

# The CUSOM Resident & Fellow COVID-19 Experience: What Changes Should Stay?

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## Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound impact on graduate medical education
- To safely prepare for an influx of COVID-19 patients, CUSOM shifted to virtual learning, telehealth visits, and clinical reassignment of duties when needed
- We aimed to explore the impact of the pandemic and resultant changes on trainees in the following areas:
  - Clinical responsibilities
  - Education
  - Well-being

## Methods

- Residents and fellows were surveyed May 21<sup>st</sup> through June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Questions targeted clinical activities, education, and well-being
- 7-item Physicians Well-Being Index (PWBI) and a single item burnout scale were used

## Results

- 428/1257 (34%) trainees in 26 specialties responded; 296/919 (32%) residents and 132/338 (39%) fellows

### Clinical Changes:

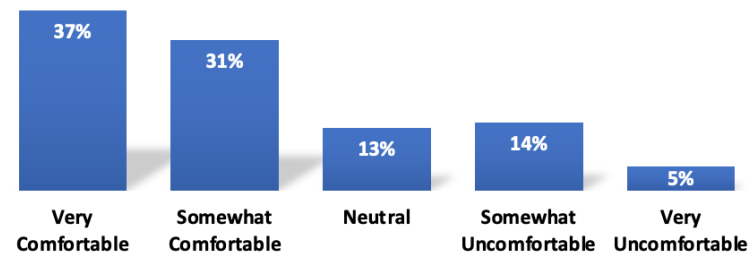
- 61% began telehealth visits of which 86% felt positively
- 74% were asked to prepare for clinical reassignment; only 24% were reassigned

## Results

### Clinical Changes (cont.):

- The vast majority were comfortable with reassignment decisions (Figure 1)

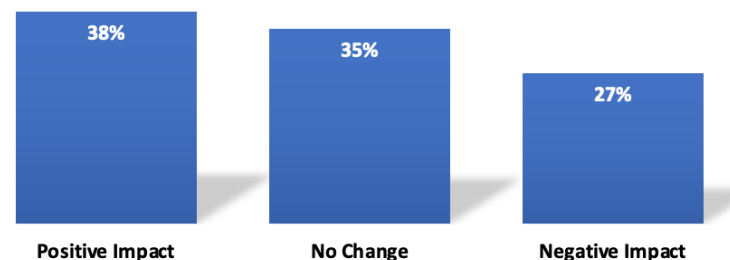
Figure 1: Comfort with Reassignment Decisions (n=293)



### Educational Changes:

- 99% used distance learning platforms
- Most noted a positive impact or no change; 68% interested in continuing these options (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Impact of Remote Learning on Learning Experience (n=387)

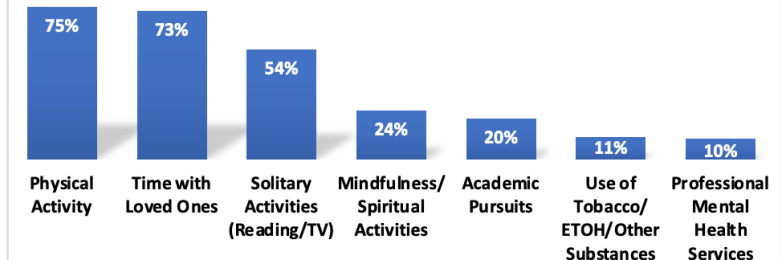


## Results

### Well-being:

- 27% experienced loss of income
- 7.5% reported difficulty paying expenses of which 20% applied for assistance
- 15% scored high risk on the PWBI; 33% scored positive for burnout
- Top coping mechanisms included physical activity (75%), time with loved ones (73%), and solitary activities (54%) (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Top Coping Mechanisms (n=374)



- 11% increased used of tobacco or other substances as a coping mechanism
- While only 14% noted use of institutional mental health or well-being resources; 92% found them helpful

## Conclusions

- Telehealth and distance learning platforms have had a positive response
- Further interventions to address financial and mental health may be needed to improve trainee wellness