



Graduate students at California public universities feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on college students' mental health and academic performance.^{1,2,3} Less is known about how the pandemic has impacted graduate students, and the extent to which campus Basic Needs services are supporting their needs.

Purpose

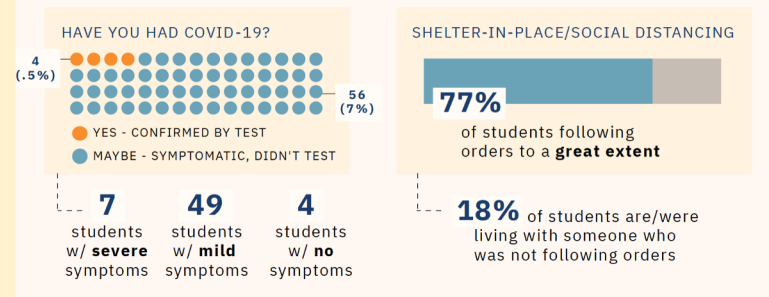
A better understanding of the pandemic's impact on graduate students' basic needs security is warranted to inform university programs and policies.

Methods

A convenience sample of graduate students, who had accessed Basic Needs services at six University of California campuses, completed an online survey in Summer 2020. Respondents reported COVID-19 exposures/infections, impacts on work, basic needs (e.g., food and housing) and academics, and campus Basic Needs service utilization during the pandemic. Descriptive statistics were used.

Results

A total of 791 graduate students completed the survey.



Top 5 student concerns about the effect of COVID-19 on learning

- 74% Learning effectively in the remote instruction environment
- 71% Ability to conduct research
- 65% Having access to an appropriate study space
- 58% Interacting with faculty outside of class
- 53% Having access to library resources and services

Food and housing insecurity due to COVID-19

- Experienced food insecurity: 44%
- Unable to afford their full housing cost: 20%
- Experienced homelessness: 5%
- At risk of eviction after the pandemic: 3%

Campus basic needs services

- Nearly two-thirds (n= 508) used campus Basic Needs services during the pandemic.

Discussion and Implications

Graduate students experienced basic needs insecurities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the large extent to which graduate students experience basic needs insecurity, targeted Basic Needs programming is warranted to support this population. The high proportion of graduate students that utilized campus Basic Needs services indicate that these services are filling gaps and may mitigate the pandemic's deleterious effects.

Literature Cited

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Basic Needs System-wide committee co-chairs Ruben Canedo & Tim Galarneau and to the students who participated in this survey.