



## Participant Information Sheet

### **REC reference number, date and version of information sheet**

ETH2021-2173

24<sup>th</sup> June 2021

V3

### **Title of study**

Social Touch Deprivation: Investigating whether obsessive-compulsive symptoms influence responses to touch and peripersonal space.

### **Name of principle investigator/research**

Emma McFadden

### **Invitation Paragraph**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. A copy of this information sheet is available for download at the bottom of this form.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a variety of changes to everyday life in order to manage the rate of infection. The most notable upheaval to daily life were the 'physical distancing' measures which were introduced to limit the interactions people had with each other. Emerging data investigating obsessive-compulsive symptoms pre and post COVID-19 restrictions suggests that the constraints of the pandemic have worsened symptoms.

Touch is understood to be an important aspect in the development and maintenance of social connections, fostering general wellbeing. Personal space is the area surrounding the body through which we are able to interact and operate control over items. It is a key aspect to daily conscious experience because it creates a feeling of ownership over the body and self.

As part of my master's dissertation, we are conducting this experiment to investigate whether those who report high obsessive-compulsive symptoms differ in their responses to videos of observed touch and personal space.



### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are over the age of 18 and are interested in sharing your experiences of touch and personal space with respect to the conditions of the experiment. This study hopes to collect data from 200 participants.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation in the project is voluntary and anonymous. To preserve anonymity, you will not be asked to provide any identifiable information and IP addresses will not be stored. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to read an online consent form and actively give consent by ticking a box under the form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You will not be able to withdraw your data after completing the study.

### **What will happen if I take part and what do I have to do?**

After answering some demographic questions (age, gender etc.) you will be asked questions relating to your physical distancing experiences. Then, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which is designed to measure obsessive behaviour. Finally, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will ask questions related to positive childhood touch experiences, current self-care actions and sexual behaviours. These questionnaires do not provide a diagnosis and everyone scores along the scales given.

You will be asked to view and rate a randomised sequence of 16 short videos (10s). The videos will be categorised into two groups showing varying instances of touch interaction and personal space. Immediately after watching it, you will be asked to rate how pleasurable each video was to watch. The study should take approximately 25 minutes.

### **What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?**

The disadvantages of this experiment for you are minimal. However, it is acknowledged that for participants with high obsessive-compulsive symptoms, this may be a sensitive topic. Additionally, as part of the second questionnaire related to experience of touch, you will be asked questions regarding sexual behaviours which some may feel uncomfortable answering. Videos of social scenes and touch may be perceived as upsetting. Accordingly, if any part of this experiment causes distress, please consider contacting your general practitioner (during office hours), dial 111 (out of hours) or contact one of the following support lines:

#### *Anxiety UK*

Charity providing support if you've been diagnosed with an anxiety condition. Phone: 03444 775 774 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 5.30pm) Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)



### *OCD Action*

Support for people with OCD. Includes information on treatment and online resources.

Phone: 0845 390 6232 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 5pm)

Website: [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)

### *Samaritans*

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### *Therapy Route*

An extensive list of helplines, crisis lines and suicide hotlines from all over the world.

<https://www.therapyroute.com/article/helplines-suicide-hotlines-and-crisis-lines-from-around-the-world>

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Your participation will facilitate the data collection of a master's dissertation and publication of the results in a scientific journal.

### **Data privacy statement**

City, University of London is the sponsor and the data controller of this study based in the United Kingdom. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The legal basis under which your data will be processed is City's public task.

Your right to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in a specific way in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal-identifiable information possible (for further information please see <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/public-task/>).

### **What will happen to the results?**

The results of the study will be used to prepare a master's dissertation and later publication in a scientific journal to aid our understanding of social touch and interactions considering the impact of the pandemic. Analysis of data and its presentation will be based on all the data collected.

### **Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been approved by City, University of London Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through City's complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to



phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is *Social Touch Deprivation: Investigating whether obsessive-compulsive symptoms influence responses to touch and peripersonal space.*

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### **Insurance**

City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

### **Further information and contact details**

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the following:

- Prof. Tina Foster (Supervisor), Department of Psychology, at [b.forster@city.ac.uk](mailto:b.forster@city.ac.uk)
- Emma McFadden (Researcher), Department of Psychology, at [emma.mcfadden@city.ac.uk](mailto:emma.mcfadden@city.ac.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**