Minimizing Risk – COVID-19

1. **Introduction**

   1.1 COVID-19 is an upper respiratory infection and is spread through airborne and surface droplets produced by coughing or sneezing. Measures aimed at reducing the spread of the virus include: wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (ie. mask, face shield), coughing/sneezing into your sleeve or elbow, frequent hand washing, social distancing and remaining home if you are feeling sick or unwell.

2. **Research Activities at the CFMM**

   2.1 The Government of Ontario has deemed research to be essential, however, the university, in-line with universities across Canada, have interpreted ‘essential’ as meaning ‘essential research’ — that is, research related to COVID-19 or studies requiring continuity of care and/or high investment longitudinal studies that would lose tremendous amounts of data if they were discontinued. The primary concern remains the safety of faculty, students, trainees, staff, research volunteers and the surrounding community.

   2.2 Research studies requiring MRI scanning are currently being reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the CFMM Core Director and approved by the ACC in conjunction with Research Western to ensure criteria for essential research is met.

   2.3 The CFMM will continue to exercise policies with regard to research activity, in line with the university operating guidelines to ensure safety with regards to COVID-19. These include measures such as donning appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), limiting the number of individuals permitted into the facility and ensuring appropriate disinfection of all high traffic surfaces prior to and following each research study, as described below.

3. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

   3.1 The Core MRI personnel must adhere to PPE guidelines in accordance with the currently mandated standards, as defined by the University, for dealing with human participants and animal models.

   3.2 Further information regarding the current mandates and FAQs related to research operations at Western can be found at:

   [https://www.uwo.ca/coronavirus/research.html](https://www.uwo.ca/coronavirus/research.html)

4. **Scheduling, Screening and Limiting Exposure**

   4.1 Mandatory pre-screening of research participants for COVID-19 related symptoms is required prior to scheduling.
4.2 As research activities resume at the University, and within the CFMM, there will be restrictions pertaining to the scheduling of MRI time. Initially, while guidelines regarding research operations are being tested, the CFMM will enforce the following:

4.2.1 scan time may only be booked up to 2 weeks in advance of the requested time;
4.2.2 exceptions to the 2 week rule will be made for longitudinal studies and exams which are time sensitive in nature; and
4.2.3 the amount of available scan time, during this transition, will be limited and at the full discretion of the CFMM. All requests will be communicated through: cfmm-bookings@uwo.ca.

4.3 Social distancing measures will be followed at all times while at the CFMM as per the university mandated standards.

4.4 Research participants and research personnel require screening for COVID-19 related symptoms upon arrival for an MRI scan. Laser thermometry will be utilized to assess fever risk. Any participant or researcher exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, aches) are not permitted to be in MRI Zones III and IV.

4.5 The maximum number of individuals allowed within MRI Zone III during an MRI exam will be limited to: 1 research personnel, 1 study participant (for human studies) and 1 MRI Technologist/Operator.

4.6 One additional person may accompany the subject for the study (caregiver, family member for human studies) but must wait in the reception area of the CFMM (Zone II) to allow for appropriate social distancing.

4.7 In special situations where a child or a participant is unable to provide informed consent, the family member or caregiver may be able to accompany the subject into Zone III, at the discretion of the CFMM Director or MRI Technologist.

4.8 No food is allowed in the control room at the scanners. Only water, in a sealed bottle, will be permitted within the MRI control room (Zone III).

5 Decontamination

5.1 Scheduling of MRI scans will now include a 30 minute buffer prior to and immediately following each scan. This allows adequate time for disinfection of all equipment and surfaces prior to the start of any subsequent research scans – and to replace linens in the case of human studies.

5.2 The CFMM uses disinfectant cleaners, proven to be effective against the COVID-19 virus, as set out by Health Canada. The 30 minute buffer time will also allow research personnel from one group to leave, prior to the next group’s arrival, reducing the number of individuals in the facility at a given time.
## Minimizing Risk – COVID-19

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<tr>
<th>SOP Number:</th>
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<td>20-May-2020</td>
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### Revision Chronology

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<tr>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>200.01</td>
<td>23 April 2020</td>
<td>First Version draft SC/MB</td>
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<tr>
<td>200.02</td>
<td>04 May 2020</td>
<td>Further changes TS and JG</td>
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<tr>
<td>200.03</td>
<td>20 May 2020</td>
<td>Addition of section 4.2</td>
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**CFMM Director Signature:**

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Date: 20 – May - 2020