

Researchers and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The work environment, as well as the general well-being of researchers has been disrupted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.¹ Researchers had to make major/minor adjustments to research operations, and some ceased their research either temporarily or permanently. An online survey evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded extramural principal investigators (PIs) and their projects revealed that 74.6% of the respondents reported that their professional life was affected by the pandemic.¹ Another study showed that 77.8% of surveyed early career dementia researchers reported research delays during the pandemic. Moreover, 41.8% of the researchers experienced a negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their career progression.²

There are several factors that may have impacted researchers' productivity and willingness. A cross-sectional, stratified random sampling study examining the factors related to medical researchers' intention to leave their research organization revealed that 41.4% of the researchers had a moderate/high level of intention to leave, with burnout and job dissatisfaction as the leading factors.³

Researchers reported that they needed support during the pandemic; particularly, younger researchers and those with family members requiring care. The needs included, but were not limited to, research promotion and online education for the development of skills.⁴ Confirming the positive role of institutional support, a 38-item survey of 772 dental researchers revealed that this support was associated with higher productivity and was beneficial in terms of mitigating the effects of the pandemic.⁵

The pandemic has had an impact on researchers and their related research practices, and thus on science



editing. A tremendous volume of manuscripts on the pathophysiology and treatment strategies of COVID-19 have been submitted to journals worldwide, which has put extra weight on editors' shoulders. Moreover, plagiarism has become another issue⁶ as well as a relative decrease in the number of non-COVID-19 publications for some journals.⁷ This may result in a possible delay in the quality of care for non-COVID diseases in the upcoming years.⁸

The researchers wish to have a COVID-free New Year!

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