Guidelines for Individuals and Communities (Including Research & Scientists) in Confinement amid COVID-19,

GUIDELINES and KEY CONSIDERATIONS

ĐIỀU KIỆN XÁC NHẬN: Hướng dẫn và cân nhắc quan trọng

TREOIRLÍNTE AGUS PRÍOMH-CHOMHDHLÚTHÚ

ہدایات اور کلیدی تحفظات

CONDIZIONE DI CONFINAMENTO: Linee guida e considerazioni chiave

CONDITION DE CONFINEMENT: Directives et considérations clés

The 5 facts in a Pandemic that do not need to be explained

Adapting quickly and efficiently to the procedures and recommendations indicated during a health emergency like a global pandemic is crucial not only for preserving personal health but also for having a good balance between family relationships and job responsibilities.

The first fact that does not need to be explained is that in a health emergency (i.e. a breakout, an epidemic or a pandemic), the health system is the main point of concern.

The second fact is that the risk in a health emergency is shared, this means that it is the responsibility of everyone to help in reducing the negative effects during and after the health emergency occurs.

The third fact is that governments and health organisations are not responsible for the pandemic, but they help to be prepared, cope with the pandemic and manage the consequences.

The fourth fact is that even if the pandemic looks like it is already under control, there is always a risk for new outbreaks, thus some of the procedures related to keep the health of individuals used to stop the pandemic shall be adopted for longer terms and the contingency methods shall be in place to prevent it.

The last but not least fact is that in a global Pandemic, all efforts will never be enough to avoid and/or contain the escalation and it is extremely important to have good procedures for handling the post-pandemic effects.

Key aspects to pay attention amid COVID-19 and Guidelines:

A Awareness for unexpected things and unreliable information

In a pandemic outbreak it is well known that all informative channels for the community, health organisations and the basic industrial activities (also known as primary services industry) will continue in operation and practically they will only focus on alleviating the effects of the health emergency by maintaining the basic services/needs objectively. Many activities will be disrupted, society will be affected in their normal operation, information is not an exception and here there are some guidelines for better understanding and handle the situation:

- *Give priority to the contextual information for better understanding, not all is true!.*
- *before judging, Identify reliable sources for consistent and verified information to avoid panic.*
- *Review information from several trusted sources to ensure their concordance.*
- *Only follow up with official communications and trusted channels for reliable information.*
- *Avoid the use of social networks as a source for validating facts.*

B Brain Healthy by maintaining social touch with colleagues and people

There are numerous references to professional methodologies and therapies on how to manage the sensibility and stress effects. In extreme cases of stress and anxiety the help of professionals in human conduct is required. However in confinement conditions it is important to consider that in no other place you and your loved ones will be safer, restrictions to mobility and being confined if not isolated, in some cases may influence very negatively, particularly if you are alone and do not have people surrounding you. However even in those conditions staying at home is the best way to help yourself and many other people and it also should be considered that at any time the anxiety may increase. The following are guidelines for maintaining your social contact with colleagues and other people:

- *Exercise positive communication practices by being in touch regularly with relatives.*
- *Prepare yourself by dressing up as normal (even if it is only half body up) is important.*
- *Video conference at least once a week with unit colleagues and close friends using video.*
- *Chat and conference calls are important, use them less frequently for other colleagues and friends and not necessarily through video sharing (phone calls, emails, texts, etc.)*
- *Use those opportunities to exchange funny experiences and avoid talking on COVID-19.*

C Create your temporal/semi-permanent working space

Having a dedicated workspace at home, specially paying attention to the location and separation (even if it is within the same home space) facilitates a change in mind when entering that place. In a personal workspace, each person must be able to separate activities and get the correct space to execute their work, sometimes a simple label or a symbol to differentiate the working spaces from other areas is a simple activity that can define a change in attitude and motivation to do activities more efficiently. The following are guidelines for setting up your working place:

- Define a place where you can think differently, even for short periods, this is crucial.
- Make sure that other people in the home environment respect that space.
- All equipment concentrated in that space helps to minimise the risk of wandering.
- Insulate the space from noise and people transhumance (with very little people passage)
- Establish working time when you cannot be disturbed and times when you are freely accessible.

D Decisions must take wisely and maintain good communication

Researchers and scientists can have high levels of stress, generated by having big responsibilities not only for themselves and their activity but also for their families and for the community.

In cases of health emergency like the COVID-19, where there is no pattern or an identified way to treat the origin (i.e. virus) and effects of the emergency the following are recommendations to alleviate the levels of stress:

- It is important to communicate quick results with the most accurate and valid information.
- Talk with your expert colleagues in a daily basis to clear your mind and be more effective.
- Take continuous breaks, this helps to relax and control your levels of stress.
- Define short goals and take confident decisions to progress your scientific activity.
- In this period high levels of uncertainty and anxiety are expected, take a short plans action.

E Exercise Proactiveness, balance personal and professional activities

The implications of working from home can affect the productivity and motivation of your work, positive or negative independently on what kind of people you are, (i.e. type 1) a person that considers working is necessary for living or type 2) people that consider working is life). Two facts that working from home will definitely change are, first the time you can or cannot dedicate to other people, and second you will need to define your strategy and philosophy for working, involving the member(s) of your family or other people sharing space with you. The following are guidelines towards keeping balance between personal and professional activities at home:

- Define a daily routine (start-end time) and follow it as if you are working at the office.
- Select and define the priorities, but it is highly advisable that personal stands out over work.
- Develop methods to respect the requirements of others who live with you.
- Talk with other people who are also working remotely to have concurrent working hours to limit the strain on the non-working people.
- Assign time for you and your family and define your priorities based on their demands and always try keeping a good atmosphere at home and a tidy place for work.
- Positive results will only happen if personal issues are first resolved then work issues.

F Find your place and your participation role

The following are some guidelines for finding your place and define your participation role.
In a health emergency it is important to understand that there will be front liners where individuals will be directly invited to participate, others will work in the background with similar

or even more important functions than the front liners, and many others (majority) will remain performing the daily activities which are equally important than the others, simply because the outbreak circumstances are exceptional and keeping the day to day activities in continuous progress will help not only the mental health of individuals but also progress towards minimizing the side effects of the health emergency. Everybody plays an important role:

- *Understand your particular role in any situation and under particular circumstances.*
- *Ensure that the required tools and equipment are accessible to fulfil your assigned role.*
- *Keep information up to date to adapt your activities so they are still relevant.*
- *Ensure that the activities are relevant to the problem at hand.*
- *Think about the impact of your activity and not just the effects of the activity.*

G Good Ideas and work must be kept avoiding overload

It is a good practice in health emergency and particularly under confinement conditions to be able to limit the number of ideas to prevent overloading your activities discovering that only will limit your efficiency or simply will make you lost the objective distracting you from your work. The following are some guidelines to reduce the overload of good ideas:

- *Ideas are necessary to keep motivation but limit them to be able to address the objectives that are defined by your work and original activities before the confinement.*
- *It is necessary to consciously develop a new routine to manage the required workload and pay attention to address the new idea(s), perhaps have an ideas time in the mornings only.*
- *Keep the new routine as close to the structure of the old routine and avoid mixing with current activities and define time frames to work on the ideas separately.*
- *Make sure that the new ideas are relevant to the assigned activities and*
- *Do not interfere with old ideas already implemented and look forward to the new work.*

H Health is first, Redefine activities and priorities

A good practice is to set in first order activities that can be resolved fast (even if they are not critical in the plan) first be confident that if an emergency happen the plans can be moved or delayed thus at least you will have those activities done, then set in second plane the activities that demands more efforts, because working full time from home will give you an advantage to have work done that cannot be affected by a health emergency and then the last is that work that need special equipment like in a laboratory for later. Thus while the main priority will be to resolve those activities and tasks that require it to be done imminently delay those activities that demand more time to be done or that require special equipment. The following are guidelines for redefining activities and priorities:

- *Health is first, during an health emergency, list all your activities and identify priorities*
- *Family is first and first priority to work activities rely on activities that can be resolved fast*
- *My work is first under full time working from home if it can be done remotely.*
- *Activities that are priority under working conditions may be delayed in a health emergency.*
- *Be aware to be able to adapt to new circumstances due to the evolving information.*

I Information, digital security and data protection

A mayor point to consider when working from home is digital security, if it is true at office there are security mechanism and data protection protocols at the home these conditions may not exist or at least be so efficient. The good practices are to avoid using your own devices to access the work network, any measure is minimal, firewalls, anti-virus software, encryption, and other forms of software protection are considering acting safe.

- Time to learn basic security polices, if not already use your time to learn some.
- Not everything in digital security and data protection is common sense, ask for help if needed.
- Avoid public WiFi and use your own WiFi network ensuring password is not shared.
- Enable security protocols to all your devices for personal use and work .

Additional Sources of information

The Psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence
In this document a review of the psychological impact of quarantine is explained using three electronic databases. Most reviewed studies reported negative psychological effects including post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion, and anger. Some results suggest long-lasting effects. When confinement is deemed necessary, officials should quarantine individuals for no longer than required, provide clear rationale for quarantine and information about protocols, and ensure sufficient supplies are provided, you can see full text here:
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30460-8/fulltext

Science-ing from home: Live by example and stay focused and Keep distance, but keep socializing
In this short publication a couple of articles are presented looking at the different aspects of laboratory closures triggered by COVID-19 explaining briefly how scientists were affected by the shutdowns and outlining the tools they are using to run their research groups remotely, you can see full text here: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00935-3

American Psychology Association (APA) - COVID-19 collection of initiatives and activities
The APA has consolidated all of its ongoing COVID-19 coverage on its COVID-19 Information and Resources special section. This section is continuously updated with all new articles throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes links to all the articles listed and the different information included can be accessed here:
https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/pandemics

Suffering from COVID-19 anxiety? Here's what you can do
A personal view from a researcher suffering anxiety being aware that COVID-19 is affecting and how seeking for help over a practicing psychiatrist helped. This short article provides a new lens to view problems as well as concrete steps that can be taken to improve mental

health. You can see full text here: https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2020/04/suffering-covid-19-anxiety-here-s-what-you-can-do

How early-career scientists are coping with COVID-19 challenges and fears

An article with a personal reflection where a third level student in neuroscience remained confined on campus in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this short experience document all the efforts to remain productive failed and she report some activities to act on those situations. you can see full text here:
https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2020/04/how-early-career-scientists-are-coping-covid-19-challenges-and-fears

How I've connected with other scientists online during the COVID-19 pandemic

A short article where a third level student shares his experience on keeping contact with research colleagues and friends during COVID-19. This short document is a personal experience that explains how anxiety, concerns and problems are faced upon and how to advance over the problem of socialising by opening social networks groups. you can see full text here:
https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2020/04/how-i-ve-connected-other-scientists-online-during-covid-19-pandemic

Ten work–life balance tips for researchers based at home during the pandemic

During years, working from home effectively has been a big challenge and sometimes a mission impossible, people on numerous occasions over the years has tried, some successfully, many other unsuccessfully. Eventually, this attempt to work from home results in a breakdown of work and life balance, in this article 10 useful tips for moving your work from office to home are described. The full text and advise can be accessed here:
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01059-4

Disclaimer and Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the scientific community and active researchers for their participation and inputs provided to create and validate this document alike the feedback received. The main purpose of this document is to be informative about key considerations amid COVID-19 and provide guidelines as support for individuals that are Working from Home. Every individual with the correct understanding and application of normal criteria can use and adapt these **Key Considerations amid COVID-19 and Guidelines** introduced and explained. We provide this information for free distribution under a creative commons licence with no liability or responsibility of any type towards its authors and with the clear understanding that its content and ideas can be extended, modified, altered.
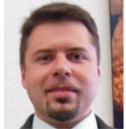
About the authors:

Dr. Martin Serrano
Principal Investigator and Team Leader

Dr. Achille Zappa
H2020 ACTIVAGE Project Manager

Yasar Khan
H2020 ACTIVAGE Research Assistant

Dr. Hoan Quoc Nguyen
H2020 i3-MARKET Project Manager

Qaiser Mehmood
H2020 i3-MARKET Research Assistant

Nial O'Brolchain
Interreg CarePeat Project Manager

Alex Acquier
Insight Centre for Data Analytics MSc Student

Internet of Things and Intelligent Systems
NUIGalway - Data Science Institute
Insight Centre for Data Analytics

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