World Transplant Games Federation Advisory re the COVID-19 virus

COVID-19 is spreading throughout the world with more than 100,000 people known to be infected and more than 3,000 deaths. This is an obvious concern for all of us, governments and health authorities.

Importantly, the situation seems to be changing daily. This makes it difficult to provide any definitive guidance to our member countries and recipients. The best advice we can give to patients across the world is that if they are concerned we recommend that they speak with their transplant physician or transplant unit who may be able to provide further advice, localised for your country, area and circumstance.

It is important to note that we are only aware of one known case of a transplant recipient (a 53-year-old kidney recipient from China) acquiring the disease and he made a full recovery.

The WTGF is monitoring the COVID-19 virus from a number of aspects:

1. We recommend that member countries should check with their health authorities before staging any large gatherings of transplant recipients such as national games or meetings. We note a couple of national games have already been postponed or cancelled. We certainly believe postponement is preferable because we are confident that this crisis will pass, hopefully sooner rather than later.
2. For recipients we recommend they follow the World Health Organisation guidelines on hygiene repeated below.
3. The WTGF is planning on staging the first-ever Transplant Football World Cup in late August in Italy. We are in constant contact with AICS, the event organisers, and have discussed the current situation.

The WTGF is 100% committed to staging the Cup in partnership with AICS in Italy - when it is safe to do so. The health and wellbeing of our recipients is our number one priority.

At the moment there are no definitive plans to change the timing however we are monitoring the situation carefully. We have decided to make a decision by the end of April as to whether the event can proceed as planned or whether its timing needs to be altered. This will give us time to evaluate and engage with the Italian health authorities. Hopefully the COVID-19 outbreak will have peaked by then and we will have a better understanding of the health and safety of the event.

In the meantime we recommend that our national teams continue to train – safely and that individual players continue to improve their fitness and skills.
We recommend that teams hold off on purchasing their air tickets at this point in time.

We will provide further updates when we know more.

Look after yourself and your family.

Chris Thomas
President
World Transplant Games Federation

WHO Recommendations

- Wash your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or with soap and water.
- Maintain social distancing of at least one metre between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Practice respiratory hygiene (covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze and then dispose of the used tissue immediately).
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early, but call in advance and follow the directions of your local health authority.
- Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority since they can provide you with reliable information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area.
- Additionally, in case of persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where COVID-19 is spreading, stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms, until you recover, but if you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly by calling your health provider to so you can be quickly directed to the right health facility.