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Study Objectives: For a number of reasons, this past year has exposed vulnerabilities in emergency medicine (EM) as a medical specialty. The decreased demand for emergency physicians - resulting in decreased compensation and job opportunities - may lead to increased stress and burnout among both established physicians and residents. We sought to evaluate and compare faculty and resident views on the changing EM environment and the effect it may have on their future career.

Methods: Full-time faculty and residents at an established, suburban EM residency program were surveyed using an anonymous, online survey program. Participation was voluntary. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1=“Definitely Not,” 5=“Definitely”), participants were asked to rate the following statements: “I have serious concerns about the future for doctors in EM,” “Knowing what I know now, I might have chosen a different specialty,” and “I am concerned about my job prospects/future career.” Both the faculty and residents were also asked what they believe is the biggest threat to EM as a physician specialty. Scores for each question were measured and differences between faculty and resident responses were calculated with 95% confidence intervals (CI).

Results: 20 (77%) faculty physicians and 21 (78%) resident physicians completed the survey. For “I have serious concerns about the future for doctors in EM,” faculty rated 4.2 and residents rated 4.6 (difference 0.4, CI: 0.1, 0.6). For “Knowing what I know now, I might have chosen a different specialty,” faculty rated 1.9 and residents rated 2.7 (difference 0.8, CI: 0.1, 1.4, p<0.05). For “I am concerned about my job prospects/future career,” faculty rated 2.9 and residents rated 4.6 (difference 1.8, CI: 0.9, 2.6, p<0.05). The results showed that 40% of faculty and 76% of residents identified the “increased use of NPs and PAs” as the biggest threat to EM as a physician specialty (difference 36%, CI: 5, 67, p<0.05), while 45% of faculty and 14% of residents identified the “increased EM residencies” as the biggest threat (difference -31%, CI: -1, -61, p<0.05).

Conclusion: Both faculty and residents have serious concerns about the future of emergency medicine. It is understandable that residents, with their financial instability and lack of establishment in the community, may have more concerns.