

# Centring sexual and reproductive health and justice in the global COVID-19 response

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*The Lancet* commentary "Centring sexual and reproductive health and justice in the global COVID-19 response" highlights the detrimental impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic response on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The piece emphasizes the threat to SRH services, caused by policies designating these services as non-

essential and diverting resources, and calls for vigilance from the SRH community to prevent access to these services from being lost. "Global responses to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic are converging with pervasive, existing sexual and reproductive health and justice inequities to disproportionately impact the health, wellbeing, and economic stability of women, girls, and vulnerable populations," writes Terry McGovern, Chair of the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, and co-authors.

Highlighting the disproportionate social and economic burden on women, girls, and [vulnerable populations](#) exacerbated by the pandemic, the authors argue that "a sexual and reproductive health and justice framework—one that centers human rights, acknowledges intersecting injustices, recognizes power structures, and unites across identities—is essential for monitoring and addressing the inequitable gender, health, and social effects of COVID-19.

A multi-disciplinary group of academics and practitioners, including epidemiologists, [health care workers](#), lawyers, and community-based organizers, the authors have expertise in sexual and reproductive health service provision and access, gender-based violence, global humanitarian response, [human rights](#), disease surveillance, stigma, and the specific needs of women, girls, and vulnerable populations.

"Advocates must continue to fight the exploitation of the COVID-19 crisis to further an agenda that restricts access to essential sexual and [reproductive health](#) services, particularly abortion, and targets immigrants and adolescents," noted McGovern, who is also director of the Program on Global Health Justice and Governance at Columbia Mailman School.

**More information:** Kelli Stidham Hall et al, Centring sexual and reproductive health and justice in the global COVID-19 response, *The*

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