

Ethics Submission

Describe the basic purposes of the proposed research.

A consortium of research partners has been awarded funding by the Wellcome Trust to pursue research in three-dimensional facial dysmorphology. Two medical applications are involved; one on the developmental processes associated with schizophrenia and the other on the success of orthognathic surgery. Facial images are required from healthy non-surgical controls, which is the focus of this current ethics submission. These images will be used to define the normal range of control facial shape.

Indicate who is funding the research (if commercially funded, ensure that participants are informed).

The funding is being awarded by the Wellcome Trust.

Describe the design of your experiment (e.g. conditions, number of participants, procedure and equipment where appropriate).

Students and staff will be invited to participate and given an information sheet, which is attached to this submission, to ensure that they are fully informed of the purpose of the research and the manner in which the data will be used. This information will include a list of the questions they will be asked prior to data collection.

Body fat measurements will be taken for each participant using a hand-held electronic machine. Participants will be asked to provide basic information such as date of birth, sex and email address. Participants will be asked to provide information about their ethnic origin, as far back as their grandparents. The study requires Caucasian controls and we will use the Office of National Statistics classifications (white British, white Scottish, white Irish, white European, other). Each participant will also be asked questions to indicate any facial surgery or injury, family history of cleft lip/palate, major psychotic disorder or suicide (in first degree relative); these voluntary declarations would not be exclusion criteria but, rather, the basis for subgroup analyses.

Equipment

Facial images will be captured with a stereo-camera system constructed by Di3D. The equipment is located in the Mathematics & Statistics building.

Body fat measurements will be taken using a widely available hand-held electronic device.

Participants

We seek participants who are aged between 18 and 60 years old. However, it is likely that most of the data will be collected from the lower end of the age scale. We seek permission to collect data from students and staff volunteers in the University of Glasgow. Both males and females will be asked to participate.

We plan to collect at least 100 control images in Glasgow, and more if time and resources permit.

Describe how the procedures affect the participants.

The participants will have their photograph taken and a body fat measurement will be made using a hand-held electronic device. Questions on ethnicity and any history of facial surgery or of mental illness will also be asked. The whole process should take around 15 minutes.

State what in your opinion are the ethical issues involved in the proposal

In our view, the principal issue is the question on any family history of psychotic illness or suicide in first degree relatives. We would like to ask this question in order to identify participants who should be treated as a separate sub-group, as the patient groups we are dealing with include those with schizophrenia. It will be made clear verbally to participants that psychotic illness refers to conditions such as schizophrenia and not to conditions such as depressive disorders. The capture sessions will take place in a confidential environment where only the participant and the project assistant will be present. The project assistant is a research student who does not have medical or psychological training. Where participants answer 'yes' to this question, the project assistant will observe carefully for any signs of distress or discomfort. Where this is observed, participants will be directed to the University Health Service or the Student Counselling and Advisory Service.

Specify the nature of the participants. Indicate if the research involves children or those with mental disabilities or handicap and if so, explain the steps taken to obtain permission from I.e.a.s, head teachers, parents, etc...

Participants will be students and staff of the University of Glasgow. All will be adults.

State if payment will be made to subject.

No monetary payment will be made to participants. Students will be offered a three-dimensional virtual model of their faces as a reward for their participation.

Describe the procedures for advertising, for recruiting participants, and for obtaining consent from participants.

Students and staff from the University of Glasgow will be invited to take part in this study and will be provided with an information sheet containing a brief explanation of the study purpose and an indication of what their data will be used for.

Students will be recruited through Statistics lectures, from all levels, and by e-mail. The Statistics S1C class, which contains a large number of Psychology students, will be a particular target.

Staff will be recruited by e-mail from the School of Mathematics and Statistics and from other locations principally within the College of Science and Engineering.

Potential participants will be given a copy of the information sheet (attached). Prior to collecting data on participants, they will be asked to sign a permission form (attached).

State whether the proposal is in accord with the BPS code of conduct or the ESRC framework of research ethics.

The proposal is in accord with the BPS code of conduct.

Describe how the participants' anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

Participants will be interviewed in private by one person. Responses provided by the participants will be entered into a secure electronic database while the permission sheets will be stored separately. This database will be accessible only to members of the project consortium in Glasgow and in Ireland during the course of the project. We plan to make the data, in anonymised form, more widely available thereafter.

Date on which project will begin.

Data collection will begin in the second week of January 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Location at which the project will be carried out.

The project will be carried out in Room 104 in the Mathematics & Statistics building of the University of Glasgow. This room will be used solely for this purpose for the duration of the project.

Describe how participants will be debriefed at the end of the experiment (this must include the opportunity to contact the experimenter - or supervisor - for feedback on the general outcome of the experiment).

Results of the study will be posted on the project website (www.Face3D.ac.uk) and all participants will be invited to read about any outcomes and findings from the study. This site includes contact details and participants will be given the address on the information sheet.

Attach participant information form and consent form as part of the automated process, these files are required in order to proceed.

Attached.