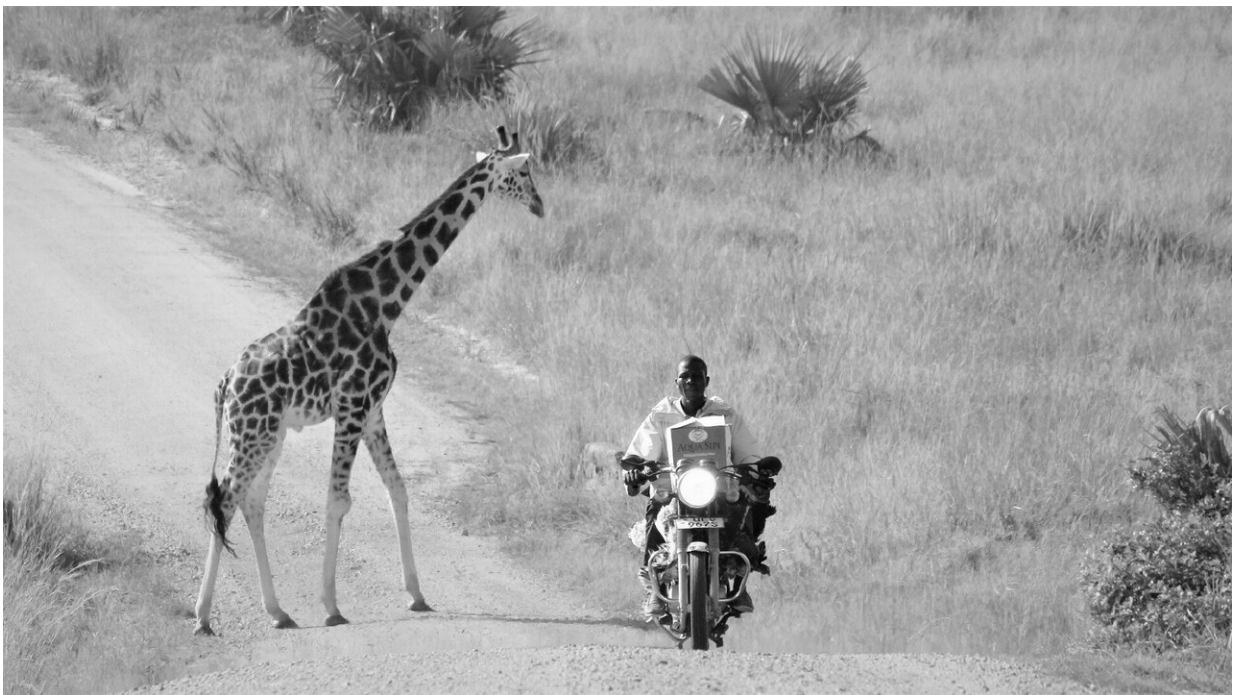


What is the link between COVID-19 lockdowns and intimate partner violence in Uganda?

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Women who remained adherent to COVID-19 preventive measures in Uganda in mid-2020 were more likely to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) than women who were poorly adherent to the measures, according to a new study published this week in the open-access journal

PLOS Global Public Health by Ronald Anguzu of the Medical College of Wisconsin, US, and colleagues.

51% of young girls and women in Uganda have experienced one form of physical or sexual IPV. COVID-19 lockdowns have been associated with [psychological distress](#) and decreased quality of life, especially in households with high poverty levels. Concerns have been raised about the population-level effects of COVID-19 prevention strategies and policies on violence against women and girls.

In the new study, Anguzu and colleagues conducted a three-month [prospective cohort study](#), from July to October 2020, among 148 women living in informal settlements of Kampala, Uganda. Participants had a mean age of 32.9 years, 50.7% were married or cohabitating, and 78.2% reported food insecurity during the lockdown period. They were surveyed at baseline, 3 weeks and 6 weeks on their adherence to COVID-19 preventive measures, sociodemographic factors, and IPV.

Overall, 10.1% of participants were poorly adherent to COVID-19 preventive measures—including social distancing, wearing face masks and use of hand sanitizer. 58.1% of women in the study experienced at least one form of IPV between baseline and endline surveys. After controlling for potential confounders, remaining adherent to all four COVID-19 [preventive measures](#) was independently associated with 3.87 times higher odds of experiencing IPV (OR 3.87, 95%CI 1.09, 13.79).

The current study was not able to follow up participants to further investigate the socio-[cultural context](#) surrounding their experiences of IPV during the first COVID-19 wave in Uganda. However, the authors conclude that integration of violence prevention and response strategies into the national COVID-19 prevention strategy for Uganda is critical.

More information: Adherence to COVID-19 preventive measures and

its association with intimate partner violence among women in informal settings of Kampala, Uganda, *PLOS Global Public Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pgph.0000177](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0000177)

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