

As data-driven, evidence-based decision makers, we look forward to how institutions worldwide implement and study the various solutions proposed.

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Commentary: Training in the time of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) virus spread around the world, no aspect of society was spared. Our medical systems strained to and in some cases beyond the breaking point, the effects of the pandemic on cardiothoracic surgery trainees could easily be overlooked. During the 1918 influenza epidemic, perhaps the most comparable historical reference point for the current crisis, little is known from the trainee perspective. Archives from Peter Bent Brigham Hospital mention that, "The Surgical Staff loaned to the Medical four of their house officers to care for influenza cases, and very generously the surgeons curtailed their work to a minimum,"¹ but there is a dearth of scholarship on the direct impact of the 1918 swine flu on surgical training.

In this issue of the *Journal*, Olive and colleagues² seek to ensure the same cannot be said of the coronavirus in 2020.

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CENTRAL MESSAGE

COVID-19 affects every aspect of cardiothoracic surgical training. Proposed responses to these challenges will require flexibility, innovation, and mentorship.

In their Young Surgeon's Note, they give us a snapshot of how COVID-19 is changing academic curricula, operative experience, safety and wellness, and scheduling of examinations and interviews for prospective cardiothoracic surgeons around the world. They also propose strategies and solutions to the problems arising in the wake of the crisis. Virtual approaches to learning, credentialing, and job searching will be increasingly important. Programs and new partners will have to be flexible and innovative to balance education and the unprecedented demands on health care systems.

The authors paint a vivid, real-time picture of the early months of the pandemic, which underscores what we didn't, and couldn't, know at the time. It is still too early to measure the toll on the physical and psychological health and wellness the pandemic will have had on trainees. Now, just a few months down the road, the picture is more variable than ever, with cases rising in some countries and falling

in others. Such heterogeneities of time course and intensity will largely determine which of the authors' proposed strategies will be most effective and for how long. Because another pandemic is virtually inevitable, this Young Surgeon's Note will be of interest to not only present readers of the *Journal*, but future ones as well.

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