

Narratives on face mask wearing from members of Navigating Knowledge Landscapes Network - the contribution No. 24

Country: **UKRAINE**

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The obligation to wear a face mask or a respirator in public places in Ukraine was established by the Ukrainian Government from April 6th 2020. Most people follow this rule, maybe not all because of personal consciousness but because of fines. However, due to the low availability of medical masks and their high cost many people wear homemade masks of unknown quality and another concern is that most people use disposable masks repeatedly and much longer than recommended. I have heard many cases that people had been washing and drying their disposable masks or applying different sanitizers on them. Young people also tend to treat a face mask as style element, decorating it with pictures and other elements, so the COVID-19 pandemic also caused the emergence of a new fashion trend.

I fully support the obligation to wear a face mask in public places but not singly walking along empty streets, that may be especially uncomfortable for people with heart failure or respiratory system disorders. Another concern is that many people let their mask down on the chin, walking singly along the street and then lift it up again, entering a shop with the hands that were in contact with their bags, purses, money, doorhandles, banisters. Also the mask worn not properly (f.i. on the chin) gets in touch with scarves, collars, hair that hypothetically might be infected with SARS-CoV-2 and after that this mask again is lifted up on the nose and mouth.

In general, the people in Ukraine seem to be disciplined concerning keeping quarantine measures and masks wearing, although I experienced cases when my request to keep distance or to put on a mask properly was treated offensively or as a sign of mistrust but only when dealing with individuals with low education.

Sources: 1. Act of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of №211 “On the Prevention of Spread of the Acute Respiratory COVID-19 disease on the territory of Ukraine, caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2” from March 11, 2020 (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/211-2020-п>)

2. Own gatherings and supervisions