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**STUDENT HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS STUDY (SHarPS)**

**FAQs for 2018 Entry Cohort (revised August 3 2018)**

**1. What is the Student Healthcare Professionals Study (SHarPS) project?**

SHarPS is new research and education project which commenced at the University of Birmingham in August 2016.

The University of Birmingham is unusual among UK Universities in that it is a research-focused university offering both biomedical science degrees and also a range of healthcare vocational (‘professional’) programmes. This provides us with a unique opportunity not only to follow students as they progress through their training, but also to compare the experiences of students enrolled on different courses.

The SHarPS project seeks to work with students enrolled on the biomedical science and the healthcare professional programmes at Birmingham so as to capture information about their experiences as they progress through the various years of their university courses to graduation and qualification. We will do this by asking you to complete an online questionnaire at the beginning of each new academic year while you are studying at the University.

**2. Who can take part in the SHarPS project?**

We are inviting all students who will start their training in September 2018 onwards at the University on one of the following programmes to join the project.

* Biomedical Science
* Dentistry
* Dental Hygiene and Therapy
* Medicine (including the Graduate Entry course)
* Nursing (BNurs and MNurs courses)
* Pharmacy
* Physician Associate Diploma
* Physiotherapy (including the two-year pre-registration programme)

**3. Who is running the SHarPS project?**

The **SHarPS Core Data Group** is:

* Professor Jayne Parry (Lead Researcher)
* Dr Suzanne Bartington (Lead Epidemiologist)
* Dr Emma Lancashire (Project Manager)
* Ms. Alice Sitch (Lead Statistician)

In addition, the following members of staff work with the Core Research Group and together comprise the **SHarPS Research Team**

* Dr Clare Ray
* Dr Dawn Jackson
* Dr Miranda Pallan
* Dr Beck Taylor
* Dr Derek Ward

The SHarPS Research Team can be contacted by email at sharps@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Professor Jayne Parry is the Lead Researchers and can be contacted by telephone on 0121 414 3191 or by email at J.M.Parry.1@bham.ac.uk.

The contact details for the other members of the Research Team are also provided on the SHarPS website, along with links to their University Personal Pages. The website address is: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/sharps](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/sharps)

**4. If I agree to take part in SHarPS, what will happen next?**

We would like you to complete an online questionnaire called the Student Baseline Questionnaire 2018 (SBQ-2018).

**5. What does the SBQ-2018 ask about?**

The SBQ-2018 contains five sections. In the first two sections we want to know a little bit about you (for example, your age and gender) and about your family (for example, whether any family members work in the NHS or for other healthcare organisations).

In the third section we ask you to tell us why you have chosen your programme of study, and why you have chosen to study at the University of Birmingham. In the next section we ask you about how you will be funding your time at University. In the final section we give you the opportunity to tell us about which aspects of university life you are most looking forward to, and what if anything, you are worried about. We would also like to know about any thoughts you have had on your future career, for example whether you know which specialty you might want to work in, or whether you would like to work in another country outside the U.K.

**6. What will happen to my completed questionnaire?**

The questionnaires are hosted online by the Bristol Online Survey (BOS) platform. The BOS platform complies with the Data Protection Act and is approved for use by the University of Birmingham. When you have completed your questionnaire, the information will be downloaded and stored on a secure server at the University of Birmingham.

**7. What will the research database be used for?**

The database will allow us to collect information on our biomedical science and our healthcare professional students when they start their degree programmes at the University, and at points in time thereafter as they progress through their training. Examples of the types of questions we are interested in answering include:

* What are the personal and educational characteristics of students who come to the University of Birmingham? Do these differ across the various biomedical and healthcare programmes?
* Are some characteristics associated with students’ experiences of their training, including performance and progression?
* What do students like and dislike about their courses? What would they like us to improve or change?
* What factors might influence students’ long-term career choices? Do some students decide not to complete their degree and instead to pursue another course or career?

The SBQ-2018 and subsequent questionnaires will also provide information that will allow the Research Team to identify students who we might ask to take part in research projects that are particularly relevant to them – for example, do students who have family members who are healthcare professionals find it easier to adapt to clinical teaching than other students? As for the SHarPS project participation in any additional research projects will be voluntary and separate consent for these studies will be required.

**8. How will the data collected in SHarPS be stored and who will have access to it?**

The research database will be password protected and held securely on a University of Birmingham server. Student names will not be stored on the database; rather we will allocate each student a unique study number as a means of identifying each participant. The code linking the student names to their unique study numbers will be stored in a separate password-protected database. Only members of the SHarPS Core Data Group (Parry, Bartington, Lancashire and Sitch) will be able to access this code; that is only these four named researchers will be able to view the data in an un-anonymised form.

All analyses of the data will be done by the SHarPS Research Team. During the analyses the Research Team will work with the dataset which does not contain your name. When undertaking data analyses the Research Team will not be looking to identify which individual has provided which information.

The Research Team will only ever deliberately look to find out the identify of a participant if in answering one of the survey questions, a participant writes something which suggests that they are at risk of harming themselves, or harming someone else. If we judge this to be the case, one of the four members of the SHarPS Core Data Group will look up the name of the student and speak in confidence with your Programme Director.

You may access the data held about yourself in the SHarPS database at any time upon request.

**9. Will you link the SHarPS data to any other datasets the University has?**

One important area of research is to understand whether we can identify students who will do very well or who may have difficulties with aspects of their studies. This is important, because if we can ‘predict’ this we can put measures in place to help students before problems start to emerge. One way we can begin to explore whether we can predict student performance is to ask you every year, in a separate survey, to tell us your examination results and about any other issues that have emerged over the past 12 months – for example, a fitness to practice problem. However, given this information is already collected by the University, it is easier for us to simply ‘link’ the SHarPS database with other University databases and ‘merge’ the two sets of data. We will therefore link SHarPS to other datasets held by the University if this enables us to address any key research questions.

The linkage of datasets with SHarPS does not change in anyway who will have access to these data. That is, only the named Research Team members will have access to these merged datasets. Further, the linkage will be ‘one-way’; that is, the SHarPS Research Team will be able to see both sets of data but staff working on the other datasets will not be able to see the SHarPS data. This way we can reassure you that no one will see your answers to the survey questions.

**10. What will happen to the information I have provided?**

We will use the information collected from participants to answer questions about the educational experience and training provided by the University to its students. We will report these findings to staff and students as the research progresses. As an academic team of researchers we will also look to publish findings in peer reviewed professional journals. In all situations where we share results and findings, we stress that the information presented will be anonymised and therefore no individual participant will be able to be identified.

**11. Will you allow any other researchers at the University of Birmingham or at other institutions to use the SHarPS dataset?**

No. We will not share the individual data you provide to us with any third party within or outside the University. If other researchers wish to use the data collected in SHarPS to answer their own research questions, the only way that they will be able to do this is if the SHarPS Research Team undertake the necessary analyses for them. In this way, we keep access to the individual data provided by SHarPS project participants to limited to the SHarPS Research Team

**12. Who will know I have participated in SHarPS?**

The only people who will know that you have participated in SHarPS other than yourself and anyone you chose to tell, is the Research Team. None of the information which you provide to SHarPS will be made available to anyone outside the Research team in any way which would enable you to be individually identified.

**13. Will my University teachers have access to my data?**

Only the named members of the Research Team will have access to the data. No other member of staff at the University of Birmingham will have access to the information you provide

Members of the Research Team do occasionally teach on the various degree programmes at the University. However, even if you are taught by a member of the Team, you can be reassured that they will not know who you are in terms of what you have written in response to the survey **(see FAQ 8** ‘**How will the data collected in SHarPS be stored and who will have access to it?)**

**14. Do I have to complete the questionnaire?**

It is up to you to decide. We will give you information about the SHarPS project and will then ask you to read and agree with a series of statements which make clear that you understand the implications of taking part in the study. Participation is totally voluntary.

**15. What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part?**

Whenever researchers collect information about people, there is a risk of participants’ privacy being breached if that information ‘gets out’ into the public domain in a manner in which an individual can be identified. We recognise this and we are committed to the highest standards of data custodianship. In preparing for the SHarPS project we have undertaken a detail Privacy Impact Assessment. This has enabled us to identify in advance the likely risks to participant confidentiality, and to put into place a series of structures and processes to minimise these risks.

The other possible disadvantage of taking part will be the time taken to fill out the SBQ-2018 questionnaire. We think this will take about 20 minutes. We intend to work with the staff who will be teaching on your programme to see if we can find some space in your timetable during Welcome Week or the first week of term to allow you to have time to complete the questionnaire during the working day.

Finally, you may be invited to take part in subsequent research at some point in your studies on the basis of information you have provided to the Research Team through the SBQ-2018. However, if and when this occurs, you will again be free to decide whether you wish to take part or not.

**16. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

This research is intended to provide insights into the experience and delivery of our biomedical science and our healthcare professionals programmes at the University of Birmingham. As such it is hoped that it will provide a basis to improve the educational experiences for current and future students. By completing the SBQ-2018 and participating in SHarPS you have an opportunity to contribute to that aim.

As part of the development of research into student experiences and future careers, the Research Team are also keen to support students who may wish to get involved in research projects during their studies, for example, as part of Special Study Modules. The development of the SHarPS database will increase the potential for this type of activity and the transfer of research skills and experience to students. However, no student will ever be able to have access to the data in a manner which would allow them to identify any of their fellow students **(see FAQ** **8 ‘How will the data collected in SHarPS be stored and who will have access to it?)**

**17. What if I choose to withdraw?**

You are free to leave the study at any time and there are no adverse consequences for any student who wants to withdraw from SHarPS.

You may withdraw from the study by emailing the Research Team at sharps@contacts.bham.ac.uk. A member of the Team will then reply to you via email to confirm that we will no longer contact you with regard to participation in SHarPS.

We would also need to ask what you would like us to do with the data you provided prior to your withdrawal. If you no longer want us to use these data, all the information you have provided would be removed from the SHarPS database. We would then send you an email to confirm that this has been done and that your data will therefore not be used in any future analyses. However, during SHarPS, we will continually be analysing participant data as SHarPS has the potential to answer a number of very important questions about the training of healthcare professionals. Our aim is to share this new knowledge through the publication of our analyses in reports and scientific papers (**see FAQ** **10 - What will happen to the information I have provided?).** It is important you are aware that should data you provide to us have been formally analysed and published prior to the point of your withdrawal, it would be very difficult for us to remove your data from any such reports or papers. In all situations where we share results and findings, we stress that the information presented will be anonymised and therefore no individual participant will be able to be identified.

**18. Who has reviewed the research?**

This research has been reviewed via the University of Birmingham ethical review process. Ref ERN\_16\_0600

**Any Further Questions?**

If you have any questions not covered by these FAQs you can contact a member of the research team using the SHarPS email address sharps@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Alternatively, you may ask questions at one of the ‘Introduction to SHarPS’ lectures which will be held on the following dates during your Welcome Week:

Biomedical Sciences: T.B.A.

Dentistry: T.B.A.

Medicine (Traditional Course): T.B.A.

Medicine (Graduate Entry) T.B.A.

Nursing (3-year course)T.B.A.

Nursing (4-year course)

Pharmacy: T.B.A.

Physician Associate Diploma T.B.A.

Physiotherapy (3-year course): T.B.A.

Physiotherapy \_pre-registration): T.B.A.