

Participant Information Sheet

1st June, 2023

Factors contributing to psychological well-being throughout pregnancy and the post-natal period

An Invitation

You are invited to participate in a study being undertaken by Dr Amy Kercher, clinical psychologist and lecturer in psychology, and Dr Liesje Donkin, health and clinical psychologist and senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology. Your well-being during and after pregnancy is extremely important and can change over time. This study aims to better understand the changes in well-being through pregnancy and the post-natal period, and some of the factors that may influence this. Participation in this study will provide screening and feedback about your well-being over time.

What is the purpose of this research?

The project will examine mothers' psychological well-being throughout pregnancy and the post-natal period. We will examine influences of mothers' anxiety, mood, exercise and other contextual factors, and how these change over time. The relationship between these areas will be explored to help us better understand what influences maternal well-being, and what can be done to positively influence well-being for mothers.

The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations, and may help us to design better treatment and support for mothers in the future. In addition, Master of Health Sciences (psychology) student Olivia Pilbrow will write a dissertation based on this study, examining links between exercise and wellbeing in early pregnancy. Our colleagues Professor Patria Hume and Associate Professor Sonja Goedeke will also be involved, but will not have access to identifying information.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Pregnant women in NZ are invited to participate. You may join the study at any stage in your pregnancy.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will not change your maternity care in anyway nor your relationship with AUT. You can withdraw from the survey at any point without giving a reason.

What will happen in this research?

Participation involves completion of a series of secure online surveys. The survey includes measures of mood and anxiety, and questions about exercise, baby health and sleep. We will email you a brief mood survey once a month, which should take around 5 minutes to complete. Every three months, we will send the full survey to gather more information about your well-being, which should take less than 30 minutes to complete.

Your personal details are collected in case we need to offer you extra support during the study (such as if we are concerned about your well-being). We require the details of your GP or Lead Maternity Caregiver (LMC) so that if you indicate that you require further support, we can contact your caregiver to organise this for you. When you join the study, we will inform your nominated healthcare professional (GP/LMC) about our research, so they will be aware of your involvement. If your surveys indicate elevated mood symptoms, your GP/LMC will be contacted on the next working day after your survey response is received to check in with you. We have a low threshold for contacting healthcare professionals and have informed them of this. Contacting your healthcare professional does not mean that we are diagnosing you as depressed or at risk; but that we are asking your healthcare professional to check if you are getting all the support that you feel you need.

Your personal information will be stored separately from your survey answers and will only be accessed if your survey answers show the need for us to contact you (such as if you have a high score indicating distress). You will not be

identified or contacted about your responses if your responses do not indicate distress. **You will not be able to be identified in any of the findings or publications from this research.**

Email links to the survey will be sent automatically each month. Should you choose not to respond, we will send one reminder, then no further reminders until the next monthly survey. If you reply to the email indicating you wish to withdraw from the study, we will then no longer email surveys to you. If your previous concerns have indicated a concern for your well-being, we will notify your GP/LMC that you are no longer participating, so they can continue your screening.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Answering questions about psychological well-being can sometimes bring concerns into awareness, and cause discomfort. If this happens, we encourage you to talk about this with your whānau, lead maternity caregiver, or GP.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary, and you are free to discontinue at any time. If you do discontinue, you can ask to have your data removed from the study up to one month after requesting to be withdrawn from the study. Should you experience any concerns or distress after answering the survey, you should contact your GP or Lead Maternity Carer, or in an emergency, call 111.

Should any participant indicate a high level of depressive symptoms or concern about risk, we will contact their GP to provide additional support. It is important to seek professional help when these concerns arise. Communication about distress will be done in a professional manner.

AUT Health Counselling and Well-being is also able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of this research project research and the name and contact details of either researcher as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

This research offers two benefits to participants. Firstly, we will provide an extra level of monitoring of your psychological well-being during and after your pregnancy, and can help to organise additional support if your survey responses suggest this is required. Secondly, through this study we hope to better understand the well-being of pregnant and post-natal women, and to be able to design and offer better support services and treatment options in the future.

In addition, every month you complete the survey, you will have the chance to enter a draw to win a \$100 Prezzy voucher.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your personal information will be stored separately from your survey responses, and only used to contact your caregiver if your responses indicate that you require additional support. Secure processes for data collection, analysis and storage will be followed, with data destroyed after 10 years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Participating in this research will take approximately 30 minutes once every three months, and 5 minutes each month. The survey will continue until you are 12 months post-pregnancy.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

The survey will remain open for approximately 2 years. You can join at any stage of your pregnancy, and answer surveys at the remaining time points until 12 months after your pregnancy. We ask you to consider beginning the survey early in your pregnancy, so that we can provide the earliest screening for you and gather thorough information about your pregnancy journey.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A summary of the research will be sent to you if you wish to receive a copy.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the researchers, Dr Amy Kercher, amy.kercher@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999, ext 5186; or Dr Liesje Donkin, liesje.donkin@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999, ext. 8164.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Researcher Contact Details: Please keep this Information Sheet for your future reference.

You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Contact Details:

Dr Amy Kercher, amy.kercher@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999, ext 5186;

Dr Liesje Donkin, liesje.donkin@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999, ext. 8164.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 2 June 2022, AUTC Reference number 22/99.

Ngā mihi,

Amy & Liesje

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