

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on energy poverty in Spain

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Abstract-

The year 2020 will always be remembered in the world as the year of the COVID lockdown. In Spain, as in many other countries around the world, population confinement measures were implemented. This fact, together with other socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, were reflected in the reality of energy poverty in the country. This study presents an analysis of this phenomenon in the light of the available data, i.e. using the 2020 Spanish HBS and SILC. This assessment is carried out by applying different metrics, namely the four main indicators proposed by the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV), and two additional metrics of disproportionate expenditure and underspending, respectively. The results show that while the disproportionate and underspending indicators, in general, did not change significantly as a result of the policies prohibiting supply cut-offs, the subjective indicators, i.e., arrears in utility bills and inadequate temperature, worsened significantly. On the other hand, the additional metric of under-spending reveals a very relevant incidence (21%) of hidden energy poverty in the country. The study also highlights an uneven geographical distribution of energy poverty.

Index Terms- Energy poverty; Affordability; COVID-19; Hidden Energy Poverty; Underspending; Overspending

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Citation:

Barrella, R.; Centeno, E.; Romero, J.C. "Understanding the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on energy poverty in Spain", Energy Efficiency, vol.16, no.6, pp.56-1-56-11, August, 2023.