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## **Validating a Multidimensional Measure of Social Cognition**

### **INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS HEALTHY CONTROL GROUP - COMMUNITY**

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Kimberley Wallis and other student researchers from the School of Psychology, at the University of Newcastle. This research is supported and supervised by Dr Michelle Kelly and Dr Linda Campbell.

#### ***Why is the research being done?***

This research aims to develop a test that will allow people with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia or an acquired brain injury to be assessed for difficulties with social skills. In particular, we want to put together some tasks that investigate the ability to recognise emotions in others, understand how others may be feeling, and understand what others may be thinking. We are also interested in the effect of social networking use on these social skills.

#### ***Who can participate in the research?***

In order to better understand the sort of social difficulties experienced by people with a diagnosis of Schizophrenia or an acquired brain injury we need to include people who do and people who do not have a diagnosis of Schizophrenia or an acquired brain injury to compare performance. You are being asked to take part in this study because you have NOT been diagnosed with Schizophrenia or an acquired brain injury.

We are seeking men and women aged between 18 and 65. Participants require adequate English and normal or corrected to normal vision and hearing to complete assessments. Those who have a history of head injury, neurodegenerative disorders (e.g. dementia), major mental psychiatric history (e.g. psychosis), alcohol/drug abuse, and diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's disorder are not eligible to participate in this study.

#### ***What would you be asked to do?***

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign the consent form. This study is conducted over approximately 2 – 3 hours at the University of Newcastle or Hunter Medical Research Institute. The overall assessment involves simple tasks such as looking at photos, cartoons and videos of people engaged in everyday tasks and answering questions about them.

We will also ask you some brief questions about your education, culture, occupation, motivation and ability to describe emotions. We may also ask your consent to videorecord the session.

#### ***What choice do you have?***

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Only those people who give their informed consent

will be included in the project. If you do participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data which identifies you. Whether or not you decide to participate, please be assured that it will not affect any medical treatment you are currently receiving or may receive in the future with health or community services, or your relationship with the University of Newcastle.

***What are the risks and benefits of participating?***

We do not expect any harm or discomfort to result from participation in this study. It is possible that the completion of questionnaires may cause some psychological distress and disclosure of personal information or completion of neuropsychology tests may cause some discomfort. However, if you experience any discomfort you can take a break, come back to the question, refuse to answer or withdraw from the study.

We cannot suggest that completing these tasks will result in direct benefits. In the longer term we expect that the knowledge we gain from this study will enable clinicians to treat social skills difficulties in a variety of disorders, and use the knowledge gained from assessing this aspect of functioning in improving quality of life for people with Schizophrenia or brain injury and their families.

Participants will be reimbursed with an electronic GiftPay voucher upon the completion of study session. We will email the gift voucher to your nominated email address.

***How will your privacy be protected?***

All personally identifiable information collected from you for this study will be treated confidentially, and only the researchers named above will have access to it. All results and identifiable information will be stored on a secure computer in a password protected file. Confidentiality will be maintained by de-identifying the data, that is any identifiable data will be transformed into numerical codes and this file will be stored separately to the obtained information. Data will be retained for 7 years at the University of Newcastle.

***How will information collected be used?***

Data will be analysed for the purpose of producing student research theses. The study results may also be presented at a conference or in a scientific publication, but individual participants will not be identified in such a presentation.

Non-identified data may also be shared with other parties to encourage scientific scrutiny, and to contribute to further and public knowledge, or as required by law.

During the consent process participants will be asked to indicate if they wish to receive a summary of the results of the study.

***What do you need to do to participate?***

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please contact the researcher via email or phone.

***Taking part in future research***

If you would like, you can agree that your data can be used as part of future research projects. This

is entirely voluntary. Deciding that you do not want your data to be used in future research will not affect your participation in the current study.

You can also agree to be contacted about future research. Agreeing to be contacted does not obligate you to take part; participation in any future research is entirely voluntary.

***Further Information***

If you would like further information please contact Kimberley Wallis on Kimberley.Wallis@uon.edu.au or Dr Michelle Kelly on Michelle.Kelly@newcastle.edu.au or (02) 4921 6838.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Dr Michelle Kelly  
Project supervisor and senior lecturer

***Complaints about this research***

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2017-0359.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Services, NIER Precinct, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.