

Pandemic and Epidemic Impacts on Reproduction, Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Family Dynamics: Longer-Term Consequences and Cross-Crisis Perspectives

Special Issue/Collection Guest Editors:

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Large-scale health emergencies—including pandemics and major epidemic outbreaks—have repeatedly combined population-wide health risks with profound social, economic, and institutional disruptions. These crises have spurred substantial scholarly interest in how such disruptions affect fertility, family dynamics, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) across diverse contexts. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic generated an unprecedented volume of research on reproductive behavior, family life, and access to sexual and reproductive health services worldwide. This body of work has been remarkable in its scope and speed, generating insights that have begun to consolidate what might be termed “crisis demography”—an emerging subfield examining how large-scale disruptions reshape demographic processes.

However, as this literature has developed, four notable limitations have become visible. First, research has predominantly focused on the short-term and immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with relatively few studies examining how pandemic or epidemic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other health crises have unfolded over longer time spans or shaped reproductive lives and family trajectories beyond the acute crisis phase. Second, a thematic and geographical divide has emerged: studies on the Global North have concentrated primarily on fertility patterns, childbearing motivations, and household dynamics, while research on the Global South has focused more heavily on sexual and reproductive health service access and behaviors, including contraceptive use and abortion access. Third, although heterogeneous impacts of health crises on reproductive and family processes have been documented, relatively little is still known about how these effects are structured by gender, including gendered power relations, caregiving roles, and inequalities in access to resources and services. Fourth, most research has treated COVID-19 or other pandemics as isolated crisis events, with limited attention to how consequences compare to other pandemic or epidemic experiences, or how exposure to multiple or compound health crises may shape reproduction, sexual and reproductive health, and family dynamics in distinct ways.

This special issue seeks to address these gaps. It aims to broaden the field by situating COVID-19 within a broader landscape of pandemics and epidemics with demonstrable implications for reproduction, family life, and SRHR. In addition to longer-term analyses of the COVID-19 pandemic, we invite research that explicitly engages with other health crises—such as the Zika epidemic or the mpox (monkeypox) outbreak—that have had well-documented sexual and reproductive health consequences. These may include contributions that adopt a comparative or cross-crisis perspective, asking whether there are recurring mechanisms through which pandemics and epidemics affect reproductive decision-making, family dynamics, and SRHR, or whether impacts remain fundamentally context-specific and contingent on institutional, social, and political conditions.

Key questions include: How do the longer-term reproductive and family consequences of pandemics differ from their immediate effects? In what ways are health crises shaping fertility, partnership dynamics, caregiving arrangements, and sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and are there cross-crises commonalities or are health crisis impacts context specific? How do health system capacity, public health responses, social protection arrangements, and governance structures mediate these effects across settings and over time?

We are particularly interested in research that brings gender and SRHR considerations to the forefront of analysis. Understanding how pandemics and epidemics shape—and are shaped by—gender inequalities in reproductive autonomy, caregiving responsibilities, labor market participation, exposure to health risks, stigma, and access to sexual and reproductive health services is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of crisis-related demographic and family processes. We especially welcome submissions that bridge the thematic divide between topics typically studied in the Global North and South by examining fertility and family formation alongside sexual and reproductive health and rights, and by situating these dynamics within explicitly gendered and rights-aware analytical frameworks across diverse geographic contexts.

This special issue builds on papers presented at the “Gender, Reproduction and Family Dynamics in the Post-Pandemic Era” side meeting at IUSSP’s International Population Conference 2025 in Australia. However, we strongly encourage submissions from researchers beyond the conference. We seek a diverse collection of empirical studies that span geographic regions and address reproductive, family, and SRHR consequences of pandemics/epidemics, whether arising from single events or from exposure to multiple health crises over time.

We welcome studies employing diverse methodological approaches, including quantitative analyses using administrative or survey data, mixed-methods research, comparative and cross-national designs, and innovative uses of new data. Research may focus on fertility intentions and realizations, partnership formation and dissolution, contraceptive behaviors, abortion access and uptake, relationship dynamics, maternal and reproductive health risks, household time use and labor division, parenting and childcare arrangements, or related reproductive, family, and SRHR processes in the context of pandemic or epidemic disruptions.

Submission Information

This collection will be published in *Studies in Family Planning*. Authors should adhere to the journal’s [author guidelines](#) when preparing manuscripts. We particularly value clear, concise writing and encourage authors to remain at or below 8,000 words. Submissions should include robust empirical evidence or substantial theoretical contributions, situate findings within relevant literatures, and clearly articulate implications for scholarship and policy.

Please submit to wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/SIFP. **Tag your paper as part of this special issue** and indicate this in your cover letter. Please contact [rfriedman\[@\]popcouncil.org](mailto:rfriedman[@]popcouncil.org) with any questions.

We look forward to your submissions.

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