THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ACADEMIC SCIENCE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Background
To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the research workforce and identify the potential implications for the diversity of the biomedical workforce, the NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD) developed and fielded the NIH COVID-19 Impact on Extramural Researchers Survey in October 2020.

Population
This fact sheet focuses on the impact of the pandemic on mental health among members of the scientific workforce.

Response Rate
Overall, 45,348 of 234,254 invited researchers responded to the survey (19% response rate). Respondents included principal investigators, trainees, sponsors, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, scientists, and project personnel.

Results
- Mental health was negatively impacted by both societal/political events and physical/social isolation for more than two-thirds of respondents (69% and 66%, respectively; Figures 1 and 2). Respondents also frequently cited disruption of promotion/tenure timeline (38%; Figure 3) as a factor negatively impacting their mental health.
- Nearly half of respondents reported that pandemic-related changes in their personal mental health and/or physical health had a substantial effect on their productivity since the pandemic began.

Where Do We Go From Here?
- NIH will continue to analyze these data and share findings with the extramural research community.
- NIH intends to use these and other data as they become available to maintain its focus on evidence-based actions that foster inclusive excellence within the scientific workforce, to better support the health of our entire population.

Learn about COSWD’s efforts to diversify the scientific workforce at diversity.nih.gov