

Appendix for:
EFFECTS OF COVID-19 SHUTDOWNS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.

Yutong Chen, Amalia R. Miller, Carmit Segal, Melissa K. Spencer¹

Abstract: This chapter examines the impact of COVID-19 shutdowns on domestic violence (DV) in the United States. Despite widespread concerns that pandemic shutdowns could increase DV, initial studies found mixed evidence that varied across data sources and locations. We review the evolving literature on the effects of the pandemic and highlight results from studies that examine multiple measures of DV across a common set of large cities. These studies show that the conflicting early results are due to opposite effects of pandemic shutdowns on two measures of DV in police data: an increase in domestic violence 911 calls and a decrease in DV crime reports. In theory, this divergence can come from either higher DV reporting rates, possibly because of additional media attention to DV and greater third-party calling, or from lower policing intensity for DV crimes. Prior evidence from police data and other sources supports the conclusion that the increase in calls came from greater reporting, while the incidence of criminal DV decreased. Finally, we present new evidence drawing on police and hospitals records from across the state of California to show that DV crimes and hospital emergency department (ED) visits were both lower during pandemic shutdowns.

Keywords: Domestic violence, COVID-19, pandemic, crime reporting, police data, hospital data

¹ Chen (0000-0003-3399-4358): University of Texas Arlington. Miller (0000-0003-0094-5226): University of Virginia, NBER and IZA (armiller@virginia.edu). Segal (0000-0002-0252-4081): University of Zurich. Spencer (0000-0001-6324-0085): University of Richmond. We thank Andrew Farquhar, Julia Kothmann, and Matthew Yorkilous for outstanding research assistance. We acknowledge financial support from the IZA COVID-19 Research Thrust and from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through the NBER Gender in the Economy Study Group Research Grants on Women, Victimization, and COVID-19. We have no competing interests to disclose.

Appendix

Table A1. Effects of COVID-19 Shutdowns on Emergency Department Visits by Female Assault Victims by Race

| | (1) Non- Hispanic White | (2) Non- Hispanic Black | (3) Hispanic | (4) Asian & Pacific Islander |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Initial shutdown in 2020 | -0.0668*** (0.00822) | -0.317*** (0.0526) | -0.116*** (0.0141) | -0.0307*** (0.00751) |
| County FE | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| DOW FE | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Month FE | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Year FE | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Outcome variable 2018-2019 mean | 0.274 | 0.546 | 0.215 | 0.058 |
| Observations | 21,112 | 21,112 | 21,112 | 21,112 |
| R-squared | 0.079 | 0.092 | 0.063 | 0.019 |

Notes: Columns report separate regressions for adult female assault victims of different racial and ethnic groups. The unit of observations is a county-day. The sample includes all counties in California for the period January 1 to May 1 in years 2018, 2019, and 2020. The initial shutdown indicator is defined based on the local shutdown down in the county. Robust standard errors clustered at the county level in brackets. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table A2: Effects of COVID-19 Shutdowns on DV Crimes

| | (1) DV Crimes |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| March 2020 | -1.118** [0.496] |
| April 2020 | -2.581*** [0.811] |
| County FE | YES |
| Month FE | YES |
| Year FE | YES |
| Outcome variable 2018-2019 mean | 33.066 |
| Observations | 696 |
| R-squared | 0.103 |

Notes: The unit of observations is a county-month. The sample includes all counties in California for the period of January, February, March, and April in the years 2018, 2019, and 2020. The regression is weighted by county population. Robust standard errors clustered at the county level in brackets. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.