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DATA NOTE

Data from a survey on the impact of the pandemic on early-stage academics

[version 1; peer review: 2 approved]

Edyta Swider-Cios[1,2], Katalin Solymosi[1,3,4], Mangala Srinivas[1,5]

[1]Young Academy of Europe (YAE), Munich, Germany
[2]Department of Cognitive Neuropsychology, Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands
[3]Department of Plant Anatomy, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
[4]Hungarian Young Academy (HYA), Budapest, Hungary
[5]Department of Cell Biology and Immunology, Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, The Netherlands

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Abstract

We would like to share data from a survey run by the Young Academy of Europe (YAE) from June to October 2020, with questions aiming to unravel the situation of early-career researchers (including early stage group leaders) working in Europe, during the COVID-19 pandemic. We were particularly interested in the impact of care activities (related to young children or other family members), and the impact of gender. We include the online survey and collected data, without identifying information. The survey is published in *Nature* Career Column (July, 2021) (https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01952-6).

Keywords

pandemic, researchers, survey, young academy

Open Peer Review

Approval Status ✓ ✓

	1	2
version 1 17 Nov 2021	✓ view	✓ view

1. **Karolina Lendak-Kabók**, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

2. **Tevfik Murat Yildirim**, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

H2020

This article is included in the Horizon 2020 gateway.

This article is included in the Research on Research gateway.

Corresponding author: Mangala Srinivas (mangala.srinivas@wur.nl)

Author roles: Swider-Cios E: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Project Administration, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing; **Solymosi K**: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing; **Srinivas M**: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Funding Acquisition, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

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Plain language summary

We are sharing data from an online survey run by the Young Academy of Europe (YAE) from June to October 2020, with questions aiming to understand the situation of early-career researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

The survey

A total of 33 questions were designed and uploaded onto the SoGoSurvey platform (www.sogosurvey.com). The survey was quite detailed and contained three sections: working conditions (15 questions); personal background (13 questions); and optional questions (4 questions). The survey was a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. It was tested with volunteers (board members of the YAE and members of the Hungarian Young Academy) for clarity before use. No changes were made after preliminary testing. As we are not experts in the field, we discussed the survey with experts during its development (see Acknowledgements).

A copy of the survey is available in the *Extended data*[1].

Data collection

A link to the survey was shared via Young Academy of Europe (YAE) website (https://yacadeuro.org/), newsletter, social media channels, and YAE contact channels (primarily other Young Academies, e.g. the Hungarian Young Academy and its Facebook page, where it was posted more than one time). We estimate our reach was between 1300-1500 people. We required that the respondent worked in research in academia in Europe at the time of the survey. Note that since we focused on Young Academies, this means that our participants were not completely random; most Young Academies tend to be quite selective in admission, but the selection criteria can vary by Academy. The survey results indicate whether or not a respondent was a member of a Young Academy.

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to provide informed consent. Information about the YAE Privacy Policy was included as well. The survey ran from June to October 2020.

Collected responses were then collated using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2019).

Ethical considerations

Written informed consent for participation and publication of the participants' details was obtained from the participants at the end of the online questionnaire. The specific text used was:

- I confirm that I am a responsible adult able to provide legal consent.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time, without the need to provide any justification for it.
- I agree that my responses will be used as part of this study.
- I am aware that the data treatment will ensure my anonymity and I will not be identifiable.

Participants were asked to confirm consent at the end of the survey by ticking a 'Certificate of Consent' box.

No further ethical approval was sought, as this is deemed a low-risk study. Identifying information, such as names or institution names (where provided), have been removed from the shared data in order to maintain anonymity.

Dataset presentation

We received a total of 151 responses. The entire data set, without identifying information, is presented as an Excel sheet and available in the *Underlying data*; responses to the open answer questions are also available in the *Underlying data*[1].

For more information about the dataset, please see our previous publication[2].

Data availability

Underlying data

Figshare: Young Academy of Europe (YAE) Survey on the Impact of COVID19 pandemic, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14971611.v1[1].

This project contains the following underlying data:

- YAE COVID19 Survey Raw Data
- YAE COVID19 Survey Open Answers Results

Extended data

Figshare: Young Academy of Europe (YAE) Survey on the Impact of COVID19 pandemic, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14971611.v1[1].

This project contains the following extended data:

- YAE COVID19 Survey questionnaire

Data are available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY 4.0).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Enikő Kubinyi, Eszter Neumann and Balázs Lengyel (Hungarian Young Academy) for advice about the survey questions, members of the YAE Board for reading the draft, and Marius Busemeyer and Lothar Smith for expert advice on the survey questions and data analysis.

References

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2. Swider-Cios E, Solymosi K, Srinivas M: **Why science needs a new reward and recognition system.** *Nature.* 2021; **595**(7869): 751–753.
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Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status: ✔ ✔

Version 1

Reviewer Report 08 February 2022

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✔ **Tevfik Murat Yildirim**

University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway

This is a survey used by the authors to publish an article in the *Nature* career column. The dataset includes a large number of questions that are designed to advance our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected early-career researchers in Europe. The sample size is large enough for statistical analysis, and the questions utilized in the dataset are sound. On the other hand, the low response rates reported by the authors, as well as the study's exclusive focus on 'young academies', necessitate the use of caution when interpreting the results from the study. Despite these relatively minor weaknesses, however, the dataset will surely contribute to our understanding of the pandemic and its consequences for academics.

Is the rationale for creating the dataset(s) clearly described?

Yes

Are the protocols appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and materials provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

Are the datasets clearly presented in a useable and accessible format?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: gender and politics

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 08 Feb 2022

Mangala Srinivas

Thank you for your comments. We agree that the data needs to be interpreted carefully, and hope it will be useful.

Competing Interests: article author.

Reviewer Report 08 December 2021

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Karolina Lendak-Kabók
University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

The data note title: Data survey on the impact of the pandemic on early-stage academics is a timely contribution which sheds light on the early career researchers (ECR) who are in a precarious situation in the neoliberal academic arena. ECRs are in a vulnerable position, they are in a period of life when they are starting a family, while they are expected to put a considerable amount of effort in their academic career, in order to stay on the demanding scientific track. Most of the ECRs (this is especially true for women) are struggling with finishing their PhDs while having small kids, or they are postponing motherhood in order to finish their PhDs. The pandemic put a lot of stress on ECRs, especially young academic mothers and the consequences of the pandemic on female ECRs are yet to be disclosed and analysed. Thus, the research presented through this data note is of great importance, as we need to raise awareness on ECRs and introduce various measures which will alleviate their career hurdles.

Is the rationale for creating the dataset(s) clearly described?
Yes

Are the protocols appropriate and is the work technically sound?
Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and materials provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Are the datasets clearly presented in a useable and accessible format?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Gender studies, women in academia, ECRs

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 08 Dec 2021

Mangala Srinivas

Thank you for your comments! We hope these data will be useful for many researchers!

Competing Interests: author of the Data Note