**Introduction**

In the aftermath of COVID-19, many organizations have been profoundly impacted. In many cases, a sudden switch to remote work has been forced on employees, while at the same time they must deal with other effects of this outbreak on their day-to-day lives.

At this same time, Enterprise Social Media (e.g. Zoom, Slack, Teams) have seen spikes in their adoption to address an increased need for remote collaboration.

We examine the implications of COVID-19 for how and with whom employees connect as part of their work lives.

**Theoretic Framework**

Employees' behavior may be shaped by several factors:  
- Personal responses to crisis and threats  
- Influences of isolation and need to alter connections  
- Effects of remote work (virtuality) on collaboration  
- Affordances of organization communication technology  

By examining work on each of these factors separately, we can theorize about the joint effect they may have on organization communication during COVID-19.

**Data Collection**

Digital trace data, on the use of the Circuit video conferencing platform was gathered from the Chinese HR branch of a large international company.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, a survey was conducted with employees of the company about their social relations with one another.

Digital trace data was gathered both pre- and during the Covid-19 pandemic in China. Peak growth in Covid-19 corresponded with travel around the Chinese New Year, a potential cofounding factor in our analysis.

To compare across time points, digital trace data on who meets with whom was split into two-week cross sections:  
- 1/10 – 1/23 Initial spread of Covid-19  
- 1/24 – 2/6 Widespread Covid-19, Chinese New Year  
- 2/7 – 2/20 Widespread Covid-19  

**Affects of Ties on Interaction**

Using social relations from survey data collected in December, we examine how dyads with these relations interacted differently on Circuit during Covid-19.

**Conclusions**

Overall, the number of people interacting over Circuit decreased during the period of initial spread of Covid-19 in the Chinese holiday, but in the end increased.

While initially tended to shrink their network of contacts while Covid-19 was spreading, over time they began to expand their network of digital connections.

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