



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Project ID: 19971

Project title: Emotion Regulation and Empathy (for pain): What's the link?

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You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

This study aims to investigate whether difficulties in self-reported emotion regulation are associated with empathy for others in pain, and the tendency to experience vicarious pain. Moreover, we seek to examine whether the relationship between emotion regulation and empathy for pain differs between different genders.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a series of online questionnaires through a secure survey weblink (www.qualtrics.com). The questionnaires will first ask you to provide basic information about yourself (e.g., age, sex, etc.), before moving onto questionnaires relating to how physically active you are, empathy and empathy for pain, how you regulate your emotions, and symptoms of anxiety and depression. The online questionnaires can be completed on any desktop computer or portable device (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, etc.) with an active internet connection. Completing the online questionnaires should take no longer than 15-20 minutes.

Why were you chosen for this research?

English speakers over the age of 18 with access to the internet and an appropriate device to complete the online questionnaires (e.g., phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer) are invited to participate in this study. Most participants will volunteer for this study after seeing advertisements on social media or websites, in emails or on online forums, or on physical or electronic posters.

Exclusion criteria: You are **not able** to participate in this research if you self-report a current or prior diagnosis of a psychiatric/neurological disorder or a chronic pain condition. Individuals who withdraw their consent (i.e., discontinue the questionnaires part way through), have more than five percent of survey responses missing (i.e., one

to two items per questionnaire), or whose response patterns suggest they have not answered items properly (e.g., extreme left/right responses selected for all items) will be excluded from the study.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Participants will indicate their consent to participate in the project by answering “Yes” to the statement “I freely agree to participate in this research project, as described within the explanatory statement”, which will be posed prior to the commencement of the online survey. Participants are free to withdraw from further participation (by not finishing the online questionnaires) at any stage until they have completed the online questionnaires. As this project involves the submission of an anonymous questionnaire, it will not be possible for a participant to withdraw their data once they have submitted the responses. There are no implications associated with withdrawing from the study. There are no alternatives available for those individuals who choose not to participate.

Possible benefits and risks to participants

There will be no direct benefit to the participants in this experiment. This research does, however, have the potential to build upon the current understanding of how emotion regulation and empathy are linked. Moreover, this study will provide important novel insight into how emotion regulation and empathy interact in people of different genders.

In general, the foreseeable risks are minimal. We are using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale 21 (DASS-21), and completing this questionnaire may be distressing for some participants. However, the DASS-21 is only being used to measure symptom severity and is not being used for diagnostic purposes. Participants will not receive personalised feedback on their possible level of depressive or anxious symptoms.

Services on offer if adversely affected

Individuals who feel they are “at risk” of depression, suicide and anxiety disorders are encouraged to speak to their GP and/or a counsellor. If you feel that you are in need of counselling, we encourage you to contact Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14. International participants can find support services in their country [here](#), if required.

Payment

Participants will not be paid monetary rewards for their participation in the study. However, participants who provide their contact details at the end of the online questionnaires will be entered in a draw to win one of three Amazon vouchers, valued at AU\$100 each. Only participants who complete all questionnaires will be eligible to enter the prize draw.

Confidentiality

Each participant in this study will be given an individual number (code) following submission of the online questionnaire, meaning that your responses will remain anonymous. Any submitted contact information will be kept separate from the questionnaire responses. Only aggregate data will be published in blog posts, academic journal articles, or in conference presentations, meaning individuals will not be able to be identified. Pre-prints of peer reviewed publications, analysis scripts and study data will be made available through services such as Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/>) and PsychArchives (<https://www.psycharchives.org/>).

Storage of data

The raw data from this study will be stored on the Qualtrics account of the lead researcher and as electronic files on a password-protected computer. All data will only be accessible by members of the research team. The study data are non-identifiable to protect participant confidentiality. Data will be kept for a minimum of seven years following the completion of the study. Pre-prints of peer reviewed publications, analysis scripts, and final study data will be made available through services such as Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/>) and PsychArchives (<https://www.psycharchives.org/>) and stored as per their user agreements.

Use of data for other purposes

Your anonymous data may be used for other research purposes where ethics approval has been granted, but only if you provide your consent.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact Dr Lincoln Tracy via email (lincoln.tracy@monash.edu). The findings are likely to be available via the internet in 2020.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Chancellery Building D,
26 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Tracy', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr Lincoln Tracy