**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Clinical research teams working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic have remained highly productive, according to the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development**

***Feelings of burnout and being disconnected are present and may grow if not addressed***

BOSTON — September 9, 2021 — While the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated many other sectors, the drug development industry has remained highly productive.

In a new study led by the [Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development](https://csdd.tufts.edu/) (CSDD), members of clinical research teams involved in the development of new drugs reported that despite having to shift to remote operating models, 43% report that productivity is unchanged since the pandemic began and 35% report that their productivity has increased.

However, several negative effects were associated with remote working, with more than half (55%) of drug development professionals reporting job burnout and 42% reporting deteriorated connections with colleagues.

Tufts CSDD, in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute (Gates MRI), undertook the study to better understand how organizations, in response to the global health crisis, managed their workloads and sustained development activities while operating remotely.

With input from 26 public and private sector organizations, Tufts CSDD and Gates MRI developed an online survey asking clinical research team members across the globe about their experiences with remote work. A total of 344 professionals responded to the survey in early 2021.

Clinical research professionals from more than 50 countries across five continents responded, with more than half living in the U.S. or Canada. Sixty percent of respondents work in pharmaceutical/biotechnical companies, 22% in contract research organizations (CRO) or vendor companies, 14% at academic medical centers or research institutions, and 4% at other types of organizations, such as government agencies, non-profits, and patient advocacy groups.

“It is widely recognized that the drug development enterprise adapted quickly to the pandemic, with strong support from the regulatory community, by embracing novel clinical trial designs, establishing open collaborations, and deploying remote and hybrid clinical trial solutions,” said Ken Getz, MBA, director and professor of Tufts CSDD, and a lead author of the study. “The results of our study provide a richer picture into how organizations adapted, what steps were taken and provisions offered, and the impact on clinical team attitudes and experiences.”

“High levels of self-reported productivity is good news,” added Mary Jo **Lamberti,** PhD, research assistant professor and associate director at Tufts CSDD, and a lead author. “But our study also detected high levels of burnout and perceptions of being less connected with colleagues. These conditions may grow over time, negatively impacting productivity in the longer term, unless the industry takes steps to address them.”

Study results, highlighted in the September/October *Tufts CSDD Impact Report*, released today, include the following:

* **In general, working remotely, did not impact the productivity of clinical research efforts.** Some 43% of survey respondents indicated that their productivity was unchanged since the pandemic began and 35% reported increased productivity.
* **An overwhelming majority of clinical research professionals were satisfied with their organization’s transition to remote work****.** 93% said they were ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’satisfied with the responsiveness and preparedness of their organizations.
* **Most professionals report that their organizations provided sufficient resources to enable remote work.** The vast majority of respondents received computing and communications support. Notable gaps included paid access to high-speed internet and external computer monitors.
* **Burnout was attributed to frequency of virtual meetings**. Burnout was also attributed to added work responsibilities, variability and uncertainty in work demands, restlessness, and one’s physical environment.
* **Most respondents want to see remote work continue in the future.** The majority (86%) indicated support for their organization’s current remote model and nearly 90% reported that they were “extremely” or “somewhat” likely to support a mostly remote work model post-pandemic.

**ABOUT THE TUFTS CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DRUG DEVELOPMENT**

The Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development at Tufts University School of Medicine is dedicated to optimizing drug development performance and efficiency through robust data-driven assessment, analysis, and insight. A multi-disciplinary center based in Boston, Tufts CSDD conducts scholarly research, hosts symposia, workshops, and public forums, and publishes the *Tufts CSDD Impact Report,* a bi-monthly newsletter providing analysis and insight into critical drug development issues. For more information, visit csdd@tufts.edu or contact Luna Rodriguez at Luna.Rodriguez@tufts.edu.

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Contacts: Tufts University

 Luna Rodriguez – 617-636-2170

 Luna.Rodriguez@tufts.edu