
Information Statement for the Research Project: Focus on understanding stress, resilience, and adaptability

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You are invited to participate in the FOCUS-R research project, which is being conducted by Dr Madeleine Hinwood, Dr Emily Walkom, Dr. Elizabeth Ditton, and Professor Rohan Walker from the College of Health and Wellbeing at the University of Newcastle.

Why is this research being done?

Chronic (long-term) stress contributes to poor physical and mental health. Stress management is recommended for the prevention of heart disease and mood and anxiety disorders, but it is not always clear how we can best manage stress to prevent poor health outcomes. We want to learn about how much stress people experience in Australia on a regular basis, and what they do to manage it. This will help us understand what sort of recommendations can be made about managing stress to improve health.

Who can participate in the research?

Anybody who is 18 years of age or older and living in Australia can participate in this research.

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, we will ask you to complete a one-time baseline survey, which includes some demographic and health questions. Then, we will ask you to complete a brief survey once a fortnight, telling us about your experiences with stress over the previous 2 weeks, and things that you have done to help manage your stress. We will also ask you to fill in an outcome survey every 6 months, which asks some questions about your physical and mental health. All surveys will be emailed to you for you to complete in your own time on a computer or mobile device/tablet.

In the fortnightly survey we will ask participants to share stress management techniques that have worked well. We want to shape our future research goals with your help. We will ask each fortnight if you will consent to sharing snippets of your responses with the community via our website and social media pages. Any shared information will be anonymous, with any identifying information removed. This sort of community-based research has been shown to improve the responsiveness of research to community needs. You do not have to consent to sharing this data.

What choice do you have?

This research is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. You can decide whether any data you have submitted up to that point will be kept in the study or be withdrawn.

How much time will it take?

We would love people to participate for 12 months, so we can measure stress over time. The one-off baseline survey will take about 30 minutes. The fortnightly surveys will take between 2 and 5 minutes to complete. The 6-monthly follow-up health surveys will take around 15-20 minutes to complete.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

There are no expected risks from participating in this research. However, there is a chance that you may find thinking about the stress you are feeling, and how you manage stress, upsetting. If this occurs, and you need someone to talk to, you can contact Lifeline (Phone 13 11 14, or visit the website at <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>), or to find information and support you can contact Beyond Blue (phone 1300 22 4636, or visit the website at <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>). The benefit of this research is that you may learn more about your own stress levels and how you manage stress, and you will help us to develop more knowledge about stress management to help people in the future.

How can I receive information about the study results?

We will share information about the study, and about stress management techniques shared by participants who consent to do so, throughout the life of the study on the FOCUS-R website (focusr.com.au). You can also opt-in to receive a copy of the entire study results by ticking a button on the consent form. We anticipate the study will take around 2 years, after which point these summary results will be emailed to you.

How will the information collected be used?

The data will be reported or presented in scientific journals and conferences, and in media reports. Summarised data may also be presented on our website and social media pages, and to inform future research identifying appropriate interventions for stress management. Individuals will not be identified in any presentation of data arising from the

project. Information from responses about stress management techniques will only be shared on our website and social media pages with your consent, and all identifying information will be removed. When data is collected all names will be removed and it will be stored using codes. Your name and signature will be collected for the purpose of recording your consent to participate in the project. Your email address will be collected for the purpose of sending you the ongoing surveys to complete.

How will your privacy be protected?

All data collection will occur through REDCap, a web application for building and managing online surveys and databases, via a secure encrypted connection. Your data is treated as private. The REDCap application is hosted locally on Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI) secure servers (<https://redcap.hmri.org.au/>), which are both physically and virtually secured. Data is stored on a user-based password protected server located in a locked room on the premises of HMRI with closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance. HMRI has 24-hour security personnel that monitor CCTV and swipe-card access. Swipe-card access permissions are restricted to authorised personnel.

Data will be retained securely for a minimum period of 5 years from completion of the research and managed/stored in accordance with the University's Research Data and Materials Management Guideline (see <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=72>) or any successor guideline, and applicable University of Newcastle policy provisions (as amended from time to time). Access to any identifiable data will be restricted to members of the research team, unless you have consented otherwise, or disclosure is required by law in order for us to comply with our regulatory obligations.

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. Please also feel free to discuss this project with your family and friends. If there is anything you do not understand, or you would like further information, please contact the study team at:

Email: madeleine.hinwood@newcastle.edu.au

Phone: 0414 584 631

If you would like to participate, please answer "Yes" to the question below, and fill out the electronic consent form. An email will be sent to the address provided with a link to the first survey.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University of Newcastle's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-[#####]. 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 & Innovation Services, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

Please provide your name and an email address so that we can send you links to complete each survey.

Please note that all identifying information, including your name and email address, will only be used to contact you with your survey links. Identifying information will be stored separately from your survey responses.

What is your first name?

What is your last name?

What is your email address?

Please sign to confirm your consent to participate

(click or tap on "Add Signature" to sign with your mouse or finger)

Date consent form signed

(Click or tap on "Today" for today's date.)