Introduction

• COVID-19 began spreading in Wuhan, China in December 2019.1
• The WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020.2
• Social distancing for extended periods may be deleterious to mental health.3
• Studies have examined the impact of quarantines on students in previous pandemics but few have looked at their impact on faculty and staff.

Methods

• The researchers decided to probe the effects of quarantine on the faculty and staff of Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville School of Pharmacy.
• The researchers used a survey to gauge the emotional impact and stress caused by COVID-19 in order to assess faculty and staff well-being.
• Participants were recruited via email and asked to complete a survey instrument administered via Qualtrics.
• The survey was available between July 16, 2020 and August 16, 2020.

Results

• A total of thirty-three respondents completed the survey which equals a 53.2% response.
• The most reported feelings about the COVID-19 work from home order when it began were stressed (51.5%), anxious (63.6%), and scared about the future (42.4%). Write-in responses included angry, worried about the effectiveness of education, and disconnected.
• The most reported feelings about the COVID-19 when the survey was conducted were stressed (39.4%), tired (30.3%), anxious (51.5%), scared for their futures (48.5%), calm (33.3%), and just fine (30.3%). Write-in responses included not being sure who to trust, unsafe, frustration, and disconnected.
• The highest ranked concerns both at the beginning of the work from home order and at the time the survey was conducted were themselves contracting the virus or a loved one contracting the virus. The lowest ranked concern at either time was how social distancing would effect patient care.

Discussion

• The survey drew inspiration from several validated measures, but it was not itself a validated instrument.
• 53.2% completion rate, so we can be fairly certain that the results accurately reflect the views of the faculty and staff at SIUe SOP.
• The survey was administered during a low-stress period of the academic cycle from July 16 to August 16, so it is likely results would be different if given during a more stressful time of the year.
• 80% of participants reported not feeling calm and relaxed during the time the survey was completed, and 71.4% of participants report feeling pressure to succeed professionally throughout the pandemic, indicating a need for well-being measures at SIUe SOP.

Conclusions

• Approximately half of participants indicated that COVID-19 has negatively affected their mental health.
• SIUe SOP would benefit from having mental health resources available for those who are struggling during this time.

References