

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Training of Surgical Residents in Greece: Results of a Survey Conducted One Year after the Onset of the Pandemic

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Abstract

Background: The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is an ongoing crisis. In light of mounting concerns about the training of surgical residents, we examined surgical residents' perceptions regarding the pandemic's impact on their training.

Methods: We developed an anonymous online questionnaire comprising 15 multiple-choice questions, which we sent via email to residents educated and employed in northern Greece hospitals. Our survey took place in January and February of 2021.

Results: A total of 124 residents across a broad spectrum of surgical fields completed the questionnaire. The majority (51.6%) reported a significant decline in the number of operations performed weekly during the pandemic. Approximately 38% of the respondents stated that their surgical skills have been negatively affected to a significant extent, and 35.5% reported that their theoretical knowledge had deteriorated to a moderate extent. Almost half of them reported that they were satisfied with the online courses and a total of 67.7% affirmed the need to prolong their clinical training.

Conclusions: The aims and scope of a surgical department include the provision of high-quality training to young surgeons. The impact of the pandemic on routine surgical activities has been dramatic. Our results clearly indicate that young surgeons have been significantly affected in terms of their training.

Key words: COVID-19 pandemic, surgical education, surgical residents