

The Question

Does exposure to extreme cold temperatures affect intimate partner violence (IPV), and is lost income or time spent with a partner more influential in driving this relationship?

How we answer it

We use data from women in the Peruvian Highlands, linking IPV as reported in the national Demographic and Health Surveys to local temperature data. While some places tend to be warmer or colder than others, once we control for characteristics like district, year, month, and altitude, we can use remaining differences in exposure to cold to test for the effects of cold exposure on IPV. Further, by comparing cold that comes during crop growing seasons (when it strongly affects income) to cold outside of growing seasons (when it affects income less – but may still keep someone inside with their partner) we can evaluate why cold affects IPV.

What we find

Exposure to cold shocks increases prevalence of IPV: households with more time and/or temperatures below -9° Celsius experienced increases in IPV.

Growing season cold shocks drive this result: lost income is the dominant mechanism by which cold affects IPV.

Social programs may mitigate effects: provinces with high social program coverage did not experience measured increases in IPV due to cold shocks.