

Pandemic is putting cutting-edge cancer research on hold: survey

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COVID-19 has at least temporarily shut down more than half of cancer

research, according to an American Cancer Society (ACS) survey.

The survey, conducted in early April, was completed by close to 500 cancer researchers who have received ACS funding. It revealed that:

- 54% were working from home.
- 32% were working both at home and in their lab.
- 8% were working in their lab or in clinics.

Asked how their institution was dealing with the pandemic:

- 91% said only essential personnel were allowed.
- 59% said labs had been closed.
- 57% said their research was temporarily halted.
- 4% said their institution was open.

In terms of the effect on research or training:

- 51% said all research or training was on hold until further notice.
- 43% said some research was paused.
- 7% said research or training continues as normal.

"It is abundantly clear that the COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on cancer research," said William Phelps, senior vice president of extramural research for ACS.

"In some labs queried for our survey, all non-essential research had been halted, with research on COVID-19 being the only type of research being encouraged," Phelps noted.

"In addition to the deceleration in progress against [cancer](#), these laboratories and institutions will face significant additional costs associated with restarting the [cancer research](#) enterprise in the coming months," he explained in a society news release

However, some researchers are seeing new opportunities with their lab closed.

Dr. Susanne Warner, who is investigating the use of viruses to infect and destroy [colon cancer cells](#) at City of Hope in Duarte, Calif., said that despite being at home more than usual, some researchers have been "really productive in the lab."

"We're taking this opportunity to review a lot of our old data to see if there were messages that the science was trying to send us that we didn't have time to stop and listen to before," she said.

"We're also using the time to plan new experiments so that when all this is over, we can hit the ground running," Warner added.

More information: For more on cancer research, visit the [American Cancer Society](#).

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