

**Protocol for experiments involving participants during times of the COVID-19 infection risk
at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology (ICNP), Research Centre for
Natural Sciences (RCNS), Budapest, Hungary**

The aim of the protocol is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection for participants, experimenters, and other RCNS personnel while conducting experiments involving participants and/or accompanying persons (caretaker/owner) visiting ICNP (together termed 'participant' from here on, except when differentiating the participant and caretaker/owner is needed).

1. Communication with participants prior to the experiment

- a. Participants are to be contacted by phone or e-mail prior to the experiment. They are to be asked about their current state of health, and to be informed about the experiment and the procedures of the COVID-19 risk reduction protocol.
- b. The questions about the current state of health are identical to the ones described by the form to be filled on-site (for experiments with infants, the form should be separately filled both for the infants and the caretaker):
 - i. Did the participant have close contact with someone potentially infected by COVID-19 (either diagnosed as being infected or showing symptoms typical for such infections)? Close contact is defined as staying within 2 m distance of the person for longer than 10 minutes.
 - ii. Was the person abroad during the previous 14 days?
 - iii. Did the participant show respiratory (e.g., coughing, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing) or gastrointestinal respiratory (e.g., diarrhea), loss of smell or taste, or fever/temperature in the previous 14 days?
 - iv. If any of the answers is positive, the person cannot participate in the experiment.
- c. For experiments with dogs, in addition to the above questions asked from the accompanying person, the following points need to be addressed, too:
 - i. The dog cannot participate in the experiment if he/she spent an interval longer than 24 hours outside the owner's garden or residence during the last 30 days (e.g., in a dog pension or in the care of others, for example because of the owner's travel).
 - ii. Did the dog get in contact with any person potentially infected by COVID-19 (either diagnosed as being infected or showing symptoms typical for such infections) or with someone without the owner observing (i.e., the owner could not observe the person contacting the dog)?
 - iii. The owner's statement that the dog is healthy to the best of the owner's knowledge is needed for participation.

- d. Participants are informed about the safety procedures as follows:
- i. The participant is requested to arrive for the experimental session alone. Accompanying persons are not allowed to enter the building except for experiments with infants and dogs.
 - ii. The participant is met by the experimenter outside the entrance of the building, where he/she signs a statement consisting of the questions described in points 1b (and if necessary 1c), and the participant's temperature is measured.
 - iii. The experimenter is only allowed to conduct the experiment if his/her answer to each of the questions at 1b is also negative. The participant is provided with a statement of this.
 - iv. The participant must wear a surgical mask in the building with the following exceptions: infants and dogs are not required to wear a mask; adults may take off the mask when they are alone in the experimental chamber and its door is closed, or when they are alone in the room for hair washing and its door is closed. A surgical mask is provided by the experimenter, or the participant may use his/her own mask. The participant is informed that in the latter case he/she may be asked to wear a surgical mask, if his/her mask is too uncomfortable for wearing for longer periods, makes breathing difficult, or may exert too much pressure on the EEG electrodes, as these conditions may cause problems for the experiment and/or the EEG recording.
 - v. In the building, an inter-person distance of at least 1.5 m is to be maintained due to the regulations of RCNS. In situations in which this is not possible to maintain (e.g., the electrode setup), speaking is to be kept to a minimum.
 - vi. In the experimental rooms, hand disinfectants are always available. The frequency of surface disinfection has been increased in the building.
 - vii. The experimenter accompanies the participant during his/her whole stay in the building. Only the experimenter may operate the elevator and open the doors.
 - viii. The information sheet on the COVID-19 risk reduction protocol (see Appendix I) is sent to the participant's e-mail address. The information sheet is part of the informed consent form to be signed by the participant.

2. The participant's arrival to the building

- a. The participant's name is provided for the reception. Participants can only enter the building when accompanied by the experimenter.

- b. The experimenter waits for the participant at the entrance, outside the building. One side of the area in front of the entrance is reserved for the reception of participants.
- c. The participant disinfects his/her hands.
- d. The participant's temperature is measured, the surgical mask is handed over, and the participant puts on the mask (infants may put on a mask as well, but this is not obligatory).
- e. The health statement pre-filled with the answers provided on the previous day during the prior communication is handed over. The participant is asked whether there is any change in his/her answer to the questions. If there is no change, the participant signs the form.
- f. An inter-person distance of at least 1.5 m is to be maintained. In situations in which this is not possible (e.g., in the elevator), talking is to be kept to a minimum (explained in advance, see point 1.d.v.). If requested, participants may use the stairway to approach the laboratory, but only when accompanied by the experimenter.
- g. If the participant arrives by car, he/she should stop in front of the building for the temperature measurement and the signing of the health statement.
- h. The participant is then directed to a dedicated parking slot in the garage under the building. The experimenter meets him/her there.
- i. The experimenter accompanies the participant in the building at all times. The experimenter operates the elevator, opens the doors, walks the participant to the restroom and waits for him/her outside. The participant is only allowed to enter the rooms listed in the protocol (entrance hall, garage, staircase, elevator, laboratory, restroom, hair-washing room).

3. Laboratory

- a. The participant signs the informed consent form, which includes that he/she was informed about, understands, accepts and will follow the COVID-19 risk reduction protocol of ICNP RCNS, and that he/she voluntarily participates in the experiment.
- b. Only the participant and the experimenter(s) are allowed in the laboratory. No personnel are allowed to have his/her regular workspace in the laboratory. Only the experimenters conducting experiments on the given day may enter the laboratory (including the preparation room). Persons providing technical help may enter the laboratory in personal protective equipment (see 3.r below). No room cleaning should take place in the laboratory by the cleaning service of the institute – cleaning is to be done by the experimenter(s) on the given day. The laboratory door is to be kept locked.
- c. Equipment not necessary for the experiment is to be removed and stored elsewhere in order to reduce the amount of surface that needs to be cleaned/disinfected.

- d. Airing rooms through windows opening to the outside should be performed often where this is possible.
- e. A restroom will be exclusively allocated for the participants. They may use only this restroom. Disinfecting tissues are placed in the restroom allowing disinfecting surfaces before and after the use of the facility.
- f. The experimenter puts on medical gloves during electrode setup, and when in the experimental chamber (not needed outside the chamber). It is important that the face area may only be touched with a clean glove. Thus, electrodes should be put on the face at the beginning of the setup procedure. As a general principle, experimenters and participants should not touch anyone's face.
- g. The participant should spend as little time in the preparation room as possible. He/she should spend most of the experiment time in the chamber. The experimenter should stay outside the chamber as much as possible communicating with the participant mainly through the speaker system from outside.
- h. Both the participant and the experimenter wear a mask throughout, except for the cases listed in 1.d.iv. A surgical mask or the participant's own mask is sufficient for the participant. The experimenter wears an ffp3 mask (or an ffp2 mask, in case no ffp3 mask can be purchased) with optional eye protector or face shield.
- i. The experimenter works in dedicated laboratory clothing (overclothes, shoe) when entering to and working in the lab, which he/she changes in the dressing room before and after the experiment.
- j. Special rules for experiments with dogs:
 - i. The experimenter may only touch the dog when wearing gloves, and may touch the dog only as often as and in the way described in the experimental protocol.
 - ii. The water bowl (water must be provided for the dog before/after the experiment) should be replaced for each dog, and disinfected before re-use.
 - iii. If treats are given during the experiment, only treats provided by the experimenter can be used. The owner cannot bring food into the building (neither for the dog, nor for himself or herself).
- k. Hair washing:
 - i. Suggest the participants to wash their hair at home, if possible.
 - ii. If not, we provide single-use paper towels for hair-washing.
 - iii. An air-filter device using ionization to neutralize viruses will be continuously operated in the hair washing room. Disinfecting towels are also provided so that the participant can wipe off surfaces that he/she may touch.

- iv. When done, the participant cannot return to the laboratory. Therefore, administration related to the experiment has to be dealt with before hair washing, and the participant must have his/her personal belongings with her/him at this point.
- l. After the experiment, the experimenter sees the participant out, makes sure that he/she leaves the building.
- m. After the participant has left, the chamber and the laboratory is disinfected.
 - i. As the first step, air disinfection is performed observing the safety procedures prescribed by the manufacturer of the device.
 - ii. Then the experimenter disinfects surfaces the participant may have touched and the devices used during the experiment (electrodes, electrode cap, etc.) and tidies up the experimental rooms. At least 1.5 hours must pass between two experiments. Auditory experiments can be administered with loudspeakers, or with stimulators with single use foam eartips. If the devices used for audiometry cannot be disinfected, no audiometry will be performed.
 - iii. In laboratories without a sink, water can be brought in for disinfection from the restrooms. Used water should be poured into the toilet bowl and flushed away with abundant water.
- n. As a general principle, hands should be washed often. Door handles and surfaces that are touched often (e.g., keyboards) should also be often disinfected. Hands must be disinfected when the participant is moving between rooms (e.g. leaving the chamber).
- o. Waste generated in the laboratory is treated as hazardous waste, and it is to be collected and transported separately as described by the protocol of RCNS.
- p. No simultaneous experiments are allowed in the 'Mordor' and 'Gondor' laboratories, which have a common preparation room.
- q. If the experiment must be suspended and the laboratory evacuated for some reason (e.g., a fire alarm), the experiment can only be continued after returning to the laboratory if compliance with all procedures related to the disinfection of the laboratory, the participants, and the experimenters (except for those regulating the participant's arrival) can be maintained. Otherwise, the experiment is to be aborted and the participant must leave the building.
- r. If technical assistance is needed, the experimenter may call a competent member of the personnel. This person is allowed to enter the laboratory in a laboratory coat, mask, and disposable overshoes.
- s. In addition to the currently used laboratory documentation, a disinfection log is to be recorded on a separate sheet. The experiment's identifier, the name of the experimenter(s), and disinfection/cleaning times are to be recorded in the log. The log is displayed on the inside of the laboratory door. When a log

sheet is full, it is archived at the ICNP directorate. It is then replaced with an empty log sheet on the door.

- t. Person(s) appointed by the director of ICNP regularly check compliance with the protocol and adjust the procedures if needed. For inspections, the appointed person(s) are allowed to enter the laboratory on the same conditions as a participant. The inspection is recorded and signed in the disinfection log.

25-May-2020, ICNP RCNS, Budapest Hungary