

Mars trip wearing thin

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MOSCOW. Six men who have been isolated together since June 2010 in a simulated mission to Mars are reaching their mental limits.

The crew of three Russians, one Italian, a Chinese national and a Frenchman were trying to simulate 520 days in space, the length of time scientists estimate would be needed for a round trip to the red planet. The men are "mentally drained" after their experience in a container in Moscow, project manager Yevgeni Dyomin said.

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But Mr Dyomin said they are determined to complete the project, which ends in November.

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Their activities are documented by cameras to see whether they complete the allotted 105 research assignments. There is no actual trip to Mars planned.