

Objective: Recently, trauma surgical researchers have witnessed diminished funding support, more onerous study regulations and increased clinical obligations. The impact of these factors on research productivity and quality are unclear. The purpose of this study is to characterize current research practices, opinions on research quality and barriers to academic productivity, expressed by EAST members. **Methods:** A 22 question survey tool was developed. All 824 members in the east-mail database were invited to complete the survey electronically. Questions on responder demographics, current and past research experience, perceptions of research quality trends and barriers to academic success were included. **Results:** Response rate was 38%. The mean age of respondents was 45 with 73% reporting completion of a critical care fellowship and 63% practicing in a university setting. Recent participation in multi-institutional research was reported by 63%. The vast majority agreed or strongly agreed that both basic science (75%) and clinical (82%) research have become more difficult to perform. Greater difficulty in obtaining funding from their institutions was reported by 69% and by 61% for industry or private sources. Approximately 70% agreed that increasing IRB regulations, confidentiality and consent requirements have impeded their research efforts while 86% agreed that increasing clinical requirements have inhibited their research efforts. Factors seen as impeding multi-institutional research, in order, were: funding, IRB issues, poor coordination, commitment of investigators and logistics. Personal motivation to perform research was reported to be diminished by 39% and not diminished by 61%. Perceived barriers to a successful research career were: insufficient protected time (42%), funding (25%), personal motivation (11%) and IRB issues (11%). Half of respondents agreed there is a trend of decreasing quality in presented research over the past 5 years. For the same period, 73% of respondents reported their number of peer-reviewed publications to be decreased or unchanged while 81% reported the same trend for their submission of grant proposals .

Conclusion: There is overwhelming agreement among EAST members that conducting research has become more difficult. The primary barriers to research productivity are perceived to be decreased protected time, decreased funding availability and increased regulatory requirements.