

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ACADEMIC SCIENCE IMPACT ON WOMEN

Background

To assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the research workforce and identify 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 experiences of women in academic science settings.

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

- **Demographics:** **53%** of respondents were women, **48%** were men, and **1%** identified their gender identity as transgender man, transgender woman, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, questioning, or something else.
- **Impact of Pandemic on Career Trajectory:** **55%** of all respondents anticipated a negative impact to their career trajectory as a result of the pandemic. The same percentage of women anticipated a negative career impact. *Figure 1* depicts anticipated negative impact on career trajectory by gender.
- **Impact of Pandemic on Productivity:** **78%** of all respondents reported decreased research productivity since the pandemic began, while **77%** of women reported decreased productivity since the pandemic began. *Figure 2* depicts lower productivity by gender.
- **Caretaking:** **50%** of women indicated that caretaking responsibilities made it substantially more difficult to be productive during the pandemic. Women were more likely than men to say that their caretaking duties made it substantially more difficult to complete work responsibilities. *Figure 3* depicts interference of caretaking with work responsibilities by gender.

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 more about NIH's approach to supporting women scientists during the pandemic by watching a recent National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine webcast with COSWD Dr. Marie Bernard.](#)

Figure 1. Percentage of Each Group Anticipating Negative Impact on Career Trajectory (n = 22,694)

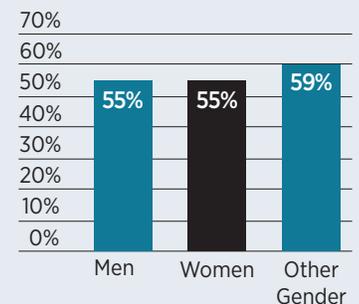


Figure 2. Percentage of Each Group Indicating Lower Productivity (n = 32,036)

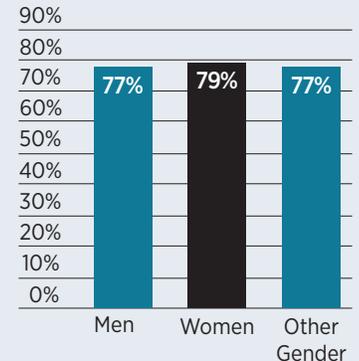


Figure 3. Percentage of Each Group Indicating That Caretaking Made it Substantially More Difficult To Be Productive (n = 8,573)

