

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS (‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)

FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1. Title of study

Exploring eating behaviours in adults with obsessive-compulsive disorder (part one)

2. Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a study for a PhD. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important that you understand the study that is being undertaken and what your involvement will include. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask us anything that is not clear or for any further information you would like to help you make your decision. Please do take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. The University’s regulation, UPR RE01, ‘Studies Involving the Use of Human Participants’ can be accessed via this link: <https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs>

(after accessing this website, scroll down to Letter S where you will find the regulation)
Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to explore eating behaviours in those with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Previous research has highlighted that individuals with OCD may be more likely to be diagnosed with an eating disorder, or present with certain eating behaviours. Eating behaviours can range from disordered eating, which often includes excessive restriction or bingeing, or general eating behaviours, such as fussy eating. Whilst we know that those with OCD are more likely to display different eating behaviours, less is known about which specific eating behaviours are the most common.

Moreover, we do not know why those with OCD are more likely to have different eating behaviours. Some research has found that other factors, such as sensory sensitivity or emotion regulation, may influence our food choices and eating behaviours. Therefore, the study also hopes to find out whether other factors may be involved in the eating behaviours of those with OCD.

It is hoped that the study will provide a better understanding of which eating behaviours occur in those with OCD and why. Findings from the study will help to inform future research which aims to provide better support for those with OCD who experience difficulties with their eating. Please note this study is being undertaken as a part of a PhD research project which explores atypical eating behaviours in OCD.

4. Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it. You are free to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason.

5. Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?

This study is aimed at adults (aged 18-65) with a diagnosis of OCD, or those self-identifying with having OCD. This is defined by at least one of the below:

- Has a diagnosis of OCD
- Has been told they have OCD by health professional
- Has received treatment or is receiving treatment for OCD (e.g., psychological therapies including cognitive behavioural therapy, or medication).

To participate, you must also have sufficient understanding of the English language to complete the online questionnaires.

6. How long will my part in the study take?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be involved in it for approximately 30-40 minutes.

7. What will happen to me if I take part?

The study is completed online and you can complete this independently, or with the researcher. If you would like someone to help with completing the questionnaires, the researcher can provide you with over the phone or over video call (e.g., over Microsoft teams or Zoom). Please send an email to the researcher (s.kucukterzi2@herts.ac.uk) if you would like support with the questionnaires.

If you choose to take part, you will first be asked to provide your informed consent to go ahead with the research. Upon providing informed consent, you will create a participant ID and answer some demographic questions (e.g., gender and age). Thereafter you will be presented with a series of questionnaires about your OCD symptoms, eating behaviours and factors which may contribute towards eating behaviours. The researcher's contact details will also be available should you have any questions.

As a small thank you, those who complete the study will also be provided with a £10 gift voucher for taking part. When you have completed the study, you will be asked to email the researcher with your participant ID to receive your gift card. You will also have the opportunity to express interest in a further study which involves taking part in an interview about your eating experiences.

8. What are the possible disadvantages, risks or side effects of taking part?

Some of the questionnaires used in the study are used to assess OCD symptoms and eating behaviours, and it is possible that some of the questions may make you feel distressed. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the study, you can pause completing the questionnaires or withdraw from the research. The study questionnaires are not designed to diagnose OCD or disordered eating but if you feel concerned about the questions being asked, information on how to seek support will be provided at the end of the study.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Eating is a crucial part of our day-to-day lives, and it is fundamental for our physical and mental health. Disordered, or atypical, eating behaviours (such as restrictive or fussy eating), in excess, may have a negative impact on our health. Whilst we know that these eating behaviours may be more common in OCD, we do not know why. Therefore, designing support to help individuals with atypical eating behaviours is limited by our lack of knowledge. By taking part in this study, you will be helping the researchers to understand why atypical eating behaviours occur in those with OCD. It is also hoped that the findings from the study will contribute towards future research which aims to provide better support for those who experience these difficulties.

10. How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your participation will remain confidential through the use of a participant ID which you will create at the start of the study. Your participant ID code will not be used to check your answers and will only be used to see if the study has been completed. The data from this study will only be accessed by the research team, consisting of the lead researcher and their research supervisor. All the data provided will be stored on a password protected file on the one drive which will only be accessible to main research team, for no more than five years after completion of the study for the purpose of publication, as per the data protection law (1988). This study has received ethical approval from the University of Hertfordshire.

11. What will happen to the data collected within this study?

The data will be anonymised prior to storage. The data collected will be stored on a secure server, in which the database will be password protected and encrypted, for no more than five years after completion of the study (in accordance with the APA and BPS regulations). In the hope to publish the findings in this time, after which time it will be destroyed under secure conditions.

You will also be asked to provide your email during the study, but this is solely for the purposes of sending a digital gift card. You will not be contacted about the study, or future studies, unless you consent to this at the end of the questionnaire.

12. Will the data be required for use in further studies?

The results of this study will be used as part of the researchers PhD thesis, and to promote future research understanding and recognition amongst experiences of eating and diet in those with OCD. The results may also be published. Any information that could be used to identify individuals will be removed from published material.

13. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by the University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is LMS/PGR/UH/05462(2)

14. Who can I contact if I have any questions?

If you would like further information or would like to discuss any details personally, please get in touch with the lead researcher or research supervisor by phone or by email:

Lead researcher:

Sonay Kucukterzi-Ali

Email: s.kucukterzi@herts.ac.uk

Research supervisor:

Dr Amanda Ludlow

Email: a.ludlow@herts.ac.uk