

**RE: Sanitizing Protocol for Activity Monitoring Remote Data Collections as Part of the CAIRHE-funded study: Elucidating Differences in Physical Activity and Movement Patterns in Montana Farmers and Ranchers [IRB Protocol: SM051019.3]**

To Whom It May Concern:

In response to the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are implementing additional safety measures to minimize the risk of infection to participants and researchers associated with this research. The nature of this research study is remote with sensors and surveys mailed to and from participants. This approach inherently minimizes person-to-person interactions while still enabling valuable data to be collected to support the goal of this research project. As of March 20, 2020, recommendations have been to implement social distancing measures and minimize personal contact, which align with the protocol of this research. The COVID-19 situation is rapidly changing and we will continue to evaluate the scenario with guidance from the CDC, state, and Montana State University (MSU) officials.

As of March 20, 2020, remote data collections of physical activity data will be permitted with the following additional sanitizing procedures to promote the safety and well-being of participants and researchers.

**General:**

- While coordinating and confirming dates for remote physical activity monitoring and receipt of equipment leading up to a data collection, MSU researchers will use the following IRB-recommended verbal screening questions. Answering YES to any of these questions will require the researcher to postpone the data collection.
  - Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past two weeks, even if they were mild?
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath
  - Have you had close contact with a person who is under investigation for possible COVID-19?
  - In the past three weeks, have you traveled internationally?
- Participants will be instructed to notify the research staff if they experience symptoms or come in contact with someone under investigation for COVID-19 during the 3-day data collection period that they are wearing a sensor.

**Preparing Sensor Packages to be Sent to Participants:**

- Researchers assigned to handle materials will confirm they answer NO to all the questions in the IRB-recommended verbal screening (see above) prior to handling any research materials. If a YES response is made for any questions, an alternate researcher who can answer NO to all responses will prepare the package. If no researchers are able to answer NO to all questions, the data collection will be postponed to a later date.
- Researchers handling research materials will:
  - Wash their hands following CDC guidelines and/or use hand sanitizer with at least 70% isopropyl alcohol **before and after** handling materials
  - Wear gloves

- Sanitize the sensors and straps with disinfectant spray/wipes
- Indicate the sensors and straps have been sanitized on the preparation checklist.
- Packages will be sent with enough time for participants to allow them to sit for 48 hours prior to opening

**During Remote Data Collection (while Sensors are with Participants):**

- Participants will be asked to follow CDC guidelines of regular handwashing, particularly before handling the sensors.

**Upon Receiving Packages following a Completed Data Collection:**

- Researchers will allow the packages to sit for 48 hours before handling
- Researcher assigned to process the returned package and complete close-out checklist will confirm they answer NO to all IRB-recommended verbal survey questions prior to handling packages.
- Researchers handling research materials will:
  - Wash their hands following CDC guidelines and/or use hand sanitizer with at least 70% isopropyl alcohol **before and after** handling materials
  - Wear gloves
  - Sanitize the sensors and straps with disinfectant spray/wipes
  - Indicate that the sensors have been sanitized on the close-out form and store the sensors with other clearly marked sanitized sensors

Additionally, as of March 20, 2020, we will be postponing the optional in-person observations of participants on their farms and ranches to eliminate the potential exposure associated with these in-person visits. We greatly appreciate all participants who offered up the opportunity for researchers to observe their operations and hope to be able to schedule in the near future, pending COVID-19 developments. As of now, this does not hinder the remote physical activity data collections, and will not alter the compensation participants receive for completing each 3-day remote physical activity collection period.

We are implementing these added safety measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 via the communications that are fundamental to conducting this research. We hold paramount the health and well-being of participants and researchers involved with this study along with their communities. We will continue to evaluate the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation and will make additional changes to this plan as well as continuing to collect data as guided by national, state, or MSU officials.

We hope these measures will minimize risk associated with participating in this research study, which is aimed at reducing the burden of osteoarthritis in Montana agricultural workers. If participants are concerned regarding continuing participation in the research study, they are invited to discuss their concerns with the Principal Investigator (Dr. Scott Monfort, see below). We hope the added steps we are implementing will ease some of these concerns. Additionally, participants always have the right to request to postpone a data collection or withdraw from the study, should they decide to do so. We appreciate the continued support for this project in the midst of these uncertain times.

Sincerely,



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