

## Letter to Editor

## Exposed and Trapped: How COVID-19 is Deepening Multidimensional Poverty for Vulnerable Populations

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**Keywords:**COVID-19, Pandemic,  
Vulnerable populations,  
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This letter describes the results of the authors' investigations and conclusions regarding the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the multidimensional poverty of vulnerable populations.

**Dear Editor**

Shortly after the emergence of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, the global spread of this health crisis to various countries resulted in a surge in patients and fatalities. Since 2020, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has stressed the need for a unified global response to the virus, with all nations taking more rigorous measures, not only in healthcare and clinical settings but also in diplomatic and political domains, trade, finance, and transportation ([Aghakhani & Eghtedar, 2021](#)).

Countries with insufficient resources experienced a sharp rise in COVID-19 patients alongside their limited access to adequate healthcare, testing, and treatment facilities. As a result, these nations experienced high mortality rates due to illnesses such as diabetes, pulmonary issues, heart disease, and infectious diseases. In addition, financially disadvantaged individuals could not follow self-isolation guidelines and quarantine measures. They needed to earn money for themselves and their families. As a result, COVID-19 posed an especially significant risk in terms of morbidity and mortality among individ-

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uals from low-income communities, classified as vulnerable populations (Monnat & Cheng, 2020).

Meanwhile, global poverty studies on the vulnerability of disadvantaged people in terms of health, education, and living standards offer valuable information about the risks of COVID-19. Issues such as undernutrition, particularly among children, unsafe drinking water, and lack of access to clean cooking fuel significantly contribute to the global disease burden, acute respiratory infections, and higher mortalities. Indoor air pollution also increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission (Alkire et al., 2020).

Cooperation among nations is essential to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its economic fallout. Given the shortage of financial resources, it is challenging to allocate funding to conduct research and provide adequate prevention and treatment for COVID-19. Furthermore, it is difficult for developing countries to bear the cost of treatment (OECD Interim Economic Assessment, 2020). In such crises, a crucial need arises for social safety-net policies in many developing countries.

These policies include one-time cash payments, food vouchers, cash transfer programs, and school feeding schemes. Health financing measures are also critical in delivering appropriate services to individuals and populations affected by the pandemic. Those activities include changing policies to eliminate financial barriers to care and increasing public funding for healthcare responses (Taylor-Gooby, 2020).

Given these challenging circumstances, the approach to combating the pandemic appeared to be a difficult one. Managing economic resources requires effort and perseverance to maximize the productivity of the available funds, and sharing global experience becomes vital in this context. In particular, financing mechanisms should be streamlined, simplified, and communicated effectively to the public regarding the recommended care-seeking patterns. Implementing these measures is recommended in future pandemics to ensure the health security of vulnerable populations.

## Ethical Considerations

### Complying with ethical guidelines

In this letter, we have used the literature representing a good spread of views and opinions, not only those we agree with. Anonymity, confidentiality and protection of children were also considered.

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## Authors' contributions

All authors contributed in the design, implementation, and writing of all aspects of the manuscript.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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