Evaluating Stress Management Strategies

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to take part in a research project evaluating stress management strategies. We are looking for 60 to 90 healthy volunteers to partake in this study.

This project is being supervised by Dr. Anna Serlachius (Lecturer in Health Psychology), co-supervised by Dr. Nathan Consedine (Professor, Department of Psychological Medicine) and carried out by Jennifer Brenton-Peters (PhD Student in Health Psychology).

It is important to read this document carefully so that you can make an informed decision about whether you would like to participate.

Procedure: If you would like to participate you will be asked to fill out an online survey pertaining to your general demographics, health behaviours, coping and stress levels which will take approximately 30 minutes. You will also be asked to attend an experimental session at the University of Auckland, Grafton Campus. The timing of this session will be arranged once you have confirmed your participation. The session will take approximately 1-1.5 hours. You will need to turn off your phones and place all your belongings in a secure drawer during the experimental session.

Physiological measures. Your heart rate (HR) and heart rate variability (HRV; the variation in the time interval between heartbeats) will be used to measure physiological arousal, using a Polar V800 heart rate monitor throughout the study.

Questionnaires. During the experimental session you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires pertaining to your health behaviours, mood and stress levels. You do not have to answer a question if you feel uncomfortable doing so.

Written Intervention. Upon beginning the study you will be randomised to one of two writing conditions.

Stress Induction. The study requires you to feel mildly to moderately stressed. You will be asked to complete a task that has been shown to increase stress levels in most individuals.
Your rights as a participant: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate you can change your mind at any time, including during a session, without giving a reason and without any negative consequences by emailing the student researcher (jbre092@aucklanduni.ac.nz). You may also withdraw your data up to two weeks after completing the study, in which case the data will be securely destroyed. You will be given a copy of this document to keep.

If you are a student of the researchers we give our assurance that your participation or non-participation in this study will have no effect on your grades or relationship with the University and that you may contact your Academic Unit Head should you feel that this assurance has not been met.

Koha: For your participation you will be provided with a free lunch ($20 value). You will receive this irrespective of whether you withdraw during the study.

Risks and discomforts: The procedures outlined in this protocol are minimally invasive and have been performed in other research settings. A full study debrief will be provided immediately after the experiment is complete. Information on where to find additional psychological support will also be provided.

Please note: Your researcher is not medically trained and therefore is unable to make any clinical observations about your physiological measures or mental states during the sessions.

Confidentiality: Your data (questionnaire responses, HR) will be used to test the study’s hypotheses. Statistical analyses will be performed, the results of which will then be discussed in research reports. Research publications and presentations from the study will not contain any information that could personally identify you, only averages will be presented.

Any information that identifies you as a participant will be used confidentiality and kept in a secure location. Your name will appear only on your Consent Form, which will be coded with an alphanumeric participation identification number. This identification number is used to de-identify all other data, ensuring your identity is kept confidential. Your data will only be referred to or labelled with this number. The Consent Form will only be seen by you and the researchers, and will be kept in a secure filing cabinet in the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Auckland for a period of 6 years to allow for publication and future analysis.

Your de-identified electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer and backed up on a University of Auckland server indefinitely. All hard copies of your data will be destroyed after a period of 6 years. This will be done by shredding physical data.

Results: A summary of the research’s findings can be emailed to you upon request. Please write your email address in the space provided on the consent form. As it takes some time to analyse the results of the study, it may be more than one year after your participation that you receive this summary.

Contact details: We appreciate the time you have taken to read this information. If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact;
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Alternative Contacts:
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Or the Head of the Department of Psychological Medicine, Professor Sally Merry.
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns, contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON AUGUST 5, 2019 FOR 3 YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 023413