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More social discontent than pandemic-related risk perception in Colombia

Understanding risk perception is important during the COVID-19 pandemic because it allows governments to predict the psychological response of citizens and define the best public health strategies. Most people accepted strong mobility restrictions when they perceived high risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 and death related to COVID-19.¹ In several Latin American countries, long lockdowns did not fully stop viral transmission because of high poverty rates, unemployment, and continued delivery of essential public services that forced a large part of the population to continue working outside their homes.² In addition to issues associated with the pandemic, Colombian society had several complaints and denunciations of social inequality, violence, and injustice, which were expressed with great force during the so-called 21–23 N, a social movement led by university students between Nov 21 and Nov 23, 2019.³ People's perception of the pandemic risk caused these protests to stop. However, social discontent remained latent.

Since mid-April, 2021, the number of incident SARS-CoV-2 cases in Colombia had increased to the highest level since the start of the pandemic. This rise was accompanied by an increase in deaths and in intensive care unit admissions. In this context, the Colombian Government proposed a tax reform that once again exacerbated social discontent, which generated social protests that have not stopped since April 28, 2021. These protests caused the government to withdraw the tax reform and the congress to stop a health reform. In general, the social protests have been peaceful, but violent demonstrations were seen in some cities and have resulted in thousands of people being injured with more than 50 deaths as of May 22, 2021.⁴

Currently, Colombia is a clear example of a society that fears hunger, absence of work, violence, lack of education, and other social problems more than SARS-CoV-2 infection. The potential impact of social protests on the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is to be determined. Social protest occurs despite government and civilian speeches that instil fear of contagion. Colombians request that all types of violence stop, and that international organisations carry out oversight of the serious events that occur in Colombia.

I declare no competing interests.

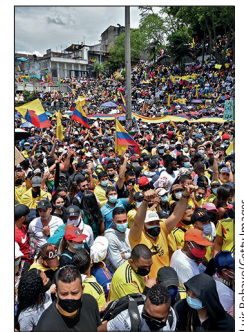
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COVID-19: counting migrants in

Rohini Mathur and colleagues¹ present important data highlighting increased SARS-CoV-2 infection rates among minority ethnic people in the UK, including people reporting as South Asian and Black, yet use of these broad ethnic categories consistently fails to capture the dynamics of contemporary migration. These categories include a highly heterogeneous group of settled minority ethnic people born in the UK, alongside more recently arrived migrants, including an increasing



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