

COVID-19 pandemic increased the frequency of intimate partner violence

April 7 2023



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Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people who experienced intimate partner violence in their current relationship before COVID-19 had an increase in the frequency of victimization after the pandemic began, according to a Rutgers study.

While national emergencies, crises and pandemics [increase the frequency](#) of health risks and intimate partner violence few studies have considered the nuances of social and [psychological factors](#), such as [socioeconomic characteristics](#) and mental health, in explaining the increase in intimate partner violence during times of crisis.

"To date, most programs on intimate partner violence focus on opposite sex and [heterosexual couples](#)," said Perry N. Halkitis, dean of the Rutgers School of Public Health and senior study author. "However, [same-sex couples](#) are different in terms of partner dynamics, and thus interventions need to address these differences."

The [study](#), published online ahead of print in the *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* in April 2023, found that nearly one in five LGBTQ people reported intimate partner violence in their current romantic or [sexual relationship](#), which increased following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also found those in the southern United States were more likely to report an increase in intimate partner violence frequency and that intimate partner violence was associated with greater severity of depressive symptoms.

The Rutgers researchers conducted to the best of their knowledge the first analysis that reported the frequency of intimate partner violence victimization since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in a national sample of LGBTQ adults and assessed associations between sociodemographic characteristics such as region, education, age, race, ethnicity, [gender identity](#), sexual identity and mental health states.

These findings also support calls for increased [intimate partner violence](#)-related resources available for and tailored to the needs of LGBTQ people, particularly during times of national crisis.

"Intimate partner violence interventions need to address that LGBTQ

people are not monolithic in terms of many factors, including environments in which they live. Now more than ever given the attacks on LGBTQ people by politicians, the work we are doing at our research center CHIBPS is as important as ever," Halkitis said.

Other study authors include Christopher B. Stults, Kristen D. Krause, Richard J. Martino, Marybec Griffin, Caleb E. LoSchiavo, Savannah G. Lynn, Stephan A. Brandt, David Tana, Nicolas Hornea, Gabin Lee and Jessie Wong.

More information: Christopher B. Stults et al, Sociodemographic characteristics, depressive symptoms, and increased frequency of intimate partner violence among LGBTQ people in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic: A brief report, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* (2022). [DOI: 10.1080/10538720.2022.2116140](https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2022.2116140)

Provided by Rutgers University

Citation: COVID-19 pandemic increased the frequency of intimate partner violence (2023, April 7) retrieved 7 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2023-04-covid-pandemic-frequency-intimate-partner.html>

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