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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: R80442_RE001

An online study examining coping strategies used by people with different types of anxiety.

My name is Bradley Mullins and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of Oxford, working with Paul Salkovskis and team. This is an invitation to take part in our research study.

Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this Participant Information Sheet, and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us by emailing the researcher at Bradley.Mullins@hmc.ox.ac.uk.

What is the purpose of the study?

When individuals become distressed by anxiety, they will often turn to others for help. Sometimes they will seek reassurance that there is nothing to worry about or that they are safe from harm. Other times they will seek emotional support to help them better manage the distress. These two approaches are known as reassurance seeking and support seeking behaviours. While these are a normal part of how people manage anxiety, they can have different effects on the management of specific types of anxiety.

The aim of this current study is to determine if there are differences in the use of reassurance and support seeking in people who have OCD, health anxiety, and people who do not have these types of anxiety.

Why have I been invited?

We are happy to hear from a full range of people aged 18 years or older. We are looking to compare the experiences of 3 groups of people:

1. Consider themselves to have a **significant level of worry about their health.**
2. Consider themselves to have **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**
3. Have **no current experience of these types of anxiety.**

You are welcome to participate if you identify with one of the 3 above groups. We are expecting to include at least 90 people (30 in each group) in this research project.

Do I have to take part?

No, taking part is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any point during the study without giving a reason. However, once you have completed the study, your contact details will be deleted. This means the research team cannot identify your individual responses and you will be unable to withdraw your data.

What will happen to me if I decide to take part?

We would like you to contact the researcher using the following email Bradley.Mullins@hmc.ox.ac.uk. You will then be sent a link to complete an online consent form. Once this is completed, we will contact you to arrange a time that best suits you for an online voice or video appointment to begin the study.

This entire study will be conducted in two parts. These will be (1) a screening interview by online voice/video calls (e.g. MS Teams), and (2) completing several online questionnaires.

For the screening interview, yourself and the researcher will arrange a time at your convenience to speak for 15 minutes. The researcher will ask you some questions to determine which of the three participant groups you will be allocated to. These are: OCD, health anxiety, or to confirm you are not currently experiencing either of these difficulties. This interview will involve questions from a structured interview that is used widely across the globe in psychological research and in clinical practice. The researcher may also ask you some additional follow-up questions based on your responses. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions that you like. Our discussion will not be recorded, although the researcher will take notes at this stage.

Following the screening interview, you will be invited to complete several online questionnaires that will be sent to your email address. For most people, the questionnaires will be completed online via the online platform Qualtrics. Alternatively, you can request the questionnaires be sent by post in paper format if you prefer. This study is also developing a new questionnaire, so we will be asking some participants to complete the questionnaires a second time to help us test its reliability. If you agree to this, you will be sent a second email within 7-14 days of submitting the first response.

Some of the questionnaires will ask you about your mental health generally, one questionnaire will ask you about your use of reassurance as a coping strategy, and another questionnaire asks you about your use of support seeking to help manage anxiety. This portion of the study will take approximately 30-45 minutes. You can log in and log out of the program at your convenience if you would like to take a break from the questionnaires.

Are there any disadvantages/risks from taking part?

Taking part will take approximately 60 minutes of your time in total. We believe it is unlikely that anyone will experience harm from participating in this project. However, it is possible

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you might find answering the questions upsetting. If this is the case, you can either take a break from the study and return to it later, or withdraw from the study at any point.

The NHS can help if you think you are suffering from a mental illness. There are also many charities who can provide advice, emotional and practical support. If you are concerned about your mental health, we encourage you to speak to your GP who can then refer you for further specialist help.

Sources of advice and support

1. Your General Practitioner
2. NHS 111
3. Helplines:
 - a. The Samaritans 116 123
 - b. SANE 0300 304 7000 or <http://www.sane.org.uk/>
4. Your local IAPT service (England Only) –
<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-a-psychological-therapies-service>
5. Online Self-help guides by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
<https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed, and approved, by a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (ref: R80442_RE001).

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We hope that your participation in this will help us understand how people use different types of coping strategies when they are feeling anxious. This may contribute to the development of other treatments. However, there are no direct benefits to those participating.

What happens to the information I provide?

The information you provide during the study is the **research data**. Any research data from which you can be identified (i.e. consent form, email address, telephone number and home address, should you request the questionnaires by post) is known as **personal data**.

Personal data will be kept on a password protected file and stored on Oxford University's secured network. All identifiable information (i.e. contact details & consent forms) will be stored separately from the rest of the data. Your contact details will be deleted once you have finished your involvement with the study. Your consent form will be kept in a password protected file in a secured folder on the university network and will be deleted 3 years after the close of the study.

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Questionnaire data will be stored separately from your consent form in a password protected file on a secured folder on the university's network. It will be stored for 3 years after publication or public release of the research and then will then be permanently deleted.

All paper copies received will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a room with restricted access, at the Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training and Research (OxICPTR). The information received on paper versions will be manually entered on to Qualtrics by the research team. Once the data has been entered, the physical copies will be scanned and stored in a password protected file in a secured folder on the university network. The physical copies will be destroyed once they have been converted to digital versions. The digital copies will be stored for 3 years after publication or public release of the research and will then be permanently deleted.

The researchers involved in this study will have access to the research data. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to the data for monitoring and and/or audit of the research. All personal information that could identify you will be removed or changed before information is shared with other researchers or results are made public.

Using the **research data**, we hope to report our findings in academic journals and present them to relevant charities, and to health professionals at conferences. The results of this project will also be written up as part of my dissertation for the fulfilment of my doctorate in clinical psychology. My dissertation will be deposited both in print and online in the Oxford University Research Archive. You will not be identified in any reports or publications arising from the study.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study.

The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest.

Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact Bradley Mullins (Bradley.Mullins@hmc.ox.ac.uk, 01865 226431) or Professor Paul Salkovskis (paul.salkovskis@hmc.ox.ac.uk, 01865 226431) and we will do our best to answer your query.

We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

Email: ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, Headington, Oxford OX3 7GB.

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I'm Interested! What's Next?

If you would like to participate, please email the following to set up a telephone interview:
Bradley.Mullins@hmc.ox.ac.uk

Bradley Mullins
Trainee Clinical Psychologist
Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training
Isis Education Centre
Warneford Hospital
Headington, Oxford
OX3 7JX
Bradley.Mullins@hmc.ox.ac.uk



You can also speak to the supervisors of the project about any questions or concerns using the details below:

Professor Paul Salkovskis (University of Oxford) - paul.salkovskis@hmc.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for your interest in the project.

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