

FGD Guide

Student Perceptions of medicine as a profession, and other issues perceived among undergraduate medical students and interns in the context of the current COVID 19 pandemic.

A multi centric study – June 2020, India

Dear Student / intern,

Thank you for making the time to participate in this online group discussion to share your views on the role of the medical profession in the context of the current COVID 19 pandemic. There are no right and wrong answers. We will listen respectfully to each other, though we can still have differing views. With your permission the discussion will be audio recorded by us but not by any of you. The recording is only for the purposes of this study and will not be used for any other purpose. Your name will not be linked with anything you say in the analysis or the reporting of this study. You are free to not answer a question anytime or to withdraw from the group. We request you to respect the privacy of what you hear today and not reveal personal information shared in this group with others.

Do you have any doubts or questions?

Thank you once again. Can we begin?

Section 1

1. “The medical profession is the best profession” Is this something that you are thinking about during this time? Can you explain why?
2. Do you see the role of the medical professional differently now as compared with when you chose this profession? Why? Probe
3. In the recent past, have you reconsidered your choosing medicine as a profession? Why?
 - a. Are there other professions that appear more appealing to you? What are they (if yes)?
 - b. What do you aspire to specialize in ?
 - c. Has this changed with the recent pandemic? Reasons?
4. Can you describe an incident in the recent past that affected your perception of a doctor or medical life?
5. Has there been a change in your desired specialization in medicine (for PG)? Place that you will choose for your PG / your future in medicine? What has influenced these changes? Why? [Drop if answered in Q3 above]

Section 2

1. What troubles you the most / inspires you the most about the medical profession in the pandemic? Probe:
 - a. How do you feel when you hear that healthcare professionals do not have the adequate PPE?
 - b. How do you feel about limited resources available for treating patients in the pandemic -Allocating beds, ventilators, caring for the old, the poor, caring for fellow doctors / healthcare workers, quarantine facilities, testing and screening?
 - c. Other choices
2. Would you say that doctors are going through feelings of emotional vulnerability in this COVID 19 crisis.? Why? Probe:
 - a. Fear for one's life
 - b. Feeling that life is unfair to doctors
3. If the doctor prioritizes personal safety over care of the patient, it may be acceptable. Do you agree?
 - a. Are you distressed by these decisions?
4. How do you think that decision-making is for doctors in the time of COVID 19? Why do you think so?
5. Medical professionals are trained to handle ethical dilemmas and legal issues in times of crises. What are your views on this?

Section 3

1. How do you feel as a student/ interns during this COVID 19 pandemic?
 - a. Check feelings- helpless / concerned/ happy / relieved? Why?
2. Can you share ways by which you have coped with the situation, ways that have worked and ways that you have tried but have not worked?
3. How do you think medical professionals can cope with these issues and moral distress/ challenges at the workplace?
4. Are there ways in which the medical profession can change or improve?
5. Can you suggest ways in which medical training can address these concerns for medical students?