

# Medical Student Fears and Needs During COVID19

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## BACKGROUND

- During pandemics such as COVID19, health care professionals are called upon to help.
- This role has vast possible consequences on physical & mental health.
- Little is known about how medical students, in the unique role of physicians-in-training, view the risks of COVID19 and how they think medical schools could support them.

## AIM

- This is an exploratory study with the aim to find out directly from medical students at WSUSOM what they need and how the medical school may support them as they continue in their important role as physicians-in-training during a pandemic.

## METHODS

- As part of the Medical Student Check-In Survey, all medical students at WSUSOM were asked to complete 11 questions about COVID19, 10 questions on a one through seven Likert scale and one open-answer.
- Faculty members led informal discussions with students at the start of the COVID19 pandemic, which identified a variety of concerns. Based on these concerns, survey questions were developed. The survey was piloted with third-year medical and pharmacy students during the internal medicine clerkship interprofessional patient safety day.
- The questions focused on medical student self-assessed concerns related to COVID19, safety, knowledge base, impact on education, and feeling of preparedness.
- The survey was open from April 18<sup>th</sup> through July 1<sup>st</sup>, coinciding with the time of the early COVID19 surge in Detroit, limited knowledge about the pandemic, lack of personal protective equipment, and pause for medical student in-person clinical rotations.

Results are based on surveys completed by 93.2% (n=276) first-year, 95% (n=286) second-year, 90% (n=290) third-year, and 84% (n=253) fourth-year students.

Results are scored on a one through seven Likert scale.

Question	M1	M2	M3	M4	Avg
I am concerned about acquiring coronavirus.	4.27	4.56	4.66	<b>4.71</b>	4.55
I am concerned that my family will acquire coronavirus because of my role as a physician-in-training.	3.64	4.24	4.63	<b>5.09</b>	4.38
I want to participate in clinical work to the best of my ability during the coronavirus pandemic.	5.26	<b>5.71</b>	5.48	5.00	5.38
I am concerned about interruption to my medical training from the coronavirus pandemic.	5.36	<b>5.56</b>	5.49	4.26	5.21
I am knowledgeable about coronavirus.	<b>5.46</b>	5.36	5.44	5.21	5.37
I am aware of CDC guidelines and precautions regarding coronavirus.	5.99	5.94	<b>6.00</b>	5.80	5.94
I have been following CDC guidelines and precautions in my personal life.	<b>6.16</b>	6.14	6.15	6.02	6.12
My school has prepared me to deal with a coronavirus exposure.	4.33	4.08	4.15	<b>4.36</b>	4.22
My school has prepared me to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.	<b>4.29</b>	4.06	4.19	<b>4.29</b>	4.20
I am concerned that the coronavirus pandemic will adversely effect my education.	5.32	<b>5.42</b>	5.38	4.33	5.15
I want my school to provide me with education about coronavirus that is geared toward healthcare professionals.	5.55	<b>5.78</b>	5.68	5.64	5.66

## RESULTS

- Students scored highest on awareness of CDC guidelines (5.94), following CDC guidelines in their personal life (6.12), and wanting the school to provide them with education geared toward health care professionals about COVID19 (5.66).
- Despite students scoring lowest on feeling prepared to deal both with the pandemic (4.20) and a potential exposure (4.22), a significant number wanted to participate in clinical work (5.38) and were concerned about interruption of their medical education (5.21).
- Student concerns about COVID19 increase with each year in training, which coincides with increased exposure to patients during training.
- Interestingly, the fourth-year medical students scored the highest for being concerned about acquiring COVID19 (4.71), while also scoring the lowest for feeling knowledgeable about the virus (5.21).
- M4 students were least concerned about impact on training, being almost finished at the time of the survey.
- Interest in education about COVID19 is apparent in every class.

## DISCUSSION

- This study provides guidance on medical student concerns early during the COVID19 pandemic and can inform preparation for future support.
- To address the wellness of students during this time, it is vital for administration to proactively reach out to students.
- Institutional support based on student needs included: PPE available at WSUSOM to all students, course on COVID19, student housing options, regular Town Halls with communication about COVID19, and curriculum changes that considered both student risk and educational impact.
- We plan to survey students again to track the impact of institutional changes and continuation of the COVID pandemic.

## REFERENCES

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