

## **From lockdowns to mass vaccination: COVID-19 and health inequality**

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### **Background/Purpose:**

COVID-19 highlighted and exacerbated the entrenched inequality that is embedded within the Australian health system. With a focus on the state of Victoria, this paper traces the trajectory of the pandemic from lockdowns to mass vaccination, outlining the ways that health inequality manifested throughout, and how it impacted people differently, whether they were essential workers in the health, aged care or food processing industries, birthing mothers or parents working from home while caring for children.

### **Approach:**

This paper takes a feminist intersectional approach to analyse and better understand health inequalities that have been laid bare during COVID-19. It also considers how a feminist intersectional approach could be adopted to ensure that COVID recovery results in a more equitable community and health system over the long term.

### **Outcomes/Impact:**

The paper will analyse the impacts of COVID-19 on those most exposed, including women, people from migrant and refugee communities, people with disabilities and older people. The impacts include higher rates of infection, higher numbers of COVID-related deaths among the above cohorts, as well as significant experiences of financial hardship and vulnerability to domestic and family violence.

### **Innovation and Significance:**

This paper is significant because it provides an analysis of the systemic inequality that became more evident and entrenched throughout COVID-19 and makes some recommendations for a gender equitable recovery.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health is funded by the Australian Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.