PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

School of Psychology

Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

Northumbria University

Project Title: Sexual Shame in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: A Mediation Analysis of Sexual Outcomes.

Researchers*:*

Main Researcher: Jay Evans (jay4.evans@northumbria.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Johannes Honekopp (johannes.honekopp@northumbria.ac.uk)

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide if you would like to take part, it is important that you read this document so you understand why the study is being carried out and what it will involve.

Reading this document, discussing it with others, or asking any questions you might have will help you decide whether you would like to take part.

What is the Purpose of the Study?

The purpose of this study is to examine how obsessive-compulsive disorder symptoms relate to sexual wellbeing and desire in adults with OCD. The findings address a gap in current knowledge and may support the design of future interventions. I am conducting this study as part of my thesis for Level 6 BSc in Psychology at Northumbria University.

Why have I been invited?

You can take part if you are aged 18 years or over, you self-certify that you have received an OCD diagnosis and/or treatment, and you have experienced obsessions (i.e. intrusive thoughts) and/or compulsions that may relate to sexual, harm, religious, moral, or contamination themes.

OCD is a misunderstood disorder that is not simply about cleanliness or being tidy, it can involve intrusive thoughts and compulsions across many different themes. If you do not have an OCD diagnosis or prior treatment, the questions may not reflect your experiences and your responses may not be suitable for this study, please participate accordingly.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is voluntary, and you should only take part if you believe you meet the eligibility criteria and feel comfortable completing the survey. This information sheet is provided to help you decide whether you want to participate. You should not take part if you feel that questions about sexual shame, intrusive thoughts, or sexual wellbeing/desire would be distressing for you at this time.

If you decide to take part, you can stop at any point while completing the survey without giving a reason. If you stop early, your responses will not be used unless you submit the survey. After you have submitted the survey, you can request withdrawal of your data by emailing the researcher and providing your participant ID code. You can do this up until **seven days** after you complete the study. After this point, withdrawal will not be possible because the data may have been anonymised and analysed. Details of contact information will be provided at the end of this information sheet.

What will happen if I take part?

After reading this information sheet, you will provide informed consent and confirm that you fit within the inclusion criteria. You will create a memorable unique code so that your responses are not linked to your identity.

You will provide demographic information limited to age and gender and complete four questionnaires covering OCD symptom severity, sexual shame, and sexual wellbeing and sexual desire. This should approximately take 15 minutes. On finishing, you will review a debrief sheet that summarises the purpose of the study, explains how your data will be used, provides researcher contact details, and lists mental health support resources. There are no follow up sessions.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

We appreciate you taking approximately 15-20 minutes of your time to complete this study. Some people may find some elements of the study personal and uncomfortable to answer. We understand that OCD can be distressing for the sufferers, so some items within the questionnaires may cause discomfort because they address intrusive thoughts, shame, and sexual wellbeing/desire. We are asking these questions because we would like to better understand people's experiences. We have attempted to reduce the level of distress you may experience by providing mental health support links and making possible participants aware of this. If you think that you may find the topic of this study distressing please consider whether or not you would like to take part, or withdraw during the study and refer to the mental health resources provided below.

Please note that many of these links are UK based. Some global resources have been provided. If you're outside the UK, you may need to consult your country's primary mental health services for additional guidance.

OCD Specific Support:

- OCD-UK: https://www.ocduk.org/
- OCD Action: https://ocdaction.org.uk
- International OCD Foundation (IOCDF): https://iocdf.org

Relationships and Sexual Wellbeing:

- Brook: https://www.brook.org.uk/
- Relate: https://www.relate.org.uk/
- World Association for Sexual Health (WAS): https://worldsexology.org/

Mental Health & Crisis Support:

- Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/
- Samaritans: https://www.samaritans.org/

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your responses will contribute to research on how sexual shame relates to sexual wellbeing/desire in adults with OCD. This will help address a gap in understanding the relationship between OCD symptoms, sexual shame, sexual wellbeing and desire. This evidence may inform future research, clinical understanding, and support.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential and anonymous?

Yes. The study collects questionnaire responses and basic demographic information such as age and gender, but not names or contact details. This means the research team cannot identify you from your responses. You can withdraw your data up until a week after your response has been submitted. However if the data has been cleaned this may not be possible.

How will my data be stored, and how long will it be stored for?

All information and data gathered during this research will be stored on password protected files within OneDrive in accordance with Northumbria University guideline and Data Protection Act (2018). The OneDrive belongs to the university organization, only the research team has access to it.

What categories of personal data will be collected and processed in this study?

We will not collect any personal data for this study.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The general findings of this study and the data underpinning it might be reported in a scientific journal, or presented at a research conference. If you would like to be provided with a summary of the findings from the study, please email the main researcher, Jay Evans (jay4.evans@northumbria.ac.uk)

Who is organising and funding the study?

Northumbria University has organised this study. This is part of Level 6 BSc Psychology dissertation project.

Who has reviewed this study?

The research project has been approved in Northumbria University's Ethics Online system (Project ID: XXXXXX). It has been reviewed to safeguard your interests and approval has been granted to conduct the study.

What are my rights as a participant in this study?

Your individual rights under GDPR can be found via this link: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/individual-rights/individual-rights/

Contacts for further information

Main Researcher: Jay Evans (jay4.evans@northumbria.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Johannes Honekopp (johannes.honekopp@northumbria.ac.uk)

Name and contact details for independent information or advice about the project: Dr Jenny Paterson (jenny.paterson@northumbria.ac.uk)

Name and contact details of the Records and Information Officer at Northumbria University: Duncan James (dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk).

You can find out more about how we use your information at our GDPR webpage, or by contacting a member of the research team.