

DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY
Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

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**MEDICAL AND
HEALTH SCIENCES**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PARENT)

Title: Screen use and dry eye: a survey of New Zealand children and adolescents

Researchers: Mrs Julie Cullen, Prof Jennifer P Craig, Prof John Thompson

Introduction

My name is Julie Cullen, and I am a Masters student in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Auckland. I am conducting my research under the supervision of Professors Jennifer P. Craig and John Thompson, reviewing the screen media habits of tamariki and rangatahi (children and adolescents) and the perceptions of its impact on the health of the eye's surface (the 'ocular surface').

Dry eye is a common and chronic ocular surface condition that ranks among the most common effects of extended screen time. In recognition of this, increasing efforts have been aimed at establishing guidelines that support safer screen use for young people. Furthermore, mounting evidence indicates that frequent and extended screen time during childhood is associated with negative impacts on a wide range of health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes.

Extended screen time is thought to contribute to Dry Eye Disease (DED) by altering blink patterns, leading to ocular surface symptoms that can significantly impact a person's quality of life, productivity and learning. Given the widespread use of screens from an early age and their unavoidable role in work settings, youth may be at more risk of developing DED.

As a parent in New Zealand, we would value your insights. You and your eldest child (who is between 12 and 18-years-old) are invited to participate in our anonymous online survey. If your child does not want to complete the survey, we will still appreciate your submitted survey.

There are no right or wrong answers; we're interested in your opinions and contemporary screen time habits. Please take a moment to review this information sheet before deciding whether you'd like to participate.

Survey responses are anonymous and, therefore, cannot be traced back to you. We will not ask for information within the survey that could personally identify you.

We appreciate your time. At the end, there will be instructions about how to enter a prize draw for a chance to win one of three \$100 Woolworths vouchers, if you wish to. The prize draw is only for adult parent participants, your young person cannot enter the prize draw. Prize draw information will not be anonymous, but it will NOT be linked to the completed survey information, and it will be destroyed after the prize draw. You do not have to enter the prize draw.

The purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the effect screen time habits have on a young person's eyes. The questionnaire should take no more than 15 minutes of your and your child's time.

Your input is important, and will help us to:

- gain a greater understanding of the screen media usage and lifestyle habits among New Zealand's tamariki and rangatahi (children and teenagers)
- better understand risks to the eye's surface posed by long-term extended screen time
- inform future studies from which we hope to develop best national and international guidelines on recommended screen use limits in youth

Project description

The online survey can be completed in your own time at a venue of your choosing. It is anticipated that the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. As the survey is anonymous, you are not required to sign a consent form. Submission of your survey responses constitutes your consent to participate in the research.

Participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part in this survey. The survey has neither been influenced, nor endorsed, by any organisation outside of The University of Auckland. Through the online survey platform, your anonymous survey results will be forwarded only to the researchers. We encourage you to read this information sheet along with your whānau to ensure you are satisfied with the study protocol, study requirements and data management. Our details are at the end; please contact Julie in the first instance to clarify any of the information or to ask any further questions you might have.

On completion of the research project, we anticipate the findings will be published in the scientific literature as well as in local professional publications and publicly accessible websites to ensure widespread accessibility of the outcomes regardless of participation in the study.

Benefits, risks and safety

Other than encouraging you to reflect on your lifestyle practices, there are no immediate benefits to you by participating in this study. However, we anticipate that the collated data will help us identify ways in which educational initiatives can be incorporated into recommendations offered in routine clinical care of young patients and to support the development of guidelines on safer screen use. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this survey.

Confidentiality, data storage and future use

All data collected as part of this study is untraceable to you (i.e. it is anonymous). Data will be stored securely on password-protected computers and secure computer networks, accessible only by the investigators. The data will be stored for a minimum of 10 years by

the Principal Investigator and may be compared to survey results in future, with the aim of improving patient health surrounding the safe use of digital screens. Once the data are no longer of use in our research, they will be safely destroyed according to University of Auckland's data management policy. If you do not wish for your data to be retained for future unspecified research use please do not complete the survey.

Aggregated data will be reported as a component of the postgraduate coursework and possibly published in scientific journals, and/or professional and community publications. Since the survey is anonymous, you cannot be personally identified in any reports on this study.

Right to Withdraw from Participation

Taking part is completely voluntary. If you do agree to take part, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time before submitting your responses. Submitted information is untraceable to individual participants and therefore your responses cannot be withdrawn after submission.

Researcher names and contact details

Thank you for your help in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more about the research project, please contact the researchers below.

Student Researcher

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If you require Māori cultural support, talk to your whānau in the first instance. Alternatively, you may contact Iwi United Engaged consultant Misty Edmonds by emailing misty@iue.net.nz.

For concerns of an ethical nature, you can contact the Chair of the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee at ahrec@auckland.ac.nz or at 373 7599 ext 83711, or at Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

**Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee on 22 JUL 2024 for three years.
Reference number 27486**