In October of 2020, 45,348 researchers at domestic, NIH-funded institutions and 224 research leaders from the top 1,000 NIH-funded domestic institutions responded to an NIH COVID-19 Impact on Extramural Research Survey, which aimed to gauge the impact of COVID-19 on the research community.

At a high-level, survey findings emphasized the impact of COVID-19 on the career trajectory, mental health, and research productivity of extramural researchers:

- 55% of respondents said the pandemic will have a negative impact on their career trajectory.
- 68% of respondents said societal/political events negatively affected their mental health, more than other factors.
- 78% of respondents reported lower levels of productivity since the pandemic began.

CAREER TRAJECTORY

61% of lab-based researchers agreed that the pandemic will harm their career trajectory:

- Asian respondents were more likely than other groups to anticipate a negative career trajectory (65%), with a decline in research activities and lab-based research driving opinions.
- Black or African American respondents were least likely to anticipate a negative career trajectory (35%), with relatively fewer lab researchers and more public health researchers driving a more optimistic outlook.

MENTAL HEALTH

42% of respondents said their mental/physical health had a substantially negative impact on productivity:

- Women and respondents identifying as "other" genders were consistently more negatively impacted than men across top factors affecting mental health.
- Early career investigators were consistently more negatively impacted across top factors affecting mental health.
- Asian researchers cited visa considerations as negatively affecting their mental health at twice the rate of the average.

RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

Early (80%) and mid-career investigators (81%) reported lower levels of productivity due to COVID-19, with faculty members reporting a more negative impact than non-faculty researchers.

- 53% of Hispanics indicated their mental/physical health had negatively impacted research productivity since the pandemic began.

The Bottom Line: The less institutional support provided to researchers leads to a greater impact on productivity.

AT A GLANCE: COVID-19 IMPACTS ON EXTRAMURAL INSTITUTIONS

- 83% of respondents indicated that COVID-19 had a moderate or major impact on overall research productivity at their institution.
- 41% of respondents said it is likely the financial repercussions of COVID-19 will jeopardize their institution’s ability to maintain research functions.
- 77% of Doctrate-granting universities reported as very or extremely concerned.
- 33% of independent research institutions reported as very or extremely concerned.