

Infographic: Scientists under attack for publicly discussing the science on COVID and vaccines

Infectious-diseases physician Krutika Kuppalli had been in her new job for barely a week in September 2020, when someone phoned her at home and threatened to kill her.

Kuppalli, who had just moved from California to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, had been dealing with online abuse for months after she'd given high-profile media interviews on COVID-19, and had recently testified to a US congressional committee on how to hold safe elections during the pandemic. But the phone call was a scary escalation.

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Kuppalli's experience during the pandemic is not uncommon. A survey by Nature of more than 300 scientists who have given media interviews about COVID-19 — many of whom had also commented about the pandemic on social media — has found wide experience of harassment or abuse; 15% said they had received death threats.

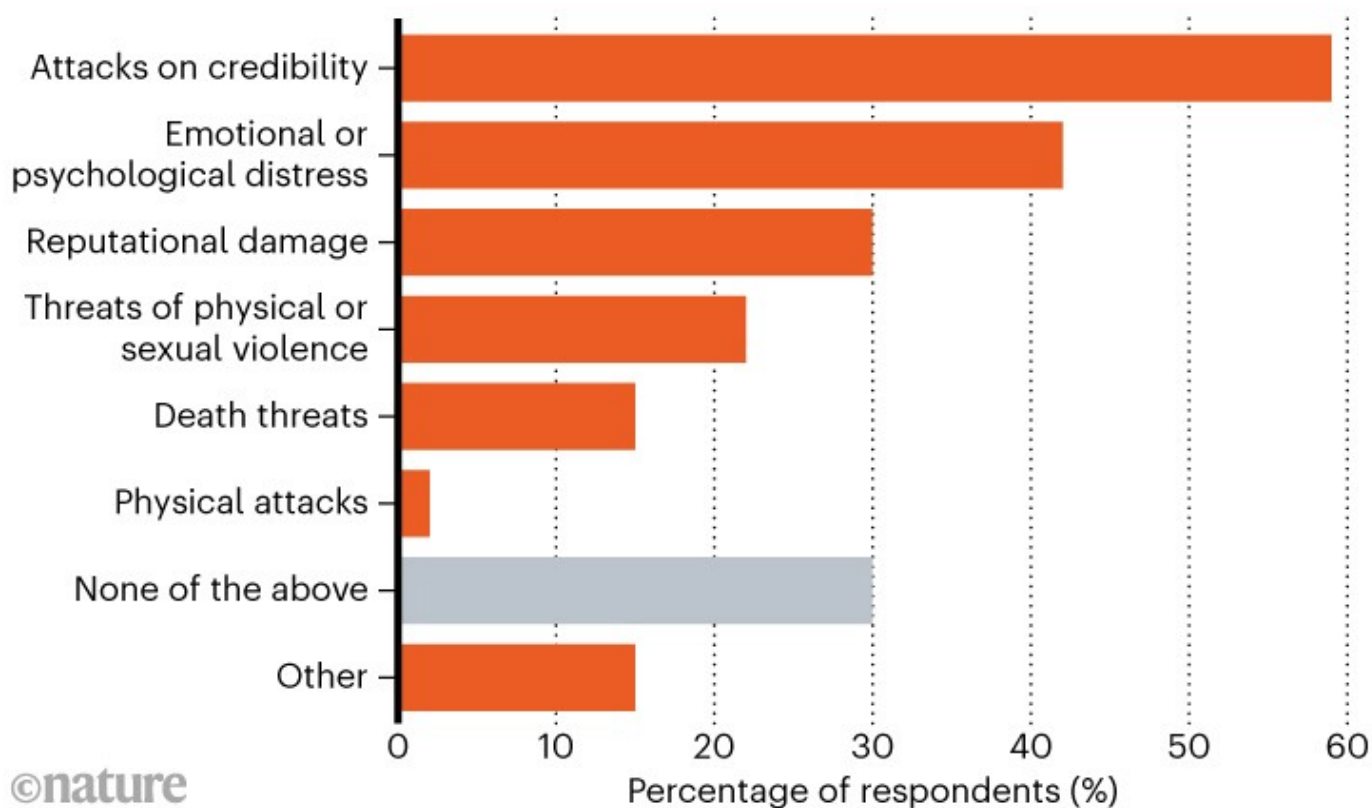
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Coordinated social-media campaigns and threatening e-mails or phone calls to scientists are not new: [topics such as climate change, vaccination and the effects of gun violence have drawn similar attacks in the past](#). But even scientists who had a high profile before COVID-19 told Nature that the abuse was a new and unwelcome phenomenon tied to the pandemic.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

In a *Nature* survey of scientists who have commented about COVID-19, 15% of 321 respondents said they had received death threats.

Question: Have you experienced any of the following negative impacts after speaking about COVID-19 to the media, or posting on social media? (You may select multiple options.)



[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)