The Mental Toll of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stress, Anxiety, and Depression of Medical Residents By J.J. Tolentino, Julianne M. Cyr, R. Maglin Halsey-Nichols, Essie Acquah, Jane H. Brice

As COVID-19 continues to spread, there is increasing strain on the healthcare system and, in particular, healthcare workers. The additional pressure of the pandemic may be an added contributor to the stress and anxiety of resident physicians, whose ongoing training in patient care has vastly changed. Utilizing data collected from a 2021 survey examining the effects of COVID-19 on resident physicians’ mental health, this study looks to compare stress, depression, and anxiety, as measured by the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21), across participant demographics (e.g., race, gender), family characteristics (e.g., number of household members), and risks for acquiring COVID-19 (e.g., high risk individual). Potential relationships between DASS-21 and the aforementioned independent variables were measured utilizing the Chi-Square test (α=0.05). Additionally, we also consider trends that may not display statistical significance (α≥0.051≤0.1). Our Findings suggest individuals were more likely to experience increased anxiety associated with the pandemic if they were living with others who are of high risk (α=0.024). Moreover, there are increasing trends in stress as the number of members in resident physician’s households increases (α=0.072). While stress, anxiety, and depression are present in varying amounts, we find that the pandemic amplifies these mental health effects in individuals whose households may be more at risk. Future research should launch the same survey in areas in which the pandemic has been largely controlled as well as in other areas where the pandemic is currently uncontrolled to examine differences in stress response based on pandemic control status.