

# Fostering Wellness and Community: Preliminary Results of Survey on Medical Student Attitudes about Journal Article Discussions

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## BACKGROUND

- Feelings of belonging, facilitated through community-building initiatives such as informal gatherings and discussion spaces, are critical for the mental wellbeing of medical students.
- In a virtual setting, peer-assisted learning has potential to not only support learning, but also to foster a sense of community in times of physical distancing.
- To create a safe and accessible space for conversation and community building, the AMWA chapter of WSUSOM hosted a number of Zoom-based journal article discussions which we coined as "Coffee Talks" to discuss gender disparities in medicine.
- AIM: To assess the effectiveness of virtual, peer-to-peer learning experiences in building a sense of community and promoting mental wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## METHODS

- A 26-item questionnaire was developed by the AMWA leadership to answer the study aims.
- Students who attended at least one journal article discussion since October 2020 were eligible.
- Eligible students were emailed a Qualtrics survey link two times over 45 days.
- Results were collected anonymously to promote privacy, transparency, and honesty in responses.
- 154 students were eligible; 8 complete responses were received.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Data is provided from 8 respondents who completed the full survey, all of whom identified as female.

Table 1: Perceived Benefits of Journal Article Discussions.

Characteristic	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Provide a safe environment for discussing topics related to gender disparities in medicine	87.50%	12.50%	0%	0%	0%
Introduce me to new information about the topics selected	100.00%	0%	0.00%	0%	0%
Introduce me to new perspectives on topics selection	87.50%	0%	12.50%	0%	0%
Contribute novel information regarding gender disparities in medicine not previously covered in medical school curriculum	87.50%	12.50%	0%	0%	0%
Encourage me to relate my own thoughts, beliefs, and experiences with my peers	87.50%	12.50%	0%	0%	0%
Provide me an avenue for prioritizing my personal wellness	75.00%	25.00%	0%	0%	0%

Table 2: Impacts of Journal Article Discussions on Mental Wellbeing.

Characteristic	Strong Positive Impact	Slight Positive Impact	No Impact	Slight Negative Impact	Strong Negative Impact
My ability to meet with peers, faculty, and staff that I otherwise would not have met	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0%	0%
My sense of community within the medical school	12.50%	87.50%	0%	0%	0%
My sense of well-being	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0%	0%
My mental health	12.50%	75.00%	12.50%	0%	0%
My ability to cope with stress related to the medical school curriculum	0.00%	75.00%	12.50%	12.50%	0%
My ability to cope with stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic.	12.50%	50.00%	37.50%	0%	0%
My ability to cope with feelings of isolating during this period of social distancing	12.50%	87.50%	0%	0%	0%

## SESSIONS

Date	Article Topic
10/22/20	Prevalence of Unprofessional Social Media Content Among Young Vascular Surgeons
1/15/21	COVID-19 and Gender Equity in Medicine
5/18/21	Reproductive Healthcare for Incarcerated Women
12/9/20	Family Leave and Return to Work Experiences of Physician Mothers
2/26/21 & 4/23/21	Trauma Informed Pelvic Care
8/9/21:	Marginalization Experienced by HIV Positive Women

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- Our preliminary data indicate that AMWA's Coffee Talks were effective in providing an opportunity for medical students to discuss women's health and gender disparities in medicine.
- Positive impact was seen in promoting students' mental wellbeing and fostering a sense of community despite the ongoing virtual educational setting.
- Our response rate was small due in part to mistiming of emails. We plan to re-survey participants at the end of the academic year.
- Providing informal and peer-led learning opportunities to discuss topics that are relevant to women's health issues important may provide an additional tool to promote student wellbeing during times when in-person learning is not possible.