

Researchers examine impact of COVID-19 on dental hygiene and dental students' careers

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The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted dental education and training. The study "COVID-19 and Dental and Dental Hygiene Students' Career Plans," published in the *JDR Clinical & Translational*

Research (JDR CTR), examined the short-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on dental hygiene and dental students' career intentions.

An anonymous online survey was emailed to dental and [dental hygiene](#) students enrolled at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry, Richmond, U.S.. The survey consisted of 81 questions that covered a wide range of topics including demographics, anticipated educational debt, [career](#) plans post-graduation, readiness to enter [clinical practice](#) or residency and student wellness. The authors found that students at all levels of training have become concerned about the limited employment opportunities, long-term stability of the dental profession and on the interruptions to clinical education and licensure examinations consequent to the pandemic.

More than 10% of all [student](#) study respondents felt anxious about the future of dentistry, with approximately 40% of those in their final year choosing to change their career post-graduation plans. Students who reported an intent to change their career plans had significantly higher perceived stress and anxiety scores and lower resilience scores than students who reported no change to their career plans. Compared to [white students](#), more black, indigenous and people of color reported that they had changed their career plans.

Lead author Dina Garcia of Virginia Commonwealth University concluded, "A comprehensive effort inclusive of adeptly designed clinical and curriculum experiences paired with wellness interventions and support tailored to students is needed."

"The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the career plans of dental and dental hygiene students may negatively affect the future dental workforce," said JDR CTR Editor-in-Chief Jocelyne S. Feine, McGill University, Montréal, Quebec, Canada. "We lack understanding of both the short-term and long-term effects of prolonged and unanticipated

public health crises on the dental workforce. More studies are needed to provide this information so that these issues can be appropriately addressed."

More information: D.T. García et al, COVID-19 and Dental and Dental Hygiene Students' Career Plans Show all authors, *JDR Clinical & Translational Research*, January 6, 2021, [DOI: 10.1177/2380084420984772](https://doi.org/10.1177/2380084420984772)

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