

# COVID IN COBBS CREEK

In order to study the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on everyday experience in the historically under-resourced West Philadelphia neighborhood of Cobbs Creek, researchers are using remote qualitative methods. In mid-April at the height of the pandemic, it was unclear how quotidian experiences in underserved communities were being affected by the response to COVID-19 across the nation. Although there have been biological advancements in terms of medicalizing COVID-19, there have been fewer attempts to study community response and human behavior during the pandemic. More specifically, there is some evidence to support lacking responses to the pandemic in underserved American communities. The ensuing research question being investigated is "How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the everyday experience in Cobbs Creek?" The study seeks to identify patterns of experience across a variety of members of the Cobbs Creek (and West Philadelphia) communities. Specifically, three groups of interest were identified by researchers: a.) essential/nonessential business owners b.) healthcare workers or c.) current residents. This study was designed in collaboration with the community outreach/liaison staff at the Sayre Health Center, the management staff of the health center, and the board of the health center. Through remote, semi-structured telephone interviews, researchers have identified emergent patterns such as a newfound reliance upon new support systems, new social stigmas, and inconsistent access to resources such as public transportation and supplies. Researchers have used purely remote recruitment and coordination, revealing new values and limitations in the virtual space.

## Methods

- Social media and Sayre community liaison led remote recruitment.
- 60 minute, semi-structured interviews conducted through phone calls.
- Participants separated into 3 subcategories:
  1. Business Community Members
  2. Healthcare Workers
  3. Self-Identified Residents

## Impact of Virtuality

Internally, remote research has led to efficient organizational systems, but building team expectations has been challenging. Recruiting participants has been a slower than anticipated process, because of the remote nature. While interviewing, the absence of body language and the increased importance of intonation has become a new normal in the virtual environment.

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## Intermediary Findings

- Shifts in sources of emotional support.
- Ordinarily accepted tasks garnered new social meaning.
- Shortages in supplies, such as food and personal protective equipment, leading to heightened emotions regarding COVID-19.
- Growing mistrust in public transportation.

