

## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Title: Gender identity and sexual arousal**

#### **1. Part 1 of the information sheet**

- 1.2** Sexual orientation and gender identity form huge parts of who we are; yet we know so little about where they come from. Therefore, one of the key aims of this new research is to try and understand how these part of ourselves develop. Your participation will help us in gaining knowledge about how our sexuality is expressed and effects on this of our gender development and identity.

We therefore would like to invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Gerulf Rieger, Luke Holmes and Jamie Raines of the University of Essex. Before you decide whether you would like to participate, we would like you to consider the reasons behind the research and what exactly would be involved if you were to take part. All of this information is included in this information sheet, which we would ask you to read through carefully. If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact Jamie Raines at [jraine@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jraine@essex.ac.uk), or Luke Holmes at [lholmeb@essex.ac.uk](mailto:lholmeb@essex.ac.uk). You can also contact Gerulf Rieger at [Gerulf@essex.ac.uk](mailto:Gerulf@essex.ac.uk) or call him at 07938 620870. There are two parts to this information sheet. Part 1 explains what the purpose of the study is and what would be involved if you decide to take part. Part 2 will give you more detailed information about the context of the study. Once again, please ask us if you have any questions or if anything is unclear.

#### **1.3 What is the purpose of this study?**

Both our genes and our experiences throughout childhood help to shape the people we become, including our sexual orientation, gender identity, and our psychological health. This study is attempting to uncover what effect gender identity and biological sex have on physiological aspects of arousal. The study will focus on several aspects of an individual's upbringing as well as aspects of current life and life satisfaction. This study focuses on people with different gender identities and different sexual orientations. By comparing these groups, the researchers will explore the effect of gender identity and biological sex on physiological arousal, and attraction.

#### **1.4 Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited because we want to understand how people with different gender identities are different or similar in their sexual arousal patterns and their psychological characters.

### **1.5 Do I have to take part?**

No. Should you decide to take part in this study your participation would be voluntary and you would be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. You are free to choose not to answer particular questions or not to complete certain parts of the study if you do not want to.

### **1.6 What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, we will ask you to come to Room 4.736B of the Centre for Brain Science, Department of Psychology at the University of Essex in Colchester. There, we will ask you to complete a brief and confidential online questionnaire about yourself on Qualtrics, which is an online survey software. Questions asked include questions about your sexual identity. Then, in a private room we will monitor your eye-movements, using a specially adapted camera and an infrared eye-tracking device. You will be asked to place your head in a padded headrest whilst we calibrate your eye movements. For calibration of your eye movements we will ask you to follow with your eyes a series of dots on a screen. Once that is finished, you will view several videos on the screen, some of which are sexually explicit. Each explicit video will be about 3 minutes long and show a naked man or a naked woman, masturbating (not to orgasm). After each video, whilst remaining in the private room, you will be asked to rate your level of attraction to the person in the video.

With your permission, your genital arousal to the videos will be measured in addition to your eye movements. We will instruct you on how to insert the measurement device, which is a tampon-sized gauge, into your vagina (please see Figure 1 below). Devices are reusable and will be thoroughly disinfected using strict guidelines between uses. We will let you insert the device privately but help you with this by talking with you through an intercom. After the experimenter has left the room, you will be asked to undress from the waist down, place the device into your vagina and sit in a paper-lined reclining chair. A paper drape will be provided for you to cover your lower body. You will be instructed not to touch your genitals during the experiment. If you have questions or concerns, you can communicate with the experimenter through an intercom at any time. The experimenter will not enter the room again unless instructed by you and with your permission. With the device in place, you will then view the videos.

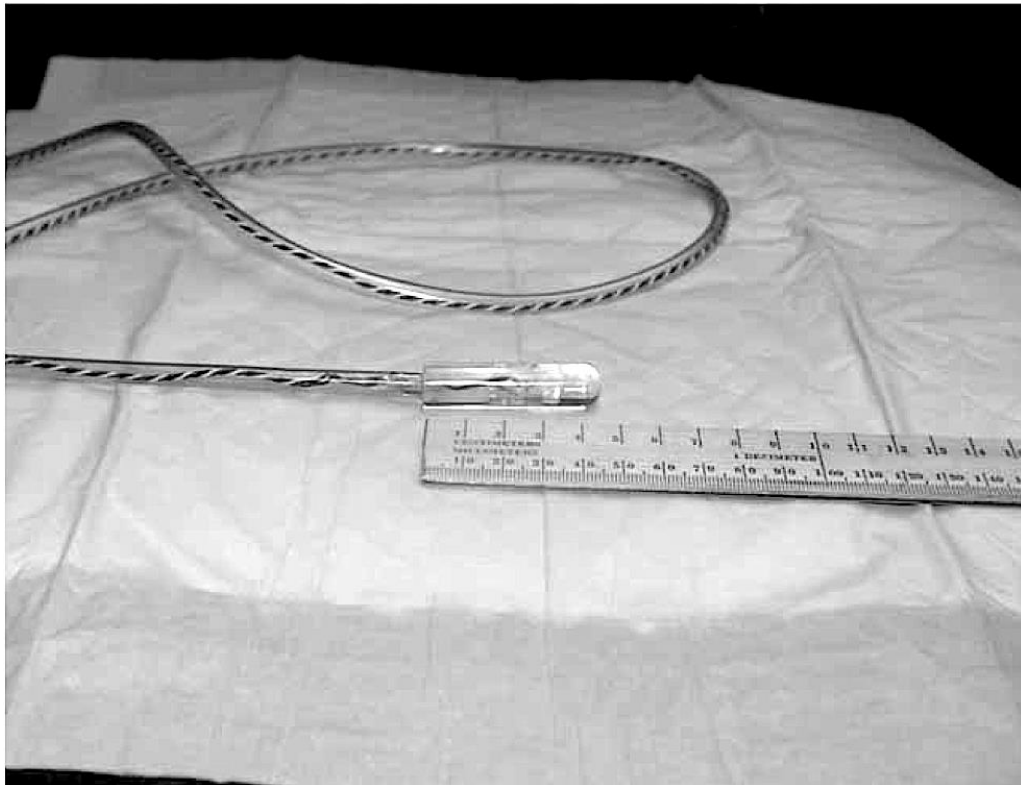


Figure 1. The vaginal probe. You will be asked to insert the measured top end of the device into your vagina.

After you are re-dressed, and with your permission, we would like to video-record you while we conduct a brief interview. We will ask you to discuss a few topics that are not linked to your sexuality (e.g. the English weather, or your favourite memory from childhood). We would also like to take photos of your hands as we investigate whether the shape of our hands tells us more about influences during early development.

We will also ask you to provide us with any videos or photos that you have of yourself from your childhood. We would like to make copies of these records. In the future, other participants will rate excerpts of your videos or photos on several aspects of psychological interest, including character, sexual orientation, and gender-related behaviours.

Following your completion of the study, you will be debriefed more fully on the objectives of the study. We will give you a copy of our "Post Experiment Form" to read and would encourage you to ask any questions that you may have. This form will also provide you with further contact information if you need to seek any advice. You also have the option to indicate on a separate form if you would like to be informed about future research.

### **1.8 Expenses and payments.**

If you participate in this study, you will be compensated with £50.

### **1.9 What will I have to do?**

Your participation is expected to take a total of two hours and would involve one visit to the University of Essex, during which time you will meet the research team and take part in the experiment.

### **1.10 Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, in the sense that all information collected from you will not be directly linked to your identity. For further details, please see part 2 of this information sheet.

## **2. Part 2 of the information sheet**

### **2.1 What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

You would be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason, by stopping your participation, removing any measurement devices, getting re-dressed and walking away from the experiment. You are free to choose not to answer particular questions or complete certain parts of the study if you do not want to. If you decided to withdraw from the experiment you will be compensated £12.50 for each half hour of the two-hour study you have completed. It is important to note that if you have consented to participate in the study, all information collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal may still be used.

### **2.2 What if there is a problem?**

#### **a. Complaints**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr Gerulf Rieger by calling 07938 620 870 or e-mailing [gerulf@essex.ac.uk](mailto:gerulf@essex.ac.uk). Dr Rieger will do his best to answer your questions. You can also reach the department's Director of Research, Professor Riccardo Russo by calling [REDACTED] emailing [rrusso@essex.ac.uk](mailto:rrusso@essex.ac.uk). If the issue remains unresolved and you would like to make a formal complaint, you can do this by contacting Sarah Manning-Press, the Research Governance and Planning Manager at the University of Essex by [REDACTED] or e-mailing [sarahm@essex.ac.uk](mailto:sarahm@essex.ac.uk).

#### **b. Risks**

Highlighted below are the potential risks involved should you decide to take part in this study. We also give you information on how these risks can be minimized or avoided. Moreover, you will have time to ask questions before, during, or after the study in order to address any possible concerns you have relating to these risks.

It is possible that you may be uncomfortable with some of the survey or interview questions, which ask about specific aspects of your gender identity, gender behaviour and experiences that you may have had during childhood and adulthood. In order to reduce your discomfort, you may however decide not to answer uncomfortable survey or interview questions.

You will be exposed to sexually explicit videos during this study, some of which you may be uncomfortable watching. You can let us know at any time during the experiment that you want to stop watching these videos.

Your genital responses may not reflect your sexual self-identity, and if you notice this, it may make you uncomfortable. In order to reduce this discomfort you will have the time to talk, in privacy to Dr Gerulf Rieger during or after the experiment. You can reach Dr Rieger at [REDACTED] or at [gerulf@essex.ac.uk](mailto:gerulf@essex.ac.uk). If the discomfort continues you have the option to contact a clinical psychologist, Dr [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED] in order to arrange a meeting with him. Please note that neither Dr Rieger nor the University of Essex would cover the costs associated with you meeting with a psychologist.

There is a very low risk of eye-damage due to the use of an infrared eye-tracking sensor. The risk of eye damage is reduced due to the limited power and wavelength of the sensor, its distance from the participant, the short duration of the experiment, and the natural protective abilities of the eye. There is however, potential discomfort associated with the assessment of your gaze, which may include discomfort as a result of sitting still in one position for about 60 minutes. If you experience this discomfort please let us know and we will stop the experiment and let you stretch out and change your position.

In this study we would encourage you to wear disposable gloves. In order to reduce the risk of allergic reactions to these gloves, we are providing powder-free Nitrile gloves. It is possible, however, that you may still have an allergic reaction to these gloves, such as tingling or itching. In such case please remove the gloves immediately. If you develop an aversive reaction on your hands 24 to 48 hours after the experiment, please seek medical advice from your General Practitioner (GP).

Regarding the assessment of your genital response, there is a very low risk of infection from the device. A standard, High Level disinfectant (Cidex OPA) is

used when cleaning the device between uses. High Level disinfectant destroys almost all pathogenic microorganisms including: HIV-1 (the AIDS virus), Herpes simplex, Poliovirus, Influenza Type A, Adenovirus Type 1 and Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The risk of getting an infection from inserting the genital device is very low because devices will be thoroughly disinfected between uses. However, it is important to note that the research team consists of psychologists, not of medically trained staff. Thus, if you are worried you have been infected we suggest that you immediately seek medical advice from your GP, your local Walk in Centre or by calling NHS 111. Possible symptoms include a fever, genital rashes or sores, genital discharge, bleeding, itching, or pain, or urinary difficulties or pain.

Additionally, there is the very low risk of an adverse response to the disinfection chemical, as the device is properly rinsed with water and 70% alcohol after disinfection. If you have immediate reactions to the device, such as genital pain, discomfort or itching, please remove the device immediately. If the pain or discomfort continues, we will call Security on 2222 in order to make an initial first aid assessment and direct you to the local hospital, if needed. If you experience allergic reactions later on (24-48 hours after the experiment), such as genital pain, discomfort or itching, please immediately seek medical advice from your GP, local Walk in Centre or by calling NHS 111.

You may experience some discomfort being undressed during the experiment and retaining the device for the duration of the experiment. To assure your privacy while being undressed, you will be completely alone in the testing room, and you can cover yourself with a paper gown.

In the future, with your consent, we will have other participants rate your photos or video recordings on several characteristics of scientific interest. It is conceivable that someone might recognize you and ask us about the nature of your participation. In the unlikely event that this happens, the participant may also ask you about your own participation. If this is something that you do not wish to reveal, this could put you in an uncomfortable position. Hence, you will have the option not to provide us with photos or videos. Furthermore, we will not tell any inquiring rater anything about your participation (e.g., we will not reveal your sexual orientation to them).

Finally, it is our responsibility to protect your data communication. Thus, in order to minimize risks of breached confidentiality, all communication about scheduling will be through a password protected email program on a password protected computer and no one other than lead researchers Gerulf Rieger, Luke Holmes and [REDACTED] will have access to this account.

### **2.3 Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential: We will never share your name or contact information with anyone. Other identifying information

(for example, your photos or videos) cannot be shared with anyone, unless you consent to it (in the Consent Form).

Research records will be kept in password-protected computers. Your research materials will never be stored in connection with your name; instead a code number will be used. This means that all of the information gathered in this study (including the questionnaire responses, eye movements, and genital response) will be de-identified because they are linked to this number, but not to your name or address. Please be aware that if you consent to it (on the Consent Form), your de-identified information can be shared with other people, including researchers and editors of scientific journals.

With your permission, these data will be backed-up on a secure cloud server, SugarSync. SugarSync servers are not located in European Economic Area (EEA). Hence, with your permission, your data will be transferred outside the EEA. Similarly, with your permission, or your questionnaire data will be backed up on another secure cloud server, Qualtrics (qualtrics.com), which is also a system outside the EEA.

10 years after completion of the study, all raw data that we have gathered from you (files containing your questionnaire data, your sexual and pupil responses, your videos) will be destroyed unless you consent that we can keep these materials indefinitely.

Please note that if you consent, de-identified information (information that excludes your name, birth date, contact details, photos and videos, but includes your sexuality and other survey responses, your genital arousal and eye data, and ratings based on your videos and photos) will be kept indefinitely. This de-identified information can be shared with other researchers or editors of research journals.

All forms containing your signature will be kept in a locked drawer, which will only be accessible to the research team.

Finally, as stated above, all communication about scheduling will be through a password-protected email program on a password protected computer and no one other than lead researchers Gerulf Rieger, Luke Holmes and Jamie Raines will have access to this account.

## **2.4 What will happen to the information I give?**

All the information you give will be condensed into a single spreadsheet in which all your responses (your questionnaire data, eye data, genital data, ratings of videos) will be expressed as numeric values. These values will be linked to your participant ID but not your name or other identifying information. With these numbers the lead researchers Gerulf Rieger, Luke

Holmes and Jamie Raines will conduct statistical analyses, such as correlating your pupil responses with your genital responses, or correlating your questionnaire data with your pupil responses. These analyses will be conducted in the statistical packages JMP and SPSS available at the Psychology Department at the University of Essex.

## **2.5 What will happen to the results of the research study?**

Findings will be written up for publications in scientific journals and sent to these journals for review. If accepted by a journal, results will be published in that journal. You will not be identified in any publication of the results.

In addition, after completion of the study, the researchers will make your own study results available to you, if you are interested in it.

Furthermore, if you chose to participate in the study you will be asked at the end of this study if you would like to take part in future research projects. If you choose to do so, your name and contact information will be kept in a separate password-protected database of potential research participants.

## **2.6 Who is organising and funding the research?**

The Psychology Department and the University of Essex are organising the study. It is funded by the American Institute of Bisexuality.

## **2.7 Who has reviewed the study?**

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, must undergo an ethics review and ethical approval must be obtained before it commences in order to protect the interests of the participants. This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Essex Ethics Committee.

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

The main researchers conducting this study are Dr Gerulf Rieger, a lecturer at the University of Essex, and Luke Holmes and Jamie Raines, PhD students. Please direct any questions you may have to Jamie Raines at [jraine@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jraine@essex.ac.uk), or Luke Holmes at [lholveb@essex.ac.uk](mailto:lholveb@essex.ac.uk). If you have questions later, you may wish to contact Gerulf Rieger at [gerulf@essex.ac.uk](mailto:gerulf@essex.ac.uk) or at 07938 620 870.

## **3. The Consent Form**

The Consent Form will be provided in a separate document.