis will define for the reader the scope of the available research on VAW during the Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of our three primary questions:

1. What are the main thematic areas covered (where and with whom);
2. What are the types of research designs used; and
3. What are the main gaps in the literature in terms of types of theme, groups of people/regions and types of studies?

This first level analysis will allow a more in-depth examination in a second stage of systematic reviews which would probe follow-on questions of interest such as:

- a. reported increase/decrease in prevalence.

- b. reported increase/decrease in severity or frequency.
- c. reported continuity/change in type of victim.
- d. reported continuity/change in type of perpetrator.
- e. how did services respond/change.
- f. What innovations were kept after covid.

Contact details for further information

Maria Lohan, Queen’s University Belfast, m.lohan@qub.ac.uk

Organisational affiliation of the review

Queen’s University Belfast

Funding

This work is funded by a research grant award from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Declaration of Competing Interest

We declare that we have no conflict of interests to declare.

Appendix A

Table 2
Search Terms.

DATABASE	SEARCH STRING
Scopus	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives
PSYCINFO	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives
MEDLINE	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives
Social Science Citation – expanded	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives
Cochrane	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives
Campbell	Violence* OR abuse* OR harass* OR abusive* OR rape OR sexual* OR victimi* OR doxing OR surveillance OR pile-on OR sex-offense OR offens* OR gaslight* OR troll* OR beat* OR exploit* OR intimid* OR aggress* OR femicide OR female-genital-mutilation OR FGM Covid* OR corona* OR COV* OR SARS-CoV-2 OR pandemic OR lockdown Wom*n OR girl* OR female* OR mother* OR daughter* OR wife OR wives

References

Addo, I., Asare, B., Mensah, E., Peparah, P., Ahinkorah, B. (2020). A systematic review of COVID-19 pandemic and associated domestic violence in Australia. PROSPERO, CRD42020222069 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020222069.

Breivik, V.F., Håvarstein, I.R., Linde, D.S., Rasch, V., Khan, K. (2020) Reports of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review. PROSPERO,

CRD42020223703 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020223703.

Campbell, F., Tricco, A. C., Munn, Z., Pollock, D., Saran, A., Sutton, A., & Khalil, H. (2023). Mapping reviews, scoping reviews, and evidence and gap maps (EGMs): The same but different—The “Big Picture” review family. *Systematic reviews*, 12(1), 45.

Comrie-Thomson, L., Gopal, P., Eddy, K., Baguiya, A., Gerlach, N., Sauv , C., & Portela, A. (2021). How do women, men, and health providers perceive interventions to influence men’s engagement in maternal and newborn health? A qualitative evidence synthesis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 291, Article 114475.

- Costa, D., Ayanian, A., Scharpf, F., Weiss, A., Bozorgmehr, K. (2021) Intimate partner violence during COVID-19: Systematic review of methodological choices and their impact on problem magnitude. PROSPERO, CRD42021297362 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42021297362.
- Emilian, C.A., Schmeckenbecher, J., Buettner, N., Kositzke, C., Persad, E., Vodden, A., Wecht, J., Al-Ajlouni, Y.A., Goeschl, S., Aschauer, J., Barker, E., Van Daalen, K. (2021) A systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. PROSPERO, CRD42021264641 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42021264641.
- Gonzalez Alvarez, M.A., Pineda Roberto, M.A., Buitrago López, C.M., Buitrago López, D. A., Acuña Quintero, D.C. (2021) Domestic violence against Latin American women - frequency and trends in the Covid-19 pandemic context: A systematic review. PROSPERO, CRD42021272160 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42021272160.
- Lausi, G., Mari, E., Pizzo, A., Cricenti, C., Baldi, M., Desiderio, R., Giannini, A.M. (2020) Intimate partner violence during Covid-19 pandemic: A review on the phenomenon's perception among help professionals. PROSPERO, CRD42020226376 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020226376.
- Negi, S., Sahoo, K.C., Samantaray, K., Mahapatra, P., del Barrio, M.O., Pati, S. (2022) Gender-based violence among urban poor during COVID-19 pandemic in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. PROSPERO, CRD42022378338 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42022378338.
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *Systematic reviews*, 10, Article 89. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-021-01626-4>. Available from: <https://systematicreviewsjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13643-021-01626-4>.
- Plüddemann, A., Aronson, J. K., Onakpoya, I., Heneghan, C., & Mahtani, K. R. (2018). Redefining rapid reviews: A flexible framework for restricted systematic reviews. *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine*, 23(6), 201–203.
- Priyanti, R., Asri, A., Batubara, S., Hung, C.H. (2021) Global prevalence of domestic violence towards woman during COVID-19: A systematic review and meta-analysis. PROSPERO, CRD42021288881 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42021288881.
- Robinson, M., Aventin, Á., Hanratty, J., Ruane-McAteer, E., Tomlinson, M., Clarke, M., Okonofua, F., & Lohan, M. (2021). Nothing so practical as theory: A rapid review of the use of behaviour change theory in family planning interventions involving men and boys. *Reproductive Health*, 18(126). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-021-01173-0>
- Ruane-McAteer, E., Amin, A., Hanratty, J., Lynn, F., Corbijn van Willenswaard, K., Reid, E., & Lohan, M. (2018). *Protocol for a systematic review: Interventions addressing men, masculinities, and gender equality and their implications for preventing violence against women and girls: An evidence and gap map and systematic review of reviews*. The Campbell Collaboration. <https://doi.org/10.1002/CL2.203>
- Ruane-McAteer, E., Amin, A., Hanratty, J., Lynn, F., Corbijn van Willenswaard, K., Reid, E., & Lohan, M. (2019). Interventions addressing men, masculinities and gender equality in sexual and reproductive health and rights: An evidence and gap map and systematic review of reviews. *BMJ Global Health*, 4(5), Article e001634. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2019-001634>
- Ruane-McAteer, E., Gillespie, K., Amin, A., Aventin, Á., Robinson, M., Hanratty, J., Rajat, K., & Lohan, M. (2020). Gender-transformative programming with men and boys to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights: A systematic review of intervention studies. *BMJ Global health*, 5(10), Article e002997. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-002997>
- Shahhosseini, Z., Hajimohammadreza, M., Mohammadi, K.M., Ghasemi, E. (2021) Assessment of prevalence of domestic violence in covid19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta analysis. PROSPERO, CRD42021237250 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42021237250.
- Sniltsvet, B., Oliver, S., & Vojtkova, M. (2012). Narrative approaches to systematic review and synthesis of evidence for international development policy and practice. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 4(3), 409–429.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. London: Sage.
- Tadesse, D.B., Gebrewahd, G.T., Gerense, H. (2020). Intimate partner violence against women during COVID-19 pandemic in Africa: A systematic review and meta-analysis. PROSPERO, CRD42020212631 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42020212631.
- Tricco, A. C., Antony, J., Zarin, W., Striffler, L., Ghassemi, M., Ivory, J., & Straus, S. E. (2015). A scoping review of rapid review methods. *BMC Medicine*, 13(1), 224. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0465-6>
- Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., & Straus, S. E. (2018). PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation. *Annals of internal medicine*, 169(7), 467–473.
- Tsusaki, R., Eapen, D., Mullassery, D., Goolsby, C., Wardell, D., Lee, K. (2022) A systematic review of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on inter-personal violence (IPRV) against women. PROSPERO, CRD42022319217 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42022319217.
- United Nations (1993). Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York: UN, 1993.
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Violence against women prevalence estimates. 2018: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. executive summary*. Geneva: Licence. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
- Yarandi, R., Panahi, M.H., Biglarian, A. (2022) Exploring the domestic violence status in the COVID-19 period and its determinants: A systematic review, meta-analysis and meta-regression study. PROSPERO, CRD42022351634 Available from: https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42022351634.