

Unintended Consequences of Lockdowns: COVID-19 and the Shadow Pandemic

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Abstract

Violence against women is a problem worldwide, with economic costs ranging from 1-4% of global GDP. Using variation in the intensity of government-mandated lockdowns in India, we show that domestic violence complaints increase 0.47 SD in districts with the strictest lockdown rules. We find similarly large increases in cybercrime complaints. Interestingly, rape and sexual assault complaints decrease 0.4 SD during the same period in districts with the strictest lockdowns, consistent with decreased female mobility in public spaces, public transport, and workplaces. Attitudes toward domestic violence play an important role in the reporting and incidence of domestic violence during the lockdown.

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