Large grants proposals development: making dreams come true
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OBJECTIVES: Assess and compare sources of stress and ways to alleviate stress during large grant proposal preparation for investigators and research developers (RDs). A large proposal is defined here as a proposal with multiple collaborators and over a couple of millions $ value.

APPROACH: Survey investigators and RDs

RESULTS: Responses: Investigators (n=65) RDs (n=37)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:
1. Investigators and RDs experienced anxiety sometimes while working on grants
2. In the past 3 years, investigators submitted 2-3 large grant proposals and RDs over 20
3. Investigators and RDs experienced stress while working on large proposals: all (n=23 and n=10) or some (n=18 and n=27)
4. Stress sources for investigators were, in order, complexity of the proposal, short turnaround time, and teaching, whereas for RDs they were short turnaround time, unresponsive team of investigators, difficult PI, and complexity of the proposal
5. To reduce stress, investigators would like, in order, help from their departments and RDs, not to teach, and start early, and RDs would like to work with a team of investigators who respond in a timely manner, start early, and work with an experienced team leader.

SUGGESTIONS FROM RDs FOR MINIMIZING STRESS INCLUDE: creating timelines, checklists, and false deadlines; PI should have a clear vision at the start; good communication e.g. set expectations and assign tasks and responsibilities; and delegate day to day work when a large proposal is due.