The Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis on Resident Wellness in a Community Teaching Hospital

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Background
In the Spring of 2020, Stamford CT was one of the epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic surge in the NY Metro area. The environment of hospital workers changed significantly, including for Internal Medicine (IM) and Family Medicine (FM) residents, who were integral members of innovative response teams at Stamford Hospital (SH). Stress, depression, and burnout are common feelings during residency training, and such feelings may be exacerbated during a crisis. Identifying areas in need for improvement related to resident wellness during a crisis is a first step towards improving wellbeing.

Aim/Goal
To evaluate resident mood, stress level, workload, sense of support, and academics surrounding SH’s COVID-19 peak. To compare select questions from a previous Wellness Committee survey to current resident interest in wellness activities.

Methods
An anonymous, voluntary Likert Scale questionnaire was sent via Survey Monkey® to 2019-2020 IM and FM residents at SH, in July of 2020. Questions were on residents’ mood, stress level, sense of support, and academics before, during, and after the COVID-19 peak. Additionally, four questions were adapted from an initial Wellness Survey, taken in January 2020, about residency sponsored wellness sessions and activities.

Results
![Figure 2](image2.png)  
**Figure 2:** Levels of mood, stress and workload were significantly increased during the peak compared to before and after (all with P ≤ 0.001). Levels of concern for personal and loved ones’ safety were significantly increased from before the peak to both during and after (all with P ≤ 0.001)

![Figure 3](image1.png)  
**Figure 3:** Level of support from family and friends showed a mean of 4.15/5 (SD 0.77), and from the hospital 2.93/5 (SD 1.07)

Discussion
The survey results suggest that residents felt sad, stressed, and overworked during the pandemic surge, as opposed to feelings of neutrality and happiness pre and post COVID-19 peak. The impact on learning was rated as neutral. Overall, residents felt more supported by their family and friends. Residents were interested in thrice yearly wellness sessions, sponsored social activities, and allotted extra free time to accomplish personal tasks.

Conclusion
The COVID-19 pandemic was a rapid and unexpected crisis that challenged the medical community. Our results show that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted different facets of resident wellness and outlook, including mood, stress level, workload, and sense of support. This provides insight regarding resident wellbeing during challenging times and identifies potential areas for improvement.

References