



# THE SCOPE

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Is working from home a better arrangement for parents of children with cancer?



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Working from home has become a norm in Singapore to minimise the spread of COVID-19 infections. How have parents of children with cancer been impacted by this new work arrangement? Read our findings from *Riding Through The Pandemic (RTTP)*, elaborating on this issue. You can also find tips on conducting efficient online surveys!

By Zach Lee

# Work-from-home arrangements : Boon or Bane for parents of children with cancer during the pandemic?

(Findings from RTTP study. View Vol. 4 here for more details on RTTP →)



In recent literature, studies have found that parents who worked from home faced an increased level of stress.



## These parents were...

Our study found that among parents of children with cancer, parents who continued working from home were less impacted than parents who were required to continue to work on site.



Less financially impacted



Less overwhelmed by COVID-19 related information



Less stressed from caregiving responsibilities

## 1 Nature of jobs which allowed parents to continue working from home

These jobs have **greater stability and benefits** during the pandemic. They allowed parents to have **greater flexibility in time and space** for caregiving responsibilities.

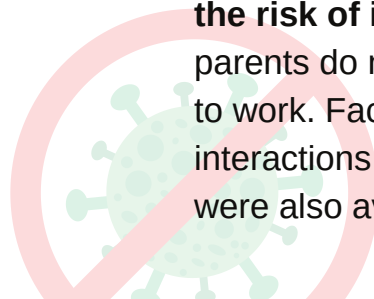


Some potential reasons why parents who worked from home were less affected by the pandemic



Risk of infection

Working from home **reduced the risk of infection** as parents do not need to travel to work. Face-to-face social interactions in the workplace were also avoided.



## 3

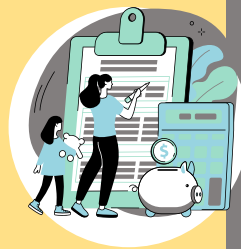
The caregiving experience of parents of children with cancer may have been altered with the introduction of work from home arrangements.

Studies have suggested that **parents appreciate flexible work arrangements** when it is supported by their employers.<sup>1,2</sup>

Managing both work and caregiving at the same time can be overwhelming.



Work provided a **positive counterbalance** to caregiving responsibilities. Work also helped parents to maintain their income to **cope with the additional financial burden** of cancer treatment.



It is important to note that parents who worked from home were also more likely to have -



A domestic helper to assist with household chores



Higher education level



Higher household income during COVID-19

These characteristics could have played a part in explaining some of the differences in the caregiving experiences between these two groups of parents.

Our study has helped us understand how working from home could potentially benefit parents of children with cancer. Existing literature also suggests that flexible work arrangements can provide the resources and space for these families. Therefore, employers can better support parents of children with cancer by providing them with greater work flexibility even after the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. McCubbin, M., Bailing, K., Possin, P., Frierdich, S., & Bryne, B. (2002). Family Resiliency in Childhood Cancer. *Family Relations*, 51(2), 103-111.
2. Brody, A. C., & Simmons, L. A. (2007). Family Resilience During Childhood Cancer: The Father's Perspective. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, 24(3), 152-165.

# Online Survey Tips:

## Creating Efficient Surveys



### Crafting questions

1. Ask one question at a time. Avoid double barrelled questions.



E.g. Did you enjoy this programme and would you recommend it to your friends?

This question assumed that there is a **correlation** between enjoying the programme and recommendation to others.

Respondents may be **confused** if they have different answers for both issues. Hence, results of the survey may have been inaccurate.

Instead, **separate** them into two questions -  
1) Did you enjoy this programme?  
2) Would you recommend it to your friends?



Make use of the online survey features!

2. Designating required questions and/or apply skip logic.

**DO NOT PROCEED**

Set a question as 'required' and your respondent(s) would need to give an answer before proceeding to the next question.



Try **not to** make every question a required question as it may discourage participants from completing the survey if they constantly face questions which they are not able to answer.



### What is skip logic?

E.g. if Participant A has indicated that he/she does not have children, the skip logic will ensure that this participant will not see questions meant for parents with children.

*In our RTTP study, we had a number of questions that only applied to certain groups of participants. Skip logic was also implemented to improve the flow of the survey. If every question was presented to all participants, they may...*



Feel confused, especially if they were constantly asked questions which they were unable to answer.

Exit the survey as they feel that the survey does not apply to them.



## Pilot your study!



Provide false answers to complete the survey.

This process will help to refine and improve your survey before rolling out to the intended targeted audience.

Approach people who are similar but not in your target group to pilot the survey



Gather feedback on their experiences



Track the amount of time taken to complete the survey



The purpose of the pilot study is to find out -

- Were there questions or terms that were confusing?
- Were there repetitive questions?
- Was the survey too long and time-consuming?
- Did the skip logic work as planned?

Tracking the duration needed to complete an online survey is easier with platforms such as SurveyMonkey or Typeform.

## Device limitation: Screen size

Participants may use a variety of electronic devices to attempt an online survey.



Ensure that your questions can be easily viewed across a variety of devices.



Avoid overloading a single screen with too much information.



In RTTP survey, participants were asked to rotate their screen to the landscape orientation if they were on their mobile phones. This was to ensure that all the information was displayed on their screens when they attempt a specific section.



This allowed us to ensure that the participants had an easier time reading the information. It also reduces the potential problems participants may face while attempting the survey.



## Before sending your survey...

Draft a persuasive invitation to encourage and attract participation. State the purpose of the survey, why you need their participation and incentives (if any). Keep it short and straightforward!

### Choose an appropriate time!

Surveys should be sent out at periods where it is convenient for participants to be able to complete it immediately (e.g. lunch break, after work hours).



## Send reminders!

A text or email can be easily overlooked. If your survey is open for two weeks, send a reminder after the first week to encourage participation.



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## THANK YOU!

We hope that you've enjoyed reading this issue of The Scope. The Scope is published bi-annually, providing you with exclusive insights into our latest research studies in a digestible format. Through sharing these bite-sized research findings, we hope that we can make research relating to childhood cancer more accessible to everyone.

If you are interested to read about our studies in greater detail, please reach out to us via email.