

Dating App Connections

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the role that dating apps played in people's wellbeing and intimacy during and after COVID-19. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

About the research

➤ Who will conduct the research?

This research is conducted by a team of people. These include Prof Brian Heaphy, Dr Jaime Garcia-Iglesias and Dr Isabel Nuñez-Salazar, from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manchester.

➤ What is the purpose of the research?

The goal of this research is to understand how dating apps influenced people's intimacies (how they connect with others, make friends, find love, etc.) during and after COVID-19, and also the impact that the apps had on people's wellbeing (including loneliness).

You have been chosen to take part because you:

- Completed an online survey about COVID-19 and dating app use and agreed to be contacted for a follow up interview.
- You have volunteered to take part in this interview after seeing the call for participants on social media.
- The researchers think your experiences and views might be particularly relevant for the research and has requested to interview you (you may not have completed the survey).

We expect to involve around 60 people in interviews.

➤ Am I suitable to take part?

You are eligible to take part if you are over 18 years-old, live in the UK, and used dating apps (such as Grindr, Tinder or others) before or during COVID-19. Using means downloading them, logging on, viewing other people's profiles or information, sending or receiving messages, or chatting with people.

➤ Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The outcomes of this project will be published in a number of ways, including research journal papers, a book, and a report. We may also publish them in a podcast and a video-series. You can keep up to date with these by following our Twitter account (twitter.com/datingappres).

➤ **Who has reviewed the research project?**

Indicate that the project has been reviewed by The University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee 5.

➤ **Who is funding the research project?**

This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (grant number: ES/W002426/1)

What would my involvement be?

➤ **What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

You will have been emailed or contacted by the survey company to invite you to take part in an interview.

You will be asked to complete a registration form online: the form will ask you to read this information (Participant Information), complete a consent form, and provide some details about your contact information and availability. You will be emailed a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent form for your records.

Once you complete this, you will be contacted by the research team within two weeks to arrange an interview. The interview will last between 30 and 60 minutes and take place on Zoom or over the phone.

➤ **Will I be compensated for taking part?**

Yes, you will be compensated with a £20 shopping voucher (this will be emailed to you).

➤ **What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you want to take part, complete the consent form and answer the information requested, and we will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the interview. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights. If you decide not to take part you do not need to do anything further.

If you agree to take part, the interview will be audio recorded (not video recorded). This is necessary to allow us to listen to it afterwards. You should only agree if you are comfortable with the recording process. You are free to stop recording and interview at any time.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

➤ **What information will you collect about me?**

In order to participate in this research project we will need to collect information that could identify you, called “personal identifiable information”. Specifically we will need to collect:

- Name
- Contact details
- Age
- Ethnicity
- During the interview, we may also ask about: ethnicity, sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, HIV status, Disability information, Income, employment, and education history.

The interview will be audio recorded (voice only) and you will be told when the recording starts and ends.

➤ **Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?**

We are collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with UK data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is “a public interest task” and “a process necessary for research purposes”.

➤ **What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?**

You have a number of rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example you can request a copy of the information we hold about you, including audio recordings or photographs.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our [Privacy Notice for Research](#).

➤ **Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?**

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

The recording of your interview will be shared (using a safe method such as DataShare) with a transcription company (who will transcribe it). They will send back a written record of the conversation (‘transcript’). Once the researchers have checked the transcript for accuracy, the original audio recording will be deleted. The transcript will then be edited to remove any information that could identify you and you will be assigned a pseudonym (a different name to yours). The list that links your real name to the one assigned to you will be kept separate from all other information in an encrypted folder within the University of Manchester servers. Only the core research team will have access to this information. The copies of the consent form will also be kept separate and in a safe location.

Upon completion of the project (April 2024), the information about you (name, contact information, and copies of the consent form) will be deleted. Only the transcripts with anonymized data will be kept.

If the interview takes place through Zoom or MS Teams, your participation in this research will be recorded in Zoom/MS Teams and your personal data will be processed by Zoom/MS Teams. This may mean that your personal data is transferred to a country outside of the European Economic Area, some of which have not yet been determined by the United Kingdom to have an adequate level of data protection. Appropriate legal mechanisms to ensure these transfers are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation are in place. The recordings will be removed from the above third party platform and stored on University of Manchester managed file storage as soon as possible following the completion of data collection.

The study team at The University of Manchester will have access to your personal information and they will anonymise it as soon as possible. Your name and any other identifying information will be removed and replaced with a pseudonym. The research team will have access to the key that links this ID number to your personal information. Your consent form will be retained for 5 years in a locked cabinet on UoM premises for audit purposes.

So that we can provide the shopping/Amazon voucher as a thank you for your time, your full name and email address will be shared with our Finance department who will send the voucher to you. Your full name and email address will be securely retained by Finance for a period of up to 7 years for audit purposes only and then destroyed. It will not be used for them for any other purpose.

At the end of the project we will deposit a fully anonymised dataset [e.g. including de-identified interview transcripts] in an open data repository where it will be permanently stored. We will use UK Data Service. Researchers at other institutions and others can access the anonymised data directly from the repository and use it for further research or to check our analysis and results.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

If, during the course of the interview, you disclose information which may mean that you or others are at risk or information related to criminal activity, the research team may need to break confidentiality to share this information with relevant third parties, such as the ambulance service.

What if I have a complaint?

➤ Contact details for complaints

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact:

Professor Brian Heaphy, Principal Investigator

Brian.heaphy@manchester.ac.uk

+44 (0) 161 275 0266

If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance then please contact

The Research Ethics Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161 306 8089.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the [Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information](#) Tel 0303 123 1113

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact the researcher(s)

Dr Jaime Garcia-Iglesias, jaime.garciaiglesias@manchester.ac.uk