

Summary

A survey was distributed worldwide to assess issues that biomedical engineers and medical physicists (academics and professionals) and similar professionals face when working from home during the pandemic. The aggregated data: demographic and geographic info and analysis by gender. This enables to assess the impact of the pandemic on the careers of women and men.

SDG Agenda

SDG 5: Gender Equality

Organizations Involved

International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine, International Federation of Medical and Biological Engineering, Intern. Organization for Medical Physics

Relevance

The COVID19 pandemic created a new work environment. Many people work from home. This survey is highly relevant to assess the gender impact of the pandemic.

Aims and Objectives

The pandemic may be having a different impact on the amount of work that women and men can do from home if the major burden of child and other types of care is still predominantly on the shoulders of women. If this is found to be true, then there will be a need for organizations to develop measures that deal with this gender discrepancy.

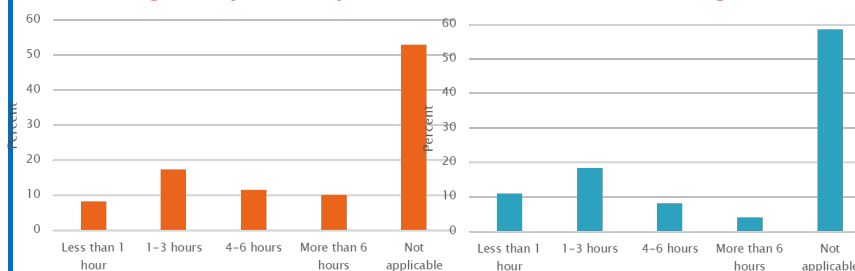
Methods

The survey was created by members of the three committees mentioned previously. Ethic clearance by Carleton University. Survey uses Survey Monkey platform to collect data. Analysis of frequencies and cross-tabulation of gender with relevant variables describing the impact of work at home. IBM SPSS statistical analysis software was used to analyze the results.

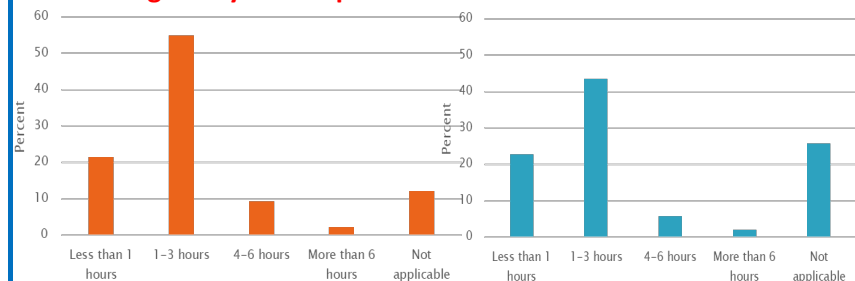
Results

Number of responses: 954 with 36.8% males and 62.2% females. Up to 74% of respondents have been working from home during the pandemic. More women were working from home (70%) versus 59% of men. More men have access to an office at home (65%) versus 55% for women. Nearly 50% of women had to adjust their working hours, while working from home and looking after their families compared to 38% males.

While working from home during Covid-19 pandemic, what are the average daily hours spent on child care and schooling?



While working from home during Covid-19 pandemic, what are the average daily hours spent on household duties?



Results (cont):

The biggest challenges in lockdown for you and your family?

Males: buying daily necessities, disruption of routine, health care, keeping up with a massive increase in workload, loneliness and housework, not being able to work from home and help my spouse with childcare, to concentrate on work not household, social isolation.

Females: overwhelmingly commented on childcare, having to juggle own work and homebased schooling, to manage work and children and household, lack of human touch.

Conclusions

Men participated in some childcare and household duties, but with less hours daily than women. This was more than found two and three decades ago. Future analysis will assess this aspect for various regions in the world. It is evident that the burden of childcare and household duties will have a negative impact on the careers of women if the burden is not similar for both sexes. Employers should develop policies to accommodate and compensate in order to minimize the negative impact on the professional status and career of those who carry the main burden of care.

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