

Study: Laws restricting abortion access associated with increase in homicide of women

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Laws restricting abortion access in the United States are associated with increased rates of homicide among women of reproductive age, according to [a new](#)

[observational study](#) published in the journal *Health Affairs* by researchers at the [Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#).

The study, funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, examined the impact of state Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) laws on rates of homicide and intimate partner violence-related homicide for women ages 10-44 between 2014 and 2020. TRAP laws impose strict regulations on abortion facilities beyond what is necessary to ensure patient safety.

The researchers analyzed data from the National Violent Death Reporting System covering 47 states. Three states – California, Florida, and Texas – were not included because not all localities in these states reported to the violent deaths database. The study looked at five different TRAP laws in place during the study period and found that for each additional TRAP law enacted, the rate of intimate partner violence-related homicide rose by 3.4%.

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Dr. Maeve Wallace

Laws requiring abortion facilities to have surgical standards similar to ambulatory surgical centers and specifying procedure room sizes showed the strongest link to increased homicides.

“The main take away here is that restricting access to abortion may have dangerous implications for health and safety. Pregnancy can be an added stressor in relationships, and intimate partner violence can start during pregnancy or even increase in severity during pregnancy,” said lead author Dr. Maeve Wallace, associate professor of [Social, Behavioral and Population Studies](#). “It’s important that abortion is an option available to everyone who may want to end a pregnancy, especially people in violent situations where continuing a pregnancy may increase their risk of being killed.”

Previous research has shown pregnancy can increase risks of violence from partners who don't want the pregnancy. The new study concludes that by restricting abortion access, TRAP laws may trap women in that violent situation against their will.

The findings come amid a wave of stricter abortion limits and bans passed by conservative state legislatures since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* two years ago.

Considering the study only included TRAP laws prior to that decision, Wallace said there's more work to be done to learn what has happened since.

"The main question this study raises is what is happening now, post-Dobbs when abortion access is substantially less than it was during the study period?" Wallace said.

Dr. Charles Stoecker, Dr. Dovile Vilda, and doctoral student Sydney Sauter were all co-authors on the publication.

Sauter also recently published related research in the *American Journal of Public Health* on [spatial considerations of abortion restrictions](#) in Texas, with Wallace and Dr. Julie Hernandez as co-authors.

Learn more about their work by listening to Wallace in [this podcast episode](#).