

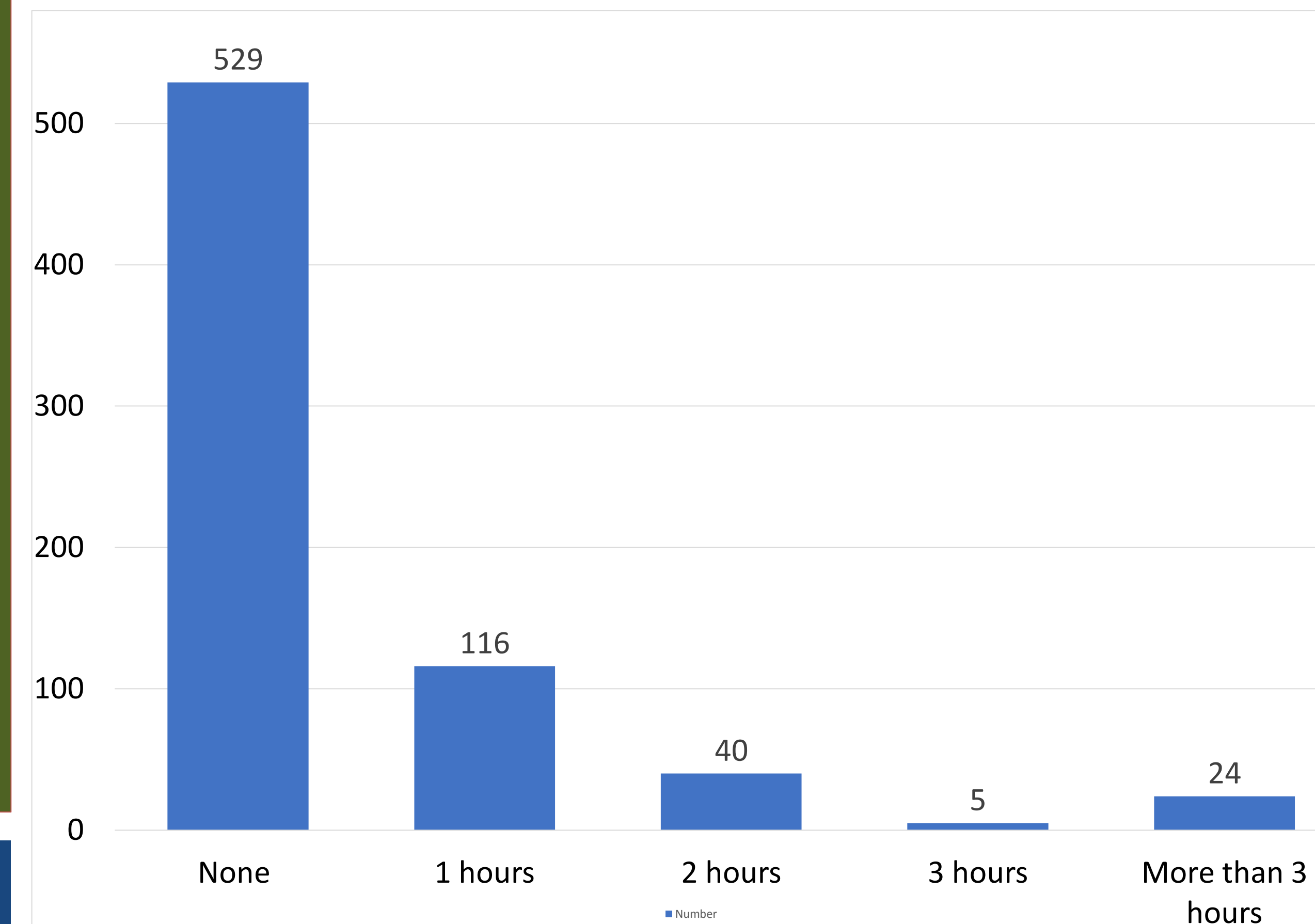
# Impact of COVID-19 on UK Foundation Doctors: Education and Safety

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## BACKGROUND:

Transmission of a novel coronavirus (SARS-COV2) from China has caused a global pandemic, resulting in an unprecedented burden on healthcare systems worldwide. Transmission to the UK was confirmed on 31st January 2020,<sup>5, 6</sup> with the first death on 5th March 2020. With rising incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates, appropriate training and support is paramount in safeguarding the wellbeing of frontline NHS staff and patients.

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**Figure 1**  
Number of training hours received from foundation schools regarding COVID-19

## RESULTS:

714 doctors answered with 55% of respondents in Foundation Year 2 (FY2), 42.7% in Foundation Year 1 (FY1), and 2.3% above FY2 level. Data was collected from all 18 UK Foundation Schools. Mean confidence was 84% in diagnosing COVID-19, and 56% in managing it. 75% did not receive formal training on the requisite safety precautions for suspected COVID-19 cases.

## DISCUSSION:

This survey gathered responses over a one-week period, thereby minimising data heterogeneity, which may have resulted from changes in training provision as Trusts responded to the evolving circumstances. Similar responses in all domains of the survey from its inception to closure evidence this, enabling analysis of responses collectively.

Demographics	Number of respondents (%)
Department	
Emergency Medicine	56 (10.11)
Acute Medicine	53 (9.57)
Cardiology	16 (2.89)
Respiratory	26 (4.69)
Gastroenterology	13 (2.35)
Elderly Care/ Geriatrics	48 (8.66)
Rheumatology	3 (0.54)
Oncology	8 (1.44)
Palliative Care	3 (0.54)
Intensive Care Medicine	18 (3.25)
General Surgery	99 (17.87)
Orthopaedic Surgery	23 (4.15)
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	22 (3.97)
Ophthalmology	3 (0.54)
Dermatology	1 (0.18)
General Practice	32 (5.78)
Nephrology	12 (2.17)
Other	118 (21.30)

**Figure 2**  
Demographics of respondents showing specialties of respondents

## METHODS:

The cross-sectional survey was designed online using the website SurveyMonkey®. It was distributed to Foundation Doctors across the 18 UK Foundation Schools. The survey opened on 15th March 2020 and closed on 23rd March 2020.

## CONCLUSIONS:

The absence of standardised formal training on COVID-19 for Foundation doctors is remediable through the design and implementation of an urgent national training programme. Training must address: diagnosis and management of COVID-19; safe and effective PPE use; mandatory fit testing; and in the event of failed fit tests, provision of suitable alternatives with appropriate training. Trusts should actively screen for vulnerable doctors and provide additional support and guidance, which may take the form of enhanced PPE training; redeployment to lower risk clinical areas; advice on self-isolation; and guidance on the impact on Foundation training progression. Greater effort to support, educate, and protect trainees will strengthen the NHS and safeguard its patients in the face of this unprecedented challenge.