

APUO COVID Stress Survey 2 Report

From November 18 to November 30, 2020, the APUO conducted its second survey regarding APUO members' experiences working in the context of the ongoing pandemic. (This survey followed-up on a similar survey sent to members in May of 2020, the report of which is available [here](#)). The APUO would like to thank members for taking the time to complete these surveys. They provide us with essential information about the experiences and wellbeing of our members that, in turn, directly inform our negotiation of Letters of Understanding with the Central Administration.

Throughout the past year APUO members have worked tremendously hard and have adapted to difficult conditions in order to continue delivering an essential public service. The November survey data show that these efforts are incurring a very high cost in terms of members' mental health. To this end, members reported higher stress levels in November than in May.

The information presented in **Table 2** shows that a larger percentage of members reported levels of stress in the high range across all three areas of work (Teaching/Professional Duties, Research and Creation, and Community Services) in November than in May. The most drastic increase in stress occurred in the Teaching/Professional Duties category. In November, 47% of members reported experiencing high stress in relation to Teaching/Professional Duties, a marked increase from the 36% reported in May.

Stress levels continue to remain notably high for members from equity seeking groups. **Table 3** shows that levels were higher for women (87% in the moderate to high range for Teaching/Professional Duties and 88% in the same range for Research and Creation) than for men. Of the respondents identifying as visible minorities (**Table 4**), 91% reported experiencing moderate to high levels of stress relating to Teaching/Professional Duties, with 86% reporting experiencing moderate to high levels of stress for Research and Creation.

Among members with children, the highest stress levels related to Teaching/Professional Duties are experienced by those with children in daycare and those with children with special needs (**Table 5**). Those with children under two and children in daycare report the highest stress levels with regard to Research and Creation. The information presented in **Table 6** shows that 86% of family caregivers are experiencing moderate to high levels of stress for Teaching/Professional Duties and over 90% are experiencing stress at those same levels for Research and Creation (with a striking 70% reporting high stress levels in that category). The majority of members with disabilities are also experiencing stress levels in the "high" range for the same duties (**Table 7**). From the data in **Table 8** we observe that for immunocompromised members the scales are also tipped towards the "high stress" category for both Teaching/Professional Duties and Research and Creation. Single parents (**Table 9**) are also experiencing higher levels of stress than those who are not single parents.

Non-tenured members and those who do not hold continuing appointments expressed significantly higher levels of stress (**Table 10**) about their Teaching/Professional Duties and about

their Research and Creation activities than their counterparts with tenure or continuing appointments.

In terms of age, members in the 40-49 year-old demographic report the highest stress levels (**Table 11**) for Teaching/Professional Duties and Research and Creation.

Below are some of the dimensions of particular concern arising from the November survey.

Caregiving. Several members are in caregiving roles for children and/or for other family members. Parents with children in daycare and parents with children with special needs are experiencing very high stress levels. In addition, parents with elementary and high school-aged children point out that their children are frequently home (whether because of school closures or other reasons), and require various types of support throughout the day. We also note that after school care has not been available for many children, resulting in substantial reductions in working hours for parents. Several of the comments received emphasized being disproportionately impacted by the increased caregiving demands and other domestic duties placed on families.

Workload. Several of the survey comments received highlighted concerns about the pace of work and a widely felt expectation that they be available to work almost constantly (even more than pre-pandemic times, when members were already working very long hours, weekends, etc.). The transition to remote emergency teaching (including adapting courses to the online and distance formats, and dealing with an increase in emails and Zoom calls with students and colleagues) along with the need to reorganize projects so that, among other things, graduate students can continue advancing through their programs has resulted in a marked increase in members' workload, with some claiming their workloads have effectively doubled.

Health. Members are experiencing high stress levels, feeling they have little-to-no work/life balance or the time to adequately complete work and caregiving tasks. Many are making up for the increased demands on their time by working late into the night. When home and workplace are one, the stresses in all areas of members' lives are constantly present, and in many ways compounded. The comments received from our November survey point to the unsustainability of the current conditions along with host of other issues (e.g., exhaustion, burnout, anxiety, depression, other health-related effects) emerging from now having worked in these conditions for several months.

Research. Several members reported being unable to effectively conduct research during the pandemic, and worrying about how this will affect them over the longer term. Labs, libraries, archives, and other research sites have been less accessible and in some cases inaccessible for extended periods of time. While the pandemic itself may necessitate remote work only until such time as the university community has been vaccinated, the impact of this period of confinement on research will last for several years. Research projects have either halted or been dismantled and/or redesigned into something entirely new. Working with collaborators and students in research teams has become particularly challenging. Research dissemination in several areas has

been forestalled by cancelled conferences and delays in the peer-review and publication process. Women in particular report falling behind on research compared to their male counterparts.

Table 1. Respondents' characteristics

<i>May N = 755; November N = 523 respondents</i>		May 2020	November 2020
Faculty	Arts	18	20
	Education	5	5
	Engineering	7	8
	Health Sciences	9	10
	Law (Civil Law)	2	2
	Law (Common Law)	4	5
	Library	4	3
	Management	6	7
	Medicine	7	7
	Science	12	10
	Social Science	24	23
Gender	Feminine	45	52
	Masculine	46	25
	Two-spirited	0	0.1
	Intersex	0	16
	Trans	0	0
	Non-binary	1	0.3
	Did not wish to specify	8	7
	Other	0	0.6
Employment status	Tenured/Continuing App	90	90
	Non-tenured/non-Continuing	10	10
Age group	39 years or younger	14	11
	40 to 49yrs	39	35
	50 to 59yrs	30	35
	60 to 69yrs	15	16
	70 and over	2	3
Member of visible minority		13	12

Indigenous	2	0.6
Disability	4	6
Immunocompromised	7	7
Children under 18	51	49
Children under 2	7	5
Child in daycare	16	13
Child in elementary school	33	32
Child in high school	21	19
Child with special needs	8	8
Single parent	4	4
Family caregiver	24	24

Table 2 – Level of stress expressed by APUO members by work in confinement

November - 2020

Categories	Teaching/Professional duties *	Research and Creation *	Community services*
Low (score 0-1)	19%	19%	43%
Moderate (score 2)	34%	29%	32%
High (score 3-4)	47%*	52%*	25%*

May - 2020

Categories	Teaching/Professional duties	Research and Creation	Community services
Low (score 0-1)	24%	21%	53%
Moderate (score 2)	40%	34%	29%
High (score 3-4)	36%	45%	18%

Table 3 – Comparative tables based on gender identity.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Feminine	Masculine
Low (score 0-1)	(21) 13 %	(28) 24 %
Moderate (score 2)	(37) 34 %	(44) 40 %
High (score 3-4)	(42) 53 %	(28) 36 %
$\chi^2 = 11,9, p = 0,00^{**}$		

Research and Creation

Categories	Feminine	Masculine
Low (score 0-1)	(17) 12%	(27) 25%
Moderate (score 2)	(34) 30%	(34) 29%
High (score 3-4)	(49) 58%	(39) 46%
$\chi^2 = 11.5, p = 0.00^*$		

Community services

Categories	Feminine	Masculine
Low (score 0-1)	36%	53%
Moderate (score 2)	38%	29%
High (score 3-4)	26%	18%
$\chi^2 = 9.3, p = 0.01^*$		

Table 4 – Comparative tables based on identifying as a member of a visible minority.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Yes	No
Low (score 0-1)	(13) 9%	(27) 19
Moderate (score 2)	(47) 39%	(39) 36
High (score 3-4)	(40) 52%	(34) 45
	$\chi^2 = 3.65, p = 0.16$	

Research and Creation

Categories	Yes	No
Low (score 0-1)	(15) 14%	(22) 18%
Moderate (score 2)	(34) 23%	(35) 30%
High (score 3-4)	(54) 63%	(43) 51%
	$\chi^2 = 2.72, p = 0.26$	

Community services

Categories	Yes	No
Low (score 0-1)	(52) 38%	(54) 43%
Moderate (score 2)	(25) 39%	(29) 31%
High (score 3-4)	(23) 23%	(17) 25%
	$\chi^2 = 1.58, p = 0.45$	

Table 5 – Comparative tables based on having children.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	None	under 18	under 2	daycare	Grade school	High school	w/special needs
Low (score 0-1)	(28) 19.1	(22) 18.8	(19) 11.1	(18) 7.5	(21) 19.6	(24) 23.5	(12) 14.6
Moderate (score 2)	(38) 37.1	(42) 31.6	(46) 37.0	(38) 32.8	(40) 28.2	(41) 27.6	(37) 26.8
High (score 3-4)	(34) 43.2	(36) 49.6	(35) 51.9	(43) 59.7	(39) 52.2	(34) 48.9	(0) 58.4
		$\chi^2= 1.98$ $p= 0.37$	$\chi^2= 1.01$ $p= 0.6$	$\chi^2= 7.4$ $p=0.02^*$	$\chi^2= 3.76$ $p=0.15$	$\chi^2=2.91$ $p=0.23$	$\chi^2=3.08$ $p=0.21$

Research and Creation

Categories	None	under 18	under 2	daycare	Grade school	High school	w/special needs
Low (score 0-1)	(27) 22.1	(16) 15.2	(16) 15.4	(13) 11.9	(13) 12.1	(20) 15.5	(8) 4.9
Moderate (score 2)	(37) 30.6	(32) 27.6	(27) 19.2	(24) 20.9	(31) 26.7	(33) 30.9	(32) 36.6
High (score 3-4)	(37) 47.3	(51) 57.2	(58) 65.4	(63) 67.2	(56) 61.2	(47) 53.6	(58) 58.5
		$\chi^2=6.01$ $p= 0.049^*$	$\chi^2=7.39$ $p=0.02^*$	$\chi^2= 8.59$ $p=0.01^*$	$\chi^2= 9.74$ $p=0.01^*$	$\chi^2= 2.10$ $p=0.35$	$\chi^2= 6.63$ $p= 0.03^*$

Community services

Categories	None	under 18	under 2	daycare	Grade school	High school	w/special needs
Low (score 0-1)	(53) 48.5	(53) 38.7	(47) 35.7	(48) 36.4	(51) 36.5	(57) 39.8	(47) 35.0
Moderate (score 2)	(31) 31.1	(27) 32.1	(28) 32.1	(29) 37.9	(28) 32.7	(22) 26.9	(30) 45.0
High (score 3-4)	(16) 20.4	(20) 29.2	(15) 32.1	(23) 25.8	(20) 30.8	(21) 33.3	(23) 20.0
		$\chi^2=6.40$ $p=0.04^*$	$\chi^2=2.46$ $p=0.29$	$\chi^2= 3.01$ $p= 0.21$	$\chi^2=7.39$ $p=0.02^*$	$\chi^2=3.10$ $p=0.05^*$	$\chi^2=5.20$ $p=0.05^*$

Table 6 – Comparative tables based being a family caregiver.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Caregiver	Not a caregiver
Low (score 0-1)	(22) 13.7	(26) 20.1
Moderate (score 2)	(31) 32.3	(43) 35.6
High (score 3-4)	(48) 54.0	(32) 44.3
$\chi^2=4.23, p=0.12$		

Research and Creation

Categories	Caregiver	Not a caregiver
Low (score 0-1)	(15) 9.7	(24) 21.3
Moderate (score 2)	(28) 20.2	(36) 32.3
High (score 3-4)	(58) 70.2	(40) 46.4
$\chi^2= 21.6, p= 0.00^*$		

Community services

Categories	Caregiver	Not a caregiver
Low (score 0-1)	(46) 34.2	(55) 46.6
Moderate (score 2)	(29) 35.9	(30) 30.5
High (score 3-4)	(25) 29.9	(16) 22.9
$\chi^2= 6.10, p=0.05^*$		

Table 7– Comparative tables based on having a disability

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Having a disability	No
Low (score 0-1)	(17) 14.8	(24) 28.89
Moderate (score 2)	(33) 25.9	(41) 20
High (score 3-4)	(50) 59.3	(35) 51.11
$\chi^2 = 2.01, p=0.37$		

Research and Creation

Categories	Having a disability	No
Low (score 0-1)	(20) 13.3	(21) 17.9
Moderate (score 2)	(30) 30.0	(34) 29.6
High (score 3-4)	(50) 56.7	(45) 52.5
$\chi^2 = 0.42, p=0.81$		

Community services

Categories	Having a disability	No
Low (score 0-1)	(39) 42.7	(54) 44.8
Moderate (score 2)	(29) 32.8	(30) 20.7
High (score 3-4)	(32) 24.5	(16) 34.5
$\chi^2 = 2.34, p=0.31$		

Table 8 – Comparative tables based being immunocompromised

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Immonucomp.	No
Low (score 0-1)	(6) 11.8	(27) 18.5
Moderate (score 2)	(49) 29.4	(40) 35.4
High (score 3-4)	(45) 58.8	(33) 46.1
	$\chi^2 = 2.21, p=0.33$	

Research and Creation

Categories	Immonucomp.	No
Low (score 0-1)	(10) 14.3	(22) 17.7
Moderate (score 2)	(28) 17.1	(35) 30.2
High (score 3-4)	(62) 68.6	(43) 52.1
	$\chi^2 = 186.5, p=0.00***$	

Community services

Categories	Immonucomp.	No
Low (score 0-1)	(35) 51.6	(56) 42.2
Moderate (score 2)	(36) 22.6	(28) 32.8
High (score 3-4)	(29) 25.8	(16) 25.1
	$\chi^2 = 1.54, p=0.46$	

Table 9 – Comparative tables based being a single parent.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Single parent	Not a single parent
Low (score 0-1)	(14) 17.4	(22) 18.3
Moderate (score 2)	(45) 30.4	(42) 32.9
High (score 3-4)	(42) 52.2	(35) 48.9
$\chi^2 = 0.62, p = 0.73$		

Research and Creation

Categories	Single parent	Not a single parent
Low (score 0-1)	(6) 4.4	(17) 15.9
Moderate (score 2)	(34) 34.8	(32) 26.9
High (score 3-4)	(58) 60.9	(51) 57.1
$\chi^2 = 2.41, p = 0.30$		

Community services

Categories	Single parent	Not a single parent
Low (score 0-1)	(50) 30.4	(53) 38.7
Moderate (score 2)	(29) 30.4	(28) 33.5
High (score 3-4)	(22) 39.1	(19) 27.8
$\chi^2 = 1.65, p = 0.51$		

Table 10 – Comparative tables based on employment status.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	Non-tenured, Non-continuing	Tenured, Continuing appointment
Low (score 0-1)	(19) 8.0	(26) 20.0
Moderate (score 2)	(42) 32.0	(40) 34.8
High (score 3-4)	(39) 60.0	(35) 45.2
$\chi^2 = 7.42, p = 0.02^*$		

Research and Creation

Categories	Non-tenured, Non-continuing	Tenured, Continuing appointment
Low (score 0-1)	(18) 10.6	(22) 19.5
Moderate (score 2)	(26) 21.3	(35) 29.9
High (score 3-4)	(56) 68.1	(43) 50.5
$\chi^2 = 6.94, p = 0.03^*$		

Community services

Categories	Non-tenured, Non-continuing	Tenured, Continuing appointment
Low (score 0-1)	(45) 39.5	(53) 43.7
Moderate (score 2)	(35) 32.6	(29) 31.7
High (score 3-4)	(20) 27.9	(17) 24.6
$\chi^2 = 0.34, p = 0.85$		

Table 11 – Comparative tables based on age groups.

Numbers in brackets represent the May 2020 survey distribution.

Teaching (professors) / Professional duties (librarians)

Categories	39 under	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 over
Low (score 0-1)	(25) 15.8	(22) 18.9	(24) 16.7	(26) 23.4	(60) 28.6
Moderate (score 2)	(41) 35.1	(39) 27.8	(43) 39.9	(39) 38.3	(33) 28.6
High (score 3-4)	(35) 49.1	(39) 53.3	(33) 43.5	(35) 38.3	(7) 52.8
$\chi^2= 9.08, p= 0.17$					

Research and Creation

Categories	39 under	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 over
Low (score 0-1)	(19) 17.5	(14) 16.0	(26) 17.8	(29) 26.3	(67) 21.4
Moderate (score 2)	(35) 24.6	(31) 21.4	(37) 34.5	(37) 36.3	(27) 42.9
High (score 3-4)	(46) 57.9	(54) 62.6	(38) 47.7	(34) 37.4	(7) 35.7
$\chi^2=18.6, p= 0.00^*$					

Community services

Categories	39 under	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 over
Low (score 0-1)	(56) 51.8	(47) 34.9	(60) 45.4	(49) 50.7	(82) 42.9
Moderate (score 2)	(30) 25.0	(30) 30.8	(25) 32.5	(37) 36.0	(9) 21.4
High (score 3-4)	(13) 23.2	(23) 34.3	(15) 22.1	(14) 13.3	(9) 35.7
$\chi^2=16.7, p= 0.01^*$					

A note on methodology

- A survey to measure the levels of stress caused by work in the context of confinement was deployed to the members of the APUO between the dates of November 18th and November 30th.
- 41% of the APUO members completed the survey. **Table 1** describes the respondents' characteristics.
- χ^2 tests of independence were performed to analyze the relationship between the categorical variables and the stress levels communicated by members. Frequency distributions are shown in the tables. In cases where members indicated "do not want to specify" data was not used to conduct the statistical analysis. Numbers in brackets () in the tables represent the May 2020 survey frequency distributions.