

IAA/IAF SPACE LIFE SCIENCES SYMPOSIUM (A1)
Behaviour, Performance and Psychosocial Issues in Space (1)

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ISOLATION IN A SPACEY ENVIRONMENT: USING A SEMINARY AND SPACE STUDIES
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Abstract

Astronauts live and work in highly unusual, challenging and isolated environments where they must withstand multiple stressors. Their abilities to maintain positive psychological outlooks and good interpersonal relations are crucial for personal well-being and mission success. The history of space exploration has seen many instances of reduced energy levels, mood changes, poor interpersonal relations, faulty decision-making, and lapses in memory and attention (NASA history series). Thus the basis for this research within the International Space University community and a catholic seminary to measure the feeling of loneliness, isolation as a reference for what astronauts experience when they live on the International Space Station.

In this work questionnaires adapted to living conditions in the two communities were administered to find out how their new environment affects them and their work productivity with being away from friends and family for such extended durations. Also to determine common ways of coping with isolation/loneliness that cuts across cultural divides and personal preferences. Analysis of the survey showed pertinent indices that played major role in coping with isolation and loneliness. It was recommended that these observations should be noted for Astronauts on long duration missions, and that they can equally help the old and ageing population have less lonely lives.