Medical and evacuation procedures for Cuba 2017
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1. Introduction

Medical screening

As with all expeditions careful planning is essential to ensure that all individuals enjoy a safe successful trip. Some members of the expedition team (including all volunteers and staff) may have significant pre-existing health problems or disabilities, which in the field, could potentially lead to problems.

Medical questionnaire

All participants will be required to enter their medical details onto the Operation Wallacea data portal. Details of how to log on are sent out upon receiving the booking from the participant. The data is stored securely and is initially only available to certain Operation Wallacea staff members, and, for groups of school students, the teacher leading the group.

Screening

All medical forms are assessed by Operation Wallacea. The country manager may seek to contact the participant to gather further information, which they would then enter on to the portal.

Following the initial screening by the country manager, the details are then passed to the on-site medic. He or she can ask for further information, and will have an opportunity to discuss any issues of concern at a medical meeting (between the expedition medics and Operation Wallacea staff) held approximately 3 months prior to the expedition. The team of medics will discuss any potential medical issues, advise anyone if a further consultation with a medic is required and will also suggest additions to the medical kits in light of any pre-existing health problems highlighted.

Insurance

Operation Wallacea has purchased Medical and Repatriation insurance cover to a value of £1 million for all volunteers and staff. Following the medical meeting, the medical details of any participants who have described current or past health concerns, or are taking any current medication, will be passed on to Operation Wallacea’s insurers. They may then want to talk directly to the participant if they have any further questions, and in some cases may choose to request a premium payment in order to provide cover for any pre-existing conditions.

Roles in the event of an Emergency

Carefully planned evacuation protocols are in place in all of the sites in Cuba. All staff will have training on the evacuation procedures and protocols.

Once a major incident leading to an evacuation is identified the Venture Leader and Senior Scientist (Dr Jorge Angulo Valdes) will take overall control and will decide the
level of emergency evacuation required for the patient. These are classified as **Medium Priority**, **High Priority** or **Emergency**. The boat based evacuations and co-ordination with the hospital and ambulance service is all organised via the Marina Manager. Before the start of the Opwall expeditions the Marina will have informed the hospital at Nueva Gerona of the groups visiting and the activities that will be undertaken.

**Medium Priority**

Cases in which the patient is in no immediate danger but the on-site facilities are unable to cope were their condition to deteriorate. An example of this would be dehydration due to sickness. This requires the patient to be moved as quickly as possible without the need to hire special vehicles or boats to the nearest appropriate suitable facilities normally in Nueva Gerona.

**High or Emergency Priority**

Cases where the patient’s health is at risk if immediate action is not taken. An example of this is a broken bone or decompression sickness. This requires transportation, via specially arranged boats and ambulances to medical facilities available in Nueva Gerona.

In the case of an Evacuation, the Country Manager will be responsible for contacting the insurance company.

2. Medical Facilities In-Country

**Facilities on the Isle of Youth**

Heroes del Baire Hospital, Nueva Gerona  
Address: Calle 39A, Esquina 41, Nueva Gerona, Isla de Juventud  
Telephone: +53 46 323012 (Reception)  
+53 46 326375 (Director)  
Facilities include operating theatres, X-ray, laboratories and a 24-hour accident and emergency unit.

In addition, there is a recompression chamber which is open 24 hours a day with trained staff available at the hospital.

Ambulance service (SIUM) +53 46 321230 or +53 46 322366

**Facilities in Havana**

Cira Garcia Hospital  
Address: Ave. 41 No. 4101, Miramar, Ciudad Habana  
Telephone: +53 7204-811
This hospital is dedicated to serving foreign nationals and is close to the marine research centre. Facilities include operating theatres, X-ray, MRI and CT scans, laboratories, a diagnostic centre etc. It also has an intensive care unit, 24-hour level accident and emergency unit.

The recompression chamber is situated in the Naval Hospital
Address: La Habana Hyperbaric Medical Centre, Hospital Naval 'Dr. Luis Diaz Soto', Havana del Este Telephone: + 537 97 3266

3. Medical Cover at Each Site

There are 3 research sites that are being used in the 2017 season: the Punta Frances reefs, Siguanea Bay near the Colony Hotel and the Manatee Monitoring Zone. Most of the students will be staying overnight at the Colony Hotel, although some may have the opportunity to stay in houses in La Victoria village or visit during de-gas day.

There is a well-stocked medical clinic at the Colony Hotel which is manned 24 hours a day by nurses. The research ships used have qualified First Aid staff on board and First Aid kits.

The First Aid kits are designed to stabilize a casualty for transfer to more extensive medical facilities where needed either at the hotel or in the hospital in Nueva Gerona.

Evacuation from Punta Frances and Colony Bay

Medium Priority Evacuations

These are all organised by the patient being returned to the marina on one of the returning boats from Punta Frances or the manatee monitoring zone and then taken by taxi to the Colony Hotel clinic or to the hospital in Nueva Gerona.

High Priority or Emergency Evacuations

Once a High Priority or Emergency Evacuation is called then the marine will despatch a speedboat to intercept the research boat which will be making its’ way back to the marina. The marina manager also calls SIUM – the ambulance service to ensure there is an ambulance waiting at the marina for when the speedboat returns and the patient travels by ambulance to the hospital in Nueva Gerona (30 minutes).

The worst case scenario would be an incident in the Punta Frances reefs that would require the boat to be intercepted by a speed boat to reduce the 2 hour transfer from the marine reserve to the Colony Marina before transferring by ambulance to the hospital in Nueva Gerona (total time to hospital 2 hours).

Incidents in the manatee monitoring zone could all be back at the marina in 1 hour (total time to hospital 1 hour 30 minutes).
Communication is key to ensuring rapid evacuations. All the research boats have VHF radios that communicate back to the marina. The marina has land line and mobile phone reception, whilst the hotel has mobile phone, land line and a very slow email system.

4. Reporting and Logging

During evacuations it is crucial that a log is kept at the Colony Hotel by the Cuba Country Manager detailing times, personnel involved and all relevant details of each step of the evacuation process.

A full safety assessment must be carried out after all evacuations and if a similar incident is likely all activities must be stopped until the situation has been rectified.

The Cuba Country Manager will collate the reports of all medical treatment and evacuations and will submit the final report to the UK office. The Cuba Project Manager will also submit the costs and report to the Opwall UK office for reimbursement of costs.

5. Mass Evacuations and Disaster Management

The most likely scenario is warning of an impending hurricane. Hurricanes can occur in Cuba at any time from June to November but are most likely in October followed by September which are both months outside the Opwall survey season. However, it is possible that a hurricane will occur. Cuba has an excellent warning system with about a week’s advance notice of any hurricanes heading for Cuba with 6 hourly updates given on TV and radio broadcasts. This information phase is succeeded by a Warning Phase if the hurricane is headed for Cuba. The Cuban authorities then organise evacuation of all people in the area likely to be affected to hurricane shelters. For the Colony Bay area the people and guests are all evacuated to a hurricane shelter in the centre of the island. Food is provided by the Civil Defence Service for the duration of the event. It is this high level of organisation that has virtually prevented any deaths occurring from hurricanes in Cuba despite there being numerous hurricanes over the last few years.
6. List of Contact Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Angulo Valdes</td>
<td>+53 52 418913</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colony Hotel</td>
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<td>Marina</td>
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