



Participant Information Leaflet for students – Focus groups

Study Title: **Eating Alone or Together (EATEx): Exploring social aspects of students' eating practices**

Investigator(s): Helena Tuomainen, Daniel Mensah, Bruno Wu

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising and funding the study?

The study is organised by researchers working at the University of Warwick in the Youth Mental Health Theme of Applied Research Collaboration West Midlands (ARC WM), funded by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR).

What is the study about?

The study explores the social aspects of eating on a university campus, and the potential of an App to increase opportunities to connect with others at lunchtime and/or other meal times.

The number and quality of close friendships has a significant and direct impact on health and wellbeing. Over 15% of students in the UK feel lonely on a daily and a third on a weekly basis. One of the primary intervention strategies to reduce loneliness is increasing opportunities for social contact.

Interventions involving eating together at shared mealtimes aimed at increasing opportunities for social contact have usually been targeted at older people or institutionalised populations. The concept of a mealtime intervention has not been applied to a (healthy) younger adult population, or in a university setting.

We are developing an App to help (undergraduate) students connect with others during lunchtime or other meal times. This research will inform the development of the App and its implementation in practice.

What would taking part involve?

Taking part in the study will involve attending an online (virtual) focus group interview which will be audio recorded, and completing a brief demographic questionnaire before the focus group.

The focus group will be conducted online via Teams at a time suitable for most interested participants. We hope to engage up to eight undergraduate students in a focus group which will last approximately 50-60 minutes. The focus group will explore students' views on eating on campus (pre/post Covid), social aspects of eating, and the App features and options.

The researcher will agree a time and date with you to join. Once this is agreed a link to a Teams meeting will be sent to you via email. You will need to click on the link to access the meeting.

The demographic questionnaire will be sent together with the consent form, and should be completed and returned to the researcher before taking part in the focus group.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and choosing not to take part will not affect you in any way. You can also choose to withdraw your participation at any time, without giving a reason by contacting one of the research team. Further details about withdrawing from the study are provided later on in this document.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

There are no anticipated possible benefits that the participant may get from taking part in this study. However, your views may shape the development of the App and its implementation.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

A disadvantage is the time it takes to participate in the focus group interview. There are no known side effects or risks associated with participation in this study.

However, participants may feel upset talking about their experiences. Given that the research will be conducted by experienced researchers this will be sensitively handled.

If after seeing or speaking to the researcher you feel upset and feel like talking to someone, you can contact the Samaritans (116 123), who offer a free private and confidential counselling service. Calls are free from a mobile and won't appear on your home phone bill. Alternatively you can contact the University of Warwick wellbeing support services on 024 7657 5570 Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm (Friday until 4pm). They also have a number of self-help resources on various topics, at <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/topics/>.

Expenses and payments

During Covid-19 restrictions, interviews will happen online or on campus (1-2-1 only), so you should not incur any (additional) travel costs or other expenses.

You will receive a token of appreciation for your time for taking part in the focus group interview. This will be a £10 Love2Shop voucher.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

- Data will be collected using audio recordings, it will be transcribed using transcription software or via a professional university approved transcription service.
- Transcripts will be anonymised and stored within the University of Warwick internal electronic secure network
- Audio recordings will be deleted once transcripts have been checked for accuracy.

- The data will be accessible to the research team, (outlined above) and a potentially a professional transcription service (only for the duration of the transcription period).
- Anonymised data will not be shared with any other organisation
- No personal data will be transferred outside of the EEA (European Economic Area)
- There are limits to maintaining confidentiality; if you were to disclose that you, and/or others (in this scenario it is most likely students) may be at risk of harm, there is a duty of care to report this to the relevant authorities
- Anonymised direct quotes may be used in a subsequent research report/publication. The nature of a direct quote means there is a potential that you could be identified directly or indirectly

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly-funded organisation, the University of Warwick have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation. The University of Warwick will keep information about you until the final report has been produced and all intended papers have been published.

Research data will be **anonymised** as quickly as possible after data collection. This means all direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from the research data and will be replaced with a participant number and generic descriptors. The key to identification will be stored separately and securely to the research data to safeguard your identity. Once data has been anonymised it will not be possible to withdraw your data from the study.

Data Sharing

Data will be shared only within the University of Warwick.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe.

This data may also be used for future research, including impact activities following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

For further information, please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice> or by contacting the Information and Data Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and a decision to withdraw participation from the study without giving a reason, will not affect you in any way. To withdraw from participating in the study prior to participation please contact the researcher (see contact details below); to withdraw from participation during the study please inform the researcher responsible for the interview/focus group at your earliest convenience. If you withdraw whilst being interviewed, information already collected cannot be deleted. If you withdraw from the study after participation, it will not be possible to withdraw your data which has already been collected after it has been anonymised. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-

identifiable information possible and keep the data secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will inform the development of the App, and subsequent studies to test its feasibility and effectiveness. We also anticipate that the results will be submitted to a scientific journal for publication, and presented at a conference linked to student wellbeing and mental health.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Warwick's Biomedical & Scientific Research Ethics Committee (BSREC): **BSREC 08/20-21**.

Who should I contact if I want further information?

Helena Tuomainen

Email: helena.tuomainen@warwick.ac.uk

Telephone: 024 765 28205

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study:

Head of Research Governance

Jane Prewett

Research & Impact Services

University House

University of Warwick

Coventry

CV4 8UW

Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk

Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer, Anjeli Bajaj, Information and Data Director who will investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet