

Antarctic research at a time of crisis: The impact COVID-19 on the Antarctic research community



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This presentation will share the results of a survey that aimed at understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the Antarctic research community. Primarily designed to identify the most adversely affected Antarctic researchers and gauge what kind of assistance they might need, the survey, which forms part of an interdisciplinary international research programme on the impact of COVID-19 for the Antarctic community more broadly, also examined the long-term implications of COVID-19 for National Antarctic Programmes.

Over 300 Antarctic research community members, most of them academics, participated in the survey. Preliminary results show that the careers of early-career researchers and those heavily reliant on fieldwork are most adversely affected by COVID-19. As expected, relief funds and free access to data, especially for those whose field campaigns were cancelled, would moderate the impact the pandemic has had on researchers to a certain extent. The survey also reveals that COVID-19 resulted in significant adverse impacts on mental health for Antarctic researchers, with the majority of survey participants noting extreme or moderate dissatisfaction with their mental health and significant increases in anxiety and stress levels, all of which needs to be considered when designing strategies for addressing the impact of COVID-19 in the Antarctic community.