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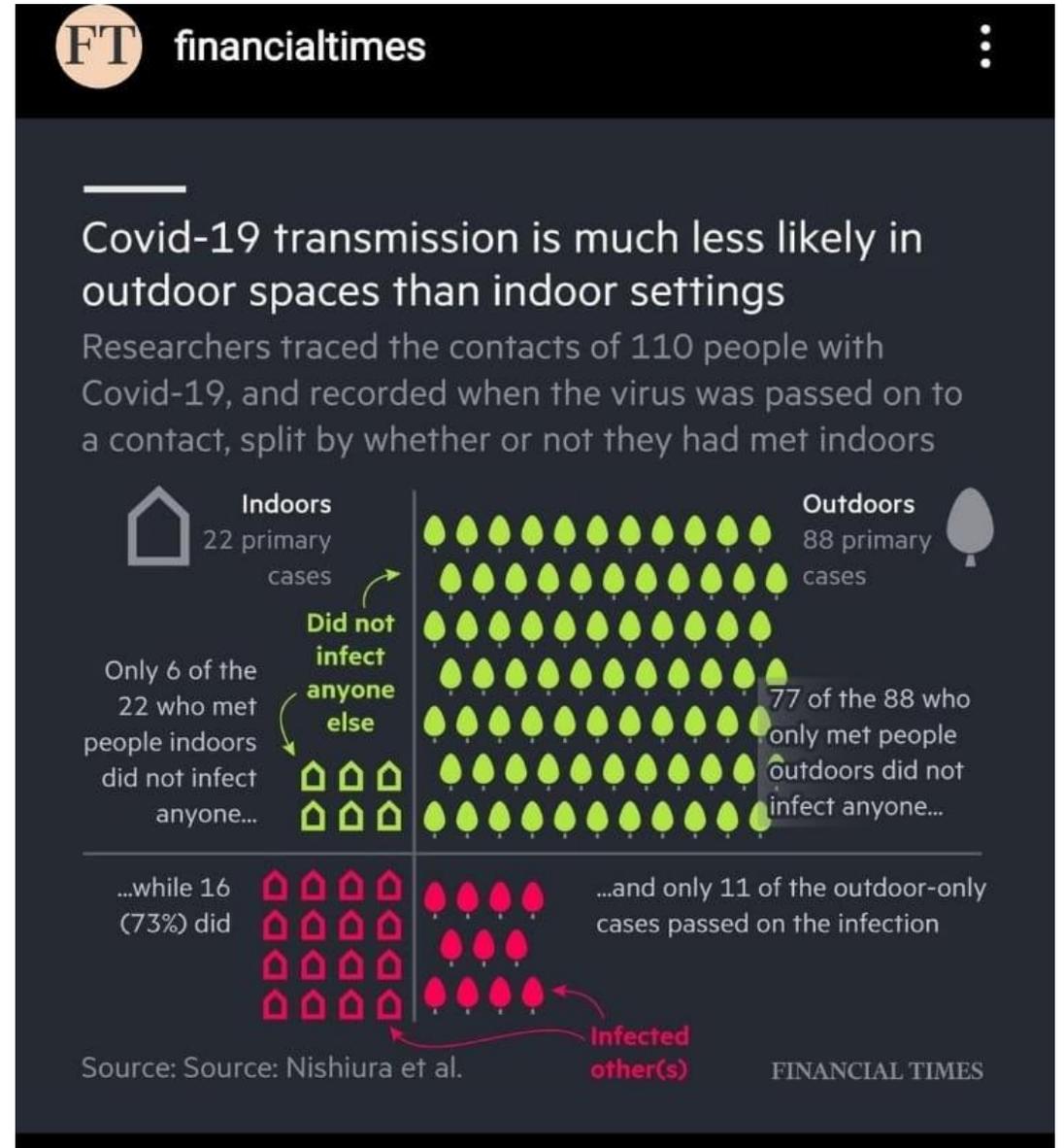
# What we know and some recommendations

**Luis D. Torres, PhD**

Assistant Professor in OB, Business & Society

COVID-19 is transmitted primarily through:

- Respiratory droplets
- Contact with contaminated surfaces.



Work-related exposure can occur anytime:

- at the workplace
- during work-related travel to an area with local community transmission
- on the way to and from the workplace

If contracted as a result of work, **could be considered as an occupational disease** (Employment Injury Benefits Convention, 1964 (No.121) and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No.102))

ILO 92020). ILO Standards and COVID-19 (coronavirus). Available at:  
[https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS\\_739937/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/WCMS_739937/lang--en/index.htm)

WHO (May 2020). Considerations for public health and social measures in the workplace in the context of COVID-19. Available at  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/guidance-for-schools-workplaces-institutions>

**Hazard:** a potential source of harm to a worker

e.g. Coronavirus

**Risk:** The likelihood that a person will be harmed or experience adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard.

e.g. Transmission risk

## COVID-19 transmission risk:

- probability of coming into close (less than 1 metre) contact with others
- frequent contact with people who may be infected with COVID-19
- contact with contaminated surfaces and objects.

**Low exposure risk** –Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other co-workers.

**Medium exposure risk** – jobs or work tasks with close, frequent contact with the general public, or other co-workers, visitors, clients or customers, or contractors where physical distancing of at least 1 metre may be difficult to observe.

**High exposure risk** – jobs or work tasks with high potential for close contact with people who are known or suspected of having COVID-19, as well as contact with objects and surfaces possibly contaminated with the virus.

## Environmental conditions that may reduce the risk of transmission

1. High Temperature and High Humidity Reduce the Transmission of COVID-19 (data from USA and China)
2. The weather with low temperature, mild diurnal temperature range and low humidity likely favour the transmission of COVID-19 (Data from China).



1. Wang, Jingyuan and Tang, Ke and Feng, Kai and Lin, Xin and Lv, Weifeng and Chen, Kun and Wang, Fei, High Temperature and High Humidity Reduce the Transmission of COVID-19 (March 9, 2020). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3551767> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3551767>
2. Liu, J. et al. (2020) 'Impact of meteorological factors on the COVID-19 transmission: A multi-city study in China', Science of the Total Environment. Elsevier B.V., 726, p. 138513. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138513.

Some workers may be at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 illness:

- Pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease)
- Older age
- **Ethnic minorities**

## Coronavirus: Black and Asian ethnic groups up to twice as likely to die with COVID-19, says Public Health England

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said "black lives matter" and action was needed to "level up" their "health outcomes".

Tuesday 2 June 2020 19:30, UK

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS



<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-black-and-asian-ethnic-groups-up-to-twice-as-likely-to-die-from-virus-says-public-health-england-11999167>

Liu, J. et al. (2020) 'Impact of meteorological factors on the COVID-19 transmission: A multi-city study in China', *Science of the Total Environment*. Elsevier B.V., 726, p. 138513. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138513.

Liu, J. et al. (2020) 'Impact of meteorological factors on the COVID-19 transmission: A multi-city study in China', *Science of the Total Environment*. Elsevier B.V., 726, p. 138513. doi: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138513.

Kirby, T. (2020) 'Evidence mounts on the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities', *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. Elsevier Ltd, 8(6), pp. 547–548. doi: 10.1016/s2213-2600(20)30228-9.

Universal measures for preventing transmission of COVID-19 that apply to all workplaces

**Hand hygiene:** Hand hygiene stations, such as hand washing and hand rub dispensers

**Respiratory hygiene:** Develop a policy on wearing a mask in line with national guidance.

**Physical distancing:**

- keep a distance of at least 1 metre
- no more than 1 person per every 10 square metres
- physical spacing at least 1 metre apart for work stations and common spaces
- Minimize the need for physical meetings

**Reduce and manage work-related travels**

- provide hand sanitizer to workers who must travel
- Provide information on whom to contact if they feel ill while travelling.
- Workers returning from an area where COVID-19 transmission is occurring should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day

## **Regular environmental cleaning and disinfection:**

- Spraying of people with disinfectants is not recommended under any circumstances

## **Risk communication, training, and education**

### **Management of people with COVID-19 or their contacts**

- If a worker is sick, they should not come to work
- If a member of staff or a worker feels unwell while at work, provide a medical mask so that they may get home safely
- Consider waiving the requirement for a medical note for workers who are sick so that they may stay home
- Standard operating procedures should be prepared to manage a person who becomes sick at the workplace and is suspected of having COVID-19
- People who were in close contact at the workplace with persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 should be quarantined for 14 days from the last time of the contact

## Collaborate!

In developing and implementing action plans for prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 workers and their representatives should be properly consulted

In updating your plan a continues collaboration with relevant authorities and “*mutualidades*” is fundamental.

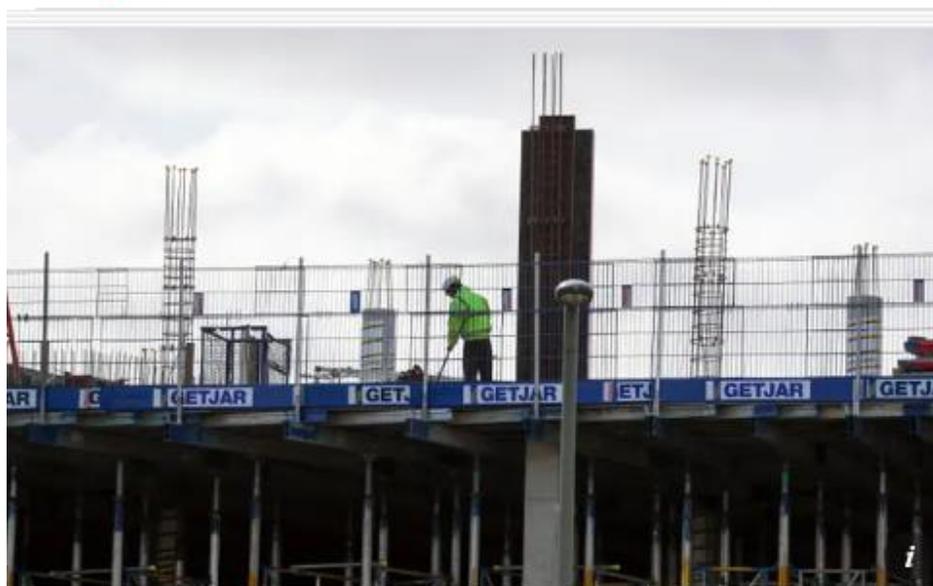


# Watch out! Indirect impact of COVID-19

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**Coronavirus outbreak**

## 'Dancing with devil': people forced back to work fear for health

Government accused of treating manual workers like 'plebs' as professionals stay safe at home

**Mattha Busby**

Tue 12 May 2020 19.26 BST

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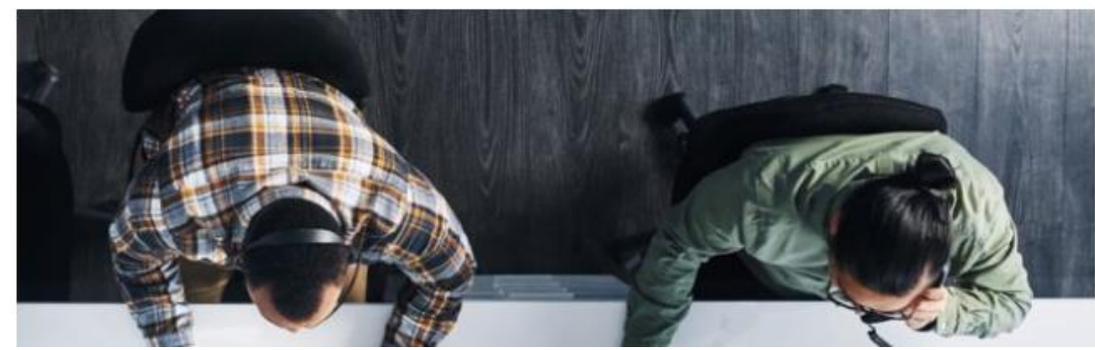
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## Coronavirus: 'I'm scared but if I stay at home I may be fired'

25 March 2020

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Coronavirus pandemic



# Work & Health - Pathways

Structure, air,  
processes,  
equipment, etc.

Physical Work  
Environment

Psychosocial work  
environment

Work Design and  
Management

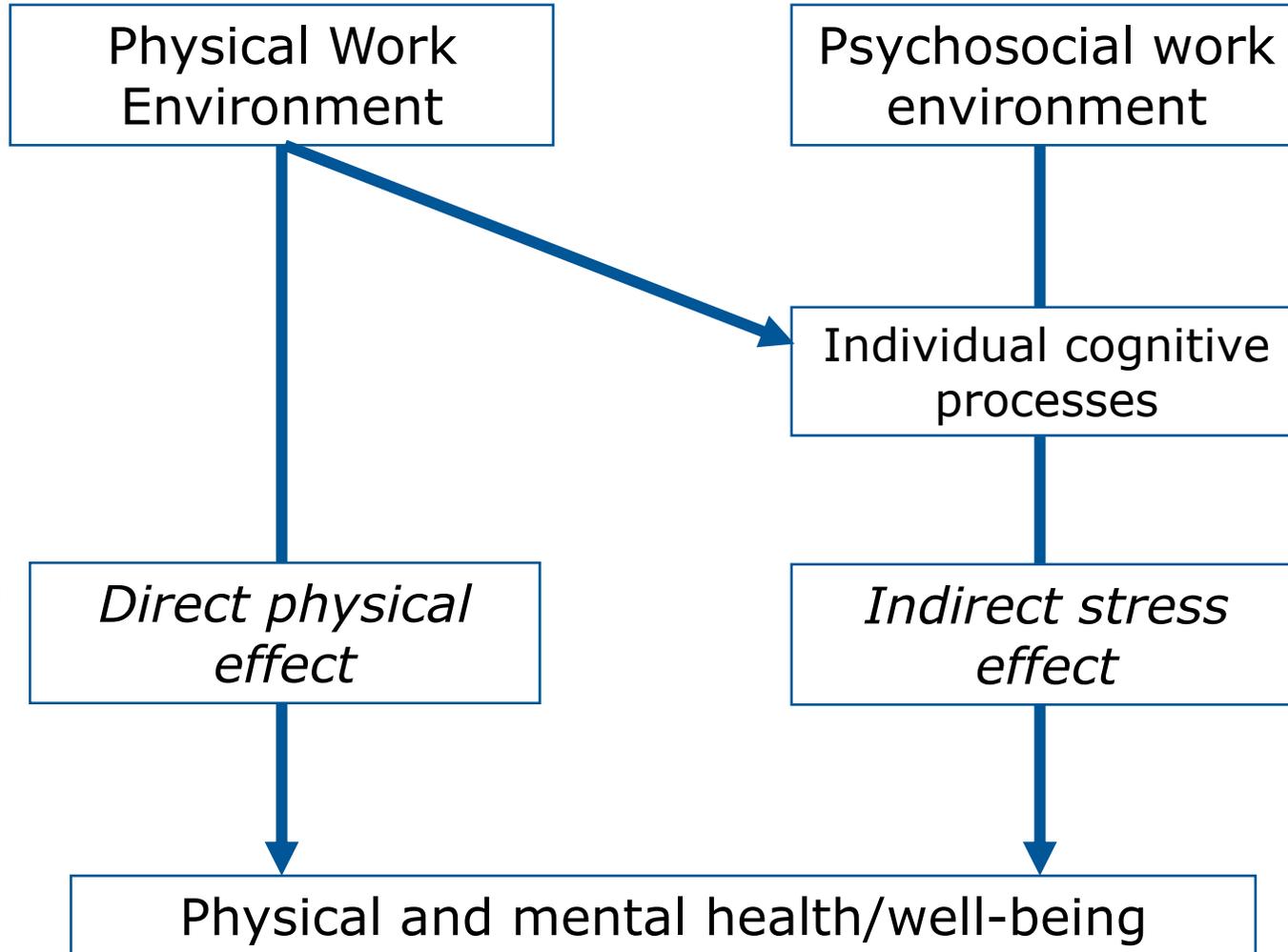
Individual cognitive  
processes

Greatest potential  
to disable or kill  
workers

*Direct physical  
effect*

*Indirect stress  
effect*

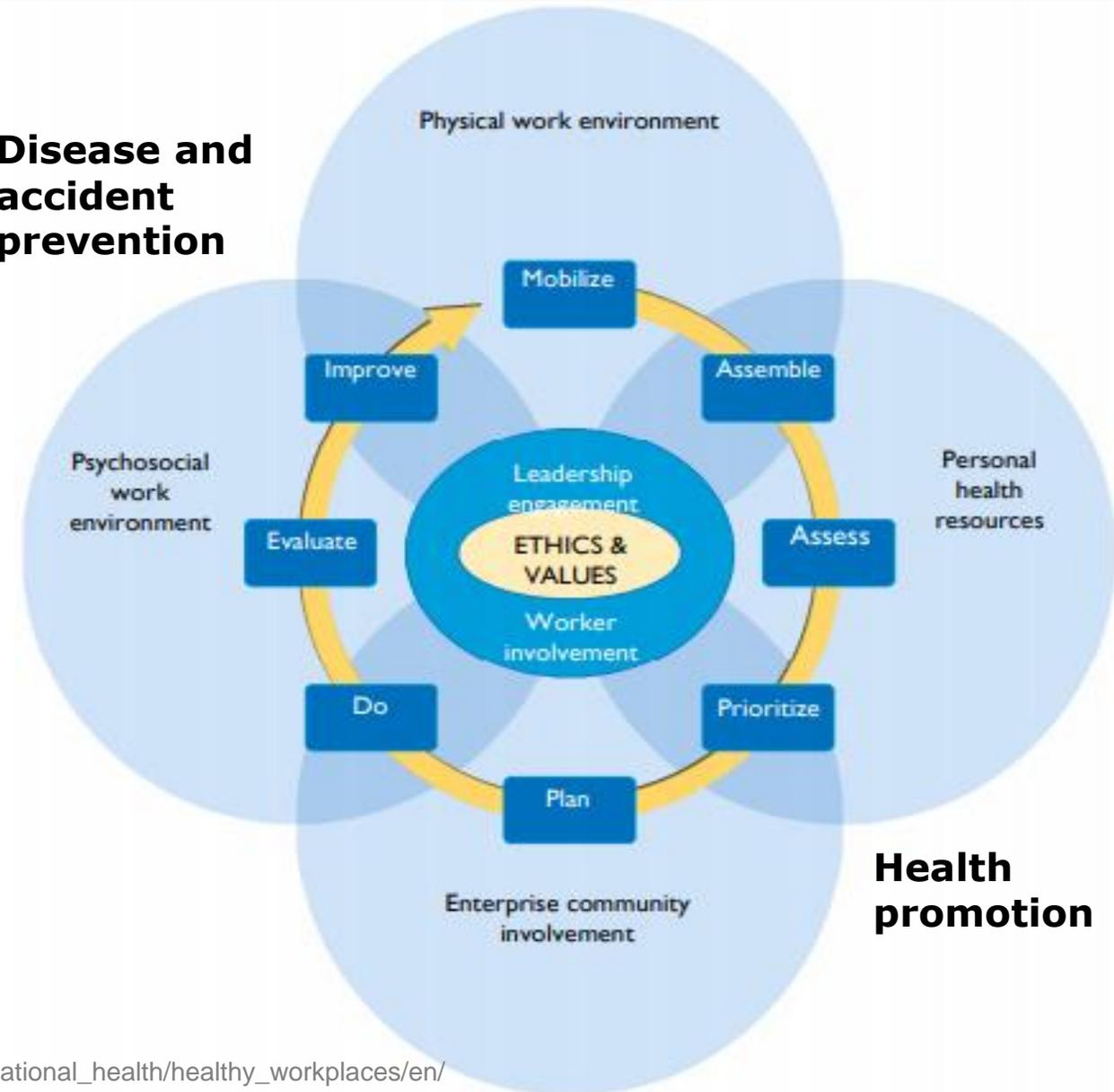
Physical and mental health/well-being



# The WHO Healthy Workplaces model

A healthy workplace is one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering:

**Disease and  
accident  
prevention**



# Remember...

The goal is not only to comply with the law, but to **protect employees' health and well-being**

Means vs ends





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**Thank you!**

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