

Presentation to the NASEM Study on Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Women in STEM Committee

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About the DDCF Medical Research Program

- Mission: to advance the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of human disease by strengthening and supporting clinical research
- Strategic goals
 - Develop clinical research careers
 - Advance biomedical research and innovation
- Even before COVID-19, there were many challenges related to integrating a research career, life responsibilities, and caregiving
 - ***Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists***

Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists program

- Provides supplemental, flexible funds to early-career physician-scientists working on clinical research projects and facing significant caregiving demands
- Qualitative evaluation by Reshma Jagsi (before the effects of the pandemic)

“There's never really enough time in the day,” said one interviewee.

“The challenge of having a family and a demanding work life is that you never leave anything that's completely done.”

“When you're in your childbearing years as a woman, there's a sense amongst colleagues that you're kind of unreliable or that you're not as serious as them or that you're not able to keep up like the others. There's still a stigma”

What do we hear now under COVID-19?

- Researchers feel the double impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice movement
- Some institutions are not supportive at all; there is collective inertia of leadership and senior faculty about the growing impossible task for young faculty to continue a career and provide schooling/childcare for children
- Many have concerns over school re-openings
- There is worry about loss of productivity and low publication rates
- There is uncertainty about advancement and promotion
- Some have mental health issues, depression and anxiety

Some ideas and questions to consider for the NASEM study

- Have institutions been supportive and responsive? If so, how? If not, why not?
- How are institutions weighing different priorities in their allocation of resources to enable research to continue for those with primary caregiving responsibilities?
- Are there any particularly innovative solutions at academic institutions that address these issues? Could these be replicated?
- How can the impacts of COVID-19 on the careers of women be quantified to facilitate cost-benefit analysis to guide institutions and highlight the importance of providing resources to address those impacts?

Some ideas and questions to consider for the NASEM study

- Is there stigma associated with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women scientists?
- Are there any specific effects on the career trajectories of physician scientists, POC, and those without family support or resources?
- How do the recent calls for racial justice intersect with the impact of COVID-19 on women, particularly women of color?

Thank you for studying this very important issue