

27<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Dear Parent/guardian,

We are writing to inform you that your child has been invited to take part in a research study titled "*Does a novel training programme improve working memory*", organised by the University of Exeter. The aim of this study is to examine whether repeated practice at a computerised working memory task over a 20 day period improves cognitive control capabilities in adolescents aged 16 years and older.

I have enclosed a study information sheet for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information (contact details can be found at the end of the information sheet).

If you **would not** like your child to participate in this study, then please complete and return the 'opt out' form enclosed, by **27<sup>th</sup> April 2015**.

On behalf of the research team at the University of Exeter, I would like to thank you and your child for your time. Your child's participation in this study is very much valued.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Anna Adlam and Dr Henrietta Roberts

Sir Henry Wellcome Building for Mood Disorder Research,  
School of Psychology,  
College of Life and Environmental Sciences,  
University of Exeter,  
Exeter.  
EX4 4QG

## Study Information Sheet

### Does a novel training programme improve working memory?

#### **WHO IS ORGANISING THIS RESEARCH?**

This research is being conducted by Dr Anna Adlam and Dr Henrietta Roberts at the Mood Disorders Centre at the University of Exeter, and is supported by the Wellcome Trust. The Mood Disorders Centre promotes research, practice and training of benefit to people with mood disorders.

#### **WHO HAS REVIEWED THIS STUDY?**

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Exeter Ethics Committee.

#### **WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT**

In this study we are examining whether repeated practice at a novel computerised working memory task over a 20 day period improves cognitive control capabilities (as measured by other unpractised tasks) in adolescents aged 16 and older.

#### **WHY HAS YOUR CHILD BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?**

We are recruiting adolescents aged between 16 and 18 years. We have invited your child to take part because of their age.

#### **DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO TAKE PART?**

No, it is up to your child to decide whether they wish to take part. If your child decides not to take part, then we will respect their decision. If your child decides that they would like to take part they can give written consent for their participation on the day of assessment. Your child will have already been given an information sheet about the research for them to keep. Your child will be free to change their mind about their participation and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

Should you decide that you **would not** like your child to take part, then we will respect your decision and your child will not be penalised in any way. Please sign and return (via your child) the 'opt out' form attached if you would not like your child to participate.

#### **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN TAKING PART?**

We have met with your child, in a group, to explain some details about the study. You have received this information sheet because your child has expressed an interest in participating in this research. Your child has been informed about a first assessment session that they can participate in at a later date.

The study involves attending two assessment sessions with a member of the research team, and completing 20-30 minutes of daily practice of the computerised cognitive training task at home over a 20 day period in between these two sessions. Each assessment session will take approximately 90 minutes and can be completed at the Mood Disorders Centre. If your child completes all 20 days of practice then they will be reimbursed £20 for their time and contributions to our research. This will be given to them when you complete the second assessment session.

On the day of the first assessment we will meet with your child again individually to explain more about the study and procedure. Your child will then be asked to complete and return a consent form. In each assessment session we will ask your child to complete some short tasks designed to measure different aspects of cognitive control. We will also ask them to fill out some brief pencil and paper questionnaires. We will also ask them to complete a short exercise that involves identifying and spending a few minutes thinking about a recent

problem or difficulty. We will then ask them to complete a breathing exercise that involves paying attention to their natural breathing patterns over a short period of time.

The home training involves being randomised to one of three novel training programmes. Your child will not be told which training programme they have received until the end of the study. At this point, if we find that one training programme is more helpful than another, and if they did not complete the more helpful version, then we will give them the opportunity to do this should they wish to. They will not be reimbursed for completing a second training programme and their scores for this will not be included in the study. The home training will involve spending 20-30 minutes each day for 20 days practicing a task on their personal computer. This task will be explained in detail when they come to the first assessment session, and will be accessible by logging into a secure website which is hosting the training.

At the end of the study your child will have an opportunity to discuss their experiences of participating in the study and ask any further questions about the research.

### **ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO MY CHILD?**

The study will involve completing measures of working memory, executive function, and mood and thinking processes using paper and pencil tasks and a computer. Although the questionnaires in the study will not ask about highly personal topics, they will ask about your child's current mood state and how your child usually feels and acts, and as such it may be possible, yet unlikely, that your child may experience discomfort when answering some of these. Your child does not have to answer any question they do not wish to, and they will be free to leave the study at any time. In the unlikely event that your child becomes stressed or upset in any way, the assessments will be stopped immediately and reasons for distress will be explored.

### **WILL MY CHILD'S INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

The information your child has given which is recorded will be kept strictly confidential, except as may be required by the law or professional guidelines for psychologists. For example, if your child discloses any information that concerns the researcher (e.g., risk of harm to self or others), then Dr Anna Adlam (lead researcher and clinical psychologist) will be informed. Dr Anna Adlam will then discuss this with your child (if possible), and will inform the relevant authorities (including the school and yourself) if necessary.

All information will be identified by an identification code, not your child's name. Any form that requires your child's name (e.g., their consent form) will be stored separately from the other material. Your child's name or other identifying information will never be associated with any research reports or publications that use the results of your questionnaires.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?**

The results from this study may be submitted to peer-reviewed journals and presented at conferences and meetings. Your child's name will not be included on any research outputs and all data will be presented anonymously. We can give you an overall summary of the study findings for your information.

## **THANK YOU FOR READING THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Further information and contact details**

For further information about the project please contact **Dr Anna Adlam** ([A.R.Adlam@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:A.R.Adlam@exeter.ac.uk)) or **Dr Henrietta Roberts** ([H.Roberts@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:H.Roberts@exeter.ac.uk)) at the University of Exeter, College of Life and Environmental Sciences, Psychology, Exeter, EX4 4QG. We will be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Participant Study ID.....(for office completion)

**Does a novel training programme improve working memory?**

**PARTICIPANT OPT OUT FORM**

Please note: If you **DO NOT** return this form, then your child will have the choice of whether they would like to participate in the above study.

Researchers: Dr Anna Adlam and research team.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 27/03/2015 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
  
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that my child can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.
  
3. I confirm that **I WOULD NOT LIKE FOR MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE** in the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of **parent or guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature