

Domestic abuse expected to rise during COVID-19 outbreak

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The stresses placed on families, combined with the closure of classrooms and child care during the COVID-19 outbreak, heightens the risks of domestic abuse and neglect, according to a new Vanderbilt University report published online in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The perspective article, "Increased Risk for Family Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic," is written by lead author Kathryn L. Humphreys, assistant professor in the of psychology at Vanderbilt Peabody College of education and human development. Co-authors are Tulane University Medical Center's Myo Thwin Myint and Charles H. Zeanah.

The authors highlight the reports of increased domestic violence following quarantine orders in China, which have provided insight into the interpersonal violence risks of isolation due to the pandemic. Additionally, they say, research has shown evidence of anger, confusion and posttraumatic stress symptoms, as well as evidence of increases in substance use during periods of isolation.

Many families are under financial pressures and need to continue to work full time during these periods. Children are likely to be more challenging and oppositional due to significant changes in routines.

The authors recommend that pediatricians and other [health care professionals](#) maintain continuity of their practices, interacting with families through telehealth, and when possible contacting the families of patients at higher risk during this time.

They also suggest clinicians should provide recommendations for parents on managing family stress, structuring daily routines, using a "tag-teaming" approach for [child care](#), and developing a plan to avoid [family violence](#).

More information: Kathryn L. Humphreys et al. Increased Risk for Family Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Pediatrics* (2020). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2020-0982](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-0982)

Provided by Vanderbilt University

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