



## Student Participant Information Form

**Project Title:** The Prevalence and Correlates of Weight and Shape Related Body Image Disorders in Australian Adolescents (The Everybody Study)

**Chief Investigator:** Dr Deborah Mitchison from the Centre for Emotional Health, Macquarie University

### What is the study about?

We are in the third year of the *Everybody Study* - the most comprehensive study of body image among young Australians to date. We are inviting students from schools in the Newcastle and Sydney regions to participate, with the aim to be as representative as possible. We are particularly interested in:

1. The types of behaviours that adolescents with poor body image engage in
2. The differences and similarities in body image concerns and behaviours across sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and body weight
3. The relationship between body image and other experiences such as bullying, social media, and family attitudes and behaviours

This is an important endeavour because it will help us to understand what eating and other body image disorders look like and who and how many young people experience them. Understanding the different body image concerns of all young Australians will ultimately help us to more easily find those who are suffering from poor body image and get them the help they need early on to improve their self-esteem.

### What does the study involve?

You will be asked to complete a survey, which includes questions related to various eating and body image concerns and behaviours, general wellbeing, bullying, and social media use. We will also ask your parents/guardians to complete a shorter survey on eating and body image concerns and behaviours. We will also be inviting a small number of students to participate in an anonymous telephone interview to further explore body image concerns.

### How much time will the study take?

The survey is expected to take you no longer than 40 minutes to complete. If you participate in a telephone interview, we expect this will take no longer than 60 minutes.

### What will be expected?

You will be asked to complete the survey in a classroom, computer lab, or school hall. If you have any difficulty answering the questions, a member of the research team will be there to assist you.

### How will my information be used?

All the information you provide is confidential. You will be assigned a code that will be matched with your data, and this code will be stored separately with your names elsewhere to the data. All files will be password-encrypted, with the password only known to the named investigators. The information will be held for 10 years following the completion of the study, after which time it will be destroyed.

When the findings from the study are reported, the answers will be grouped so that it will be impossible for others to identify you (e.g., "12% of the participants reported that they were on a diet"). If you have concerns about what has been recorded or its use, you may access your own recorded data within the period of storage. This may be done by contacting Dr Mitchison (deborah.mitchison@mq.edu.au). Students who do not express interest in the study or whose parents decline consent will not be asked to complete the survey.

### Will the study benefit me?

Yes! We believe that taking part in this study may help you to think and learn about your own health and wellbeing and what to do if you or someone you know might need help with a mental health issue (we will give you a handout after the survey about where to seek local help). Also, taking part in the study will give you the chance to see how scientific research is conducted and you will have an opportunity to ask the researchers questions about this or anything else you might be interested in, such as attending university or career options in psychology. More broadly,

the study aims to further medical knowledge and may improve future treatment for eating disorders, however it is unlikely to directly benefit you in this way.

To thank you for your participation in the research project, you can choose to go into a draw to win one of 10 \$100 gift cards. You will also be given a bonus entry if you have a parent/guardian who completes their survey. If you have left school then you will be provided an option between entering the gift card draw or receiving a \$20 gift card.

If you would like to participate in the draw, you will be asked to provide your contact details upon completion of the survey. These contact details are confidential, and will only be used to contact winners of the draw and not stored with the survey data.

### **Will the study have any risks?**

It is unlikely that you will experience any distress while completing the survey. However, if you do, a member of the research team who is psychologically trained, will be there to assist you. We will also include some contact information at the end of the survey if you wish to talk to a mental health professional later on.

### **How is the study being paid for?**

The study is funded by a Macquarie University Research Fellowship grant awarded to the principal investigator, Dr Deborah Mitchison.

### **Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. The findings, based on grouped data (meaning no individuals will be able to be identified), will be communicated to the school in a wellbeing report, as well as at scientific conferences, through scientific peer-reviewed journals, and to the broader community through media releases.

### **Can I withdraw from the study?**

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and - if you do participate - you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason. Further, you can decide to participate in the online survey but not be contacted for a telephone interview. This also means that you can choose to participate or withdraw from the follow-up survey. Whatever your decision, it will not affect your academic progress or your relationship with the school or research staff.

### **What if I require further information?**

If you would like to know more information at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Deborah Mitchison (deborah.mitchison@mq.edu.au).

### **What if I have a complaint?**

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

### **What do I do now?**

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete the survey on the day of testing. We will also provide you with an invitation for one of your parents/guardians to take part in a parent/guardian survey.

If you do not want to participate in this study, please let one of the research staff know on the day of testing, and you will be provided an alternative activity to do.