

**Title: Fostering a culture of research mentorship**

**Affiliation:** Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases and HIV Medicine.

**Mission category:** Research

**Background:** Mentorship is important for guidance, personal growth and career advancement. In medical research, mentorship builds the researcher's capacity, skills and ability to obtain funding, to publish and be connected with other experts in one's field of interest. In the Department of Medicine at the Drexel College of Medicine, challenges exist that undermine the development of a successful mentorship environment. The lack of a mentorship leads to lack of scholarship and productivity and eventually poor morale. This study seeks to identify unmet needs, in regards to mentorship, of faculty interested in research, and seeks to explore the mentorship infrastructure best suited to meet the needs of faculty in the Department of Medicine.

**Methods:** As a first step, we summarized the results of two surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019 detailing the challenges facing faculty looking to undertake scientific research in the Department of Medicine. Based on the results of these consecutive surveys, qualitative interviews will be conducted to further elaborate on the challenges and possible solutions faced by the researchers.

**Results:** In a Department of Medicine 2018 survey of its research advisory and faculty development committee members, faculty reported a lack of solid mentorship structure and felt that this was a great impediment to their involvement in research. The survey also found that early career investigators needed more professional and technical support to effectively undertake research and meet projected outcomes. In a follow-up online survey in March 2019 it was reported that even though 64.7% of faculty surveyed were involved in research only 23.53% had a mentor. Also 88.5% of those surveyed reported that they would like to have a mentor.

**Discussion:** Based on the above results we propose to conduct a series of qualitative interviews with both junior researchers and senior faculty to identify the major challenges and possible solutions to improve the current mentorship culture. The initial phase of the interviews will provide greater insight on the barriers to mentorship at Drexel. The second phase of interviews will propose solutions to foster greater mentorship opportunities in the department. The results of this series

of interviews will be used to propose different structural mentorship models that can foster a dynamic mentorship culture within the department of medicine.



# Fostering a Culture of Research Mentorship

Florence Momplaisir MD MSHP FACP on behalf of the Drexel Faculty Launch Program  
Drexel University College of Medicine



## Background

- Mentorship is important for guidance, personal growth and career advancement.
- In medical research, mentorship builds the mentee’s skills and ability to obtain funding, to publish and be connected with other experts.
- At the Drexel College of Medicine, challenges exist that undermine the development of a successful mentorship environment.
- Lack of a mentorship leads to lack of scholarship and productivity and eventually poor morale.
- This study seeks to identify unmet needs, in regards to mentorship, of faculty interested in research, and seeks to explore the mentorship infrastructure best suited to meet the needs of faculty in the Department of Medicine.

## Methods

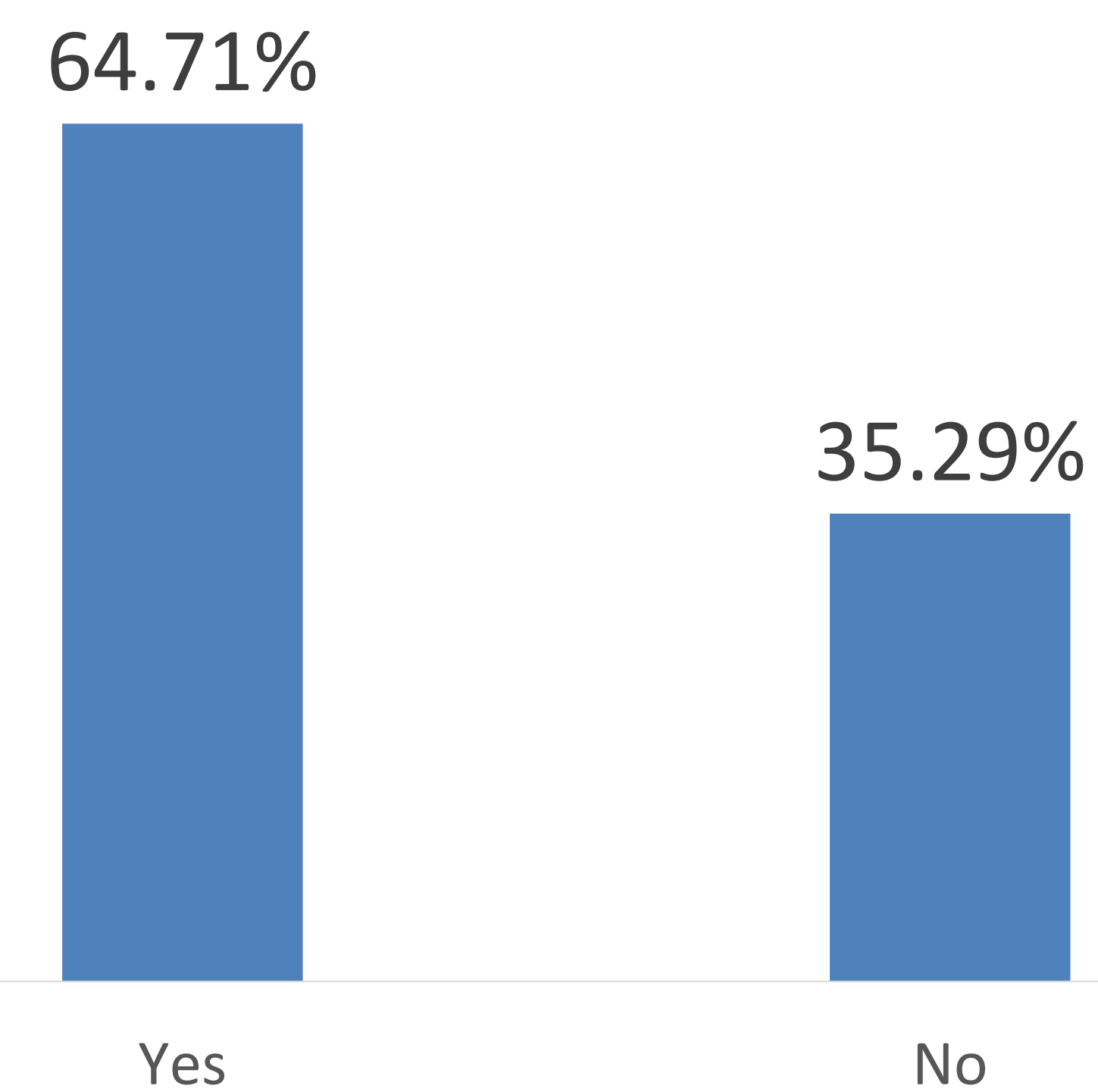
- The Department of Medicine surveyed their faculty in 2018 and 2019 in an effort to assess the needs of faculty interested in research.
- The first survey was a questionnaire sent electronically in 2018 to all Department of Medicine faculty.
- The second survey was administered in 2019 and targeted a smaller cohort of faculty interested in research.
- Both surveys included questions on the general research environment, barriers and facilitators in engaging in research and needs of faculty interested in research.
- Here, we summarized the results of both surveys and reports answers related to mentorship.

## Results

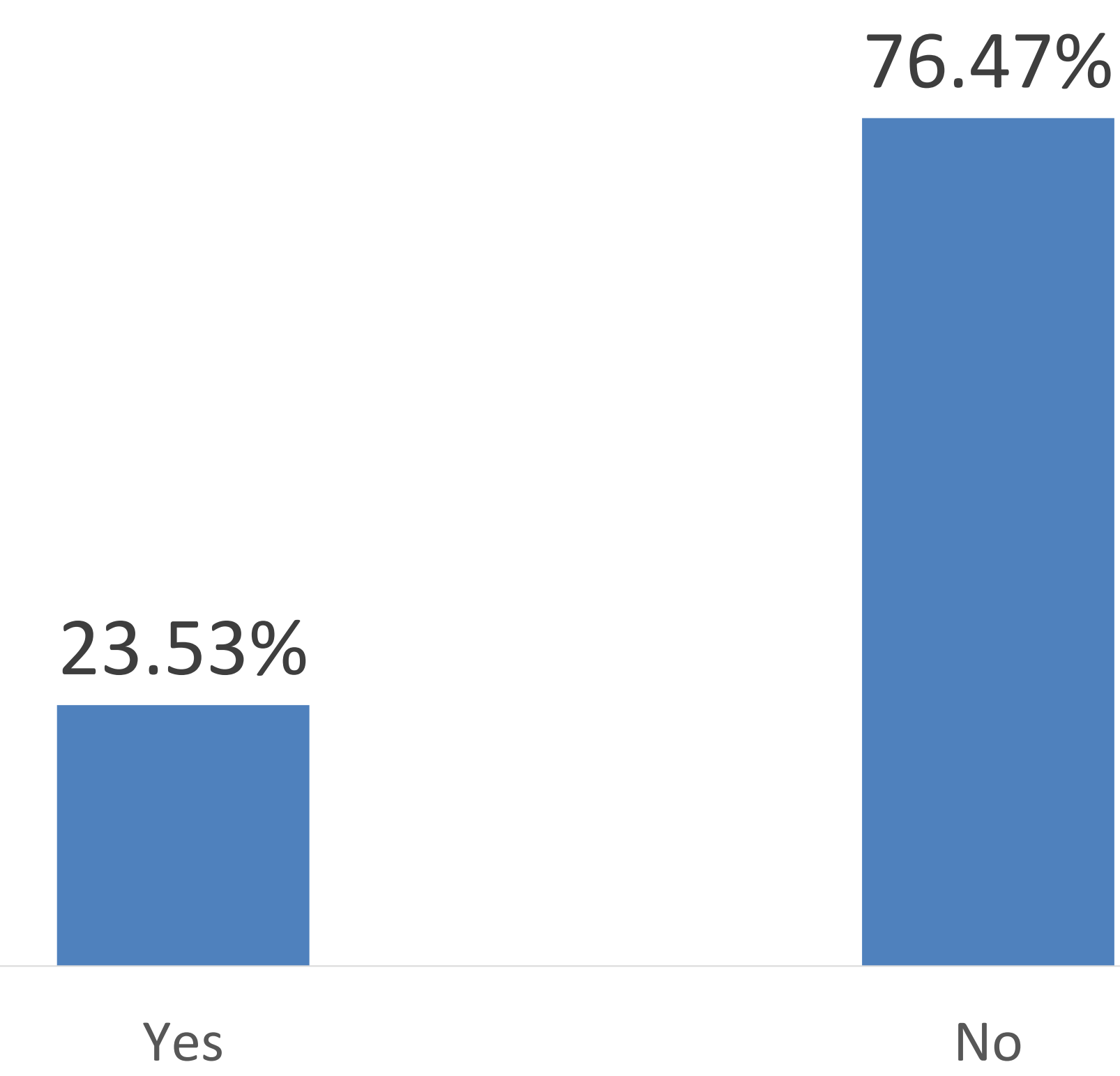
- **GENERAL FINDINGS**
- The total number of participants for the 2018 survey was not reported but all Department of Medicine Faculty were targeted.
- The 2019 survey included 17 respondents. Demographic data on the respondents is not currently available.
- In both surveys, respondents reported their needs under 3 broad categories:
  - 1) Need for mentorship
  - 2) Need to improve the infrastructure for research, particularly to support early career faculty
  - 3) Need for opportunities to foster cross-collaboration and faculty development

### FINDINGS SPECIFIC TO MENTORSHIP

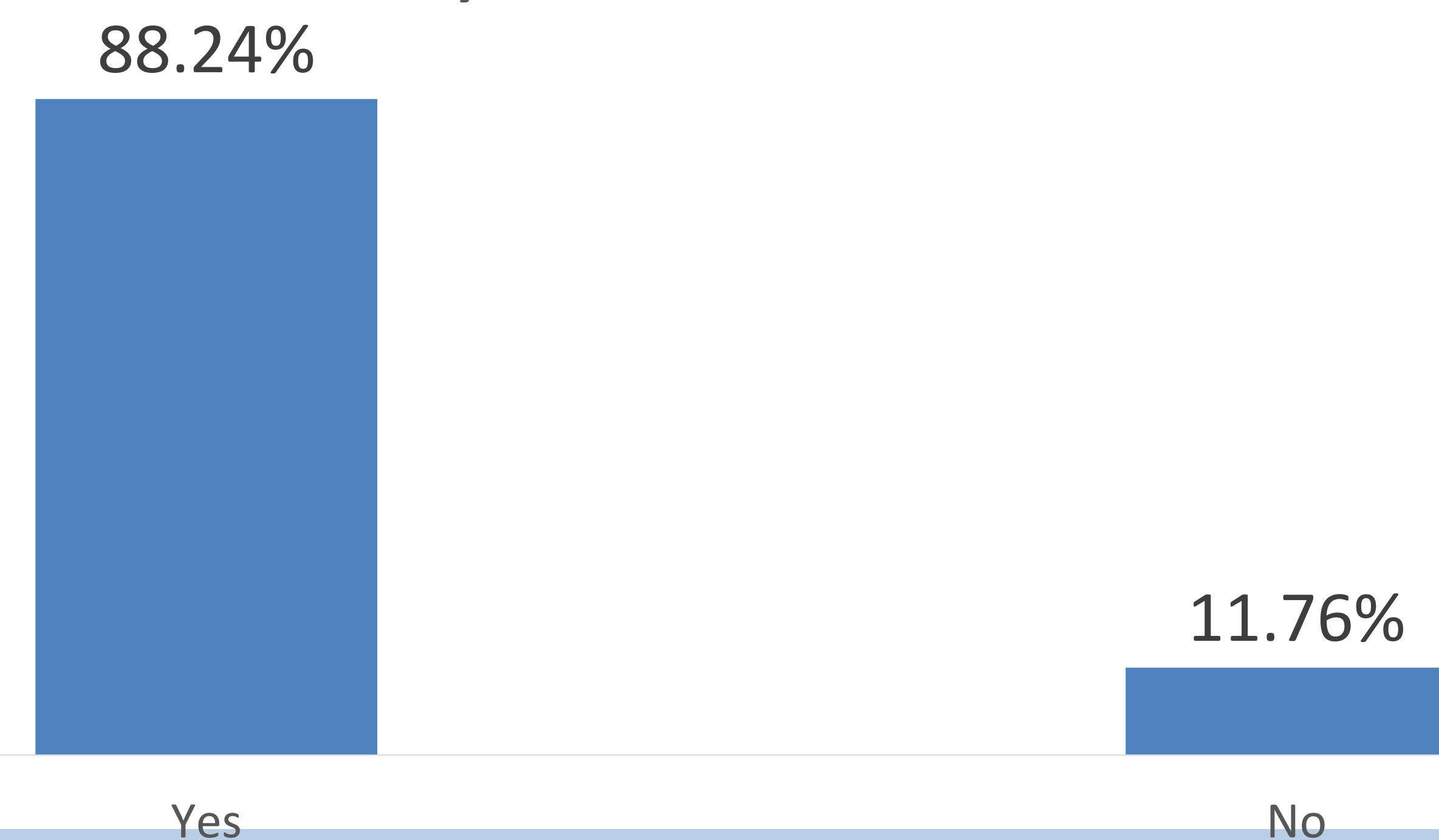
Do you currently participate in research of any kind?



Do you have a mentor?



Would you like to have a mentor?



## Quotes from surveys

- “Mentorship in research, my training was not research heavy and I’m often lost in the steps I need to take”
- “A mentor to show me and encourage me to continue despite the many obstacles I am certain to encounter”.
- “We have a robust research that no one knows about and we need to collaborate and have more open discussions about what everyone is doing. We need a point person at each level, division, department, colleges to be designated as the go to person for research.”
- “ Excellent ideas need mentoring and resources. Time commitment.”
- “A mentor to guide me and encourage me to continue despite the many obstacles I am certain to encounter.”

## Discussion

- The need for mentorship was a strong theme that was raised by many faculty in the surveys.
- Less than a quarter of individuals engaging in research reported having a mentor and over 80% reported needing mentorship.
- **FUTURE DIRECTION:**
- Conduct qualitative interviews and focus groups to better:
  - assess barriers specific to mentorship
  - come up with solutions to meet the needs of faculty regarding mentorship
  - foster an environment for collaboration and professional satisfaction

## Contact Information

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## References

1. Department of Medicine 2018 faculty survey
2. Retreat follow-up survey *Envisioning the future of our research mission in the department of medicine*

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