

Participant information sheet

Investigating texture perception at the foot sole

Lead researcher: Luke Cleland

Principle investigator: Dr. Hannes Saal

You are being invited to take part in a research study funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC). Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study aims to investigate how we perceive textures at the sole of the foot.

Why have I been chosen?

The study will use 50 participants between the ages of 18 and 40 years of age, with no sensory or neurological impairments.

Do I have to take part?

No. Taking part in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form. Participants are free to refuse to participate and you may withdraw from the study at any time up until leaving the laboratory, and you do not have to provide a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked if you have any questions regarding the study. Should you agree to take part, you will be required to complete and sign a consent form.

You will take part in up to three conditions. All conditions will require you to interact with 16 textures and rate them based on different perceptual dimensions, such as roughness-smoothness, hardness-softness, slipperiness-stickiness. You will wear a blindfold and noise-cancelling headphones throughout. In condition 1, you will step onto and then off the texture before giving your rating. During this condition, you will be guided by an experimenter at all times by holding onto a guiding stick. In condition 2, you will be seated and asked to explore each texture with your foot sole. In condition 3, you will be seated and asked to explore each texture with your hands. There will be 3 presentations per stimulus, per perceptual dimension. Rests between stimulus presentation blocks are planned, but you can ask for extra rest if required.

What are the disadvantages or risks of taking part?

Some of the materials used may be uncomfortable to step onto. However, these materials and textures are reflective of those that you may come across in everyday life. You may feel disoriented while wearing the blindfold and noise-cancelling headphones. It is also possible that you may feel tired during the experiment. If you feel uncomfortable or tired, we will give you as much time as you need to rest. There will also be planned rests throughout the study. You may stop and withdraw from the experiment at any time until the point you leave the lab.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. If you are a first year undergraduate psychology student recruited through SONA, you will be given 8 research credits.

What will happen if I do not want to carry on with the study?

You can withdraw up until the time at which you leave the laboratory. Thereon, you cannot withdraw from the study after data collected has been completed as your data will be anonymised and there will be no way of linking you to the data.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. Your involvement will be confidential and anonymous. You will be given a participant ID, and that is all that will be associated with your data. Your data will be stored on encrypted storage devices and on the University of Sheffield's protected network. Access to this data will be restricted to researchers working on the project. Upon publication, data may be released to a public repository, in line with MRC guidelines.

Any photographs taken will not include identifiable features. These will be used exclusively for the purpose of this research and in the content of scientific presentations and publications. Please do not hesitate to tell us if you feel uncomfortable with this. If you are uncomfortable with this, then you may withdraw from the study if you feel that your concerns are not addressed.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to the data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using properly. Data must be stored for 20 years post study completion.

We will aim to publish our results in a peer reviewed scientific journal. We will also present the findings at national and international meetings. No identifiable information will be included in any written or oral output from the study.

The data collected during the course of the project may be used for additional or subsequent research.

What if there is a problem?

This is an observational study and does not involve any interventions like new treatments. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study. If you should ask to speak to the lead researcher, who will do their best to answer your questions (contact details at the end of this information sheet). If you feel your concern has not been handled to your satisfaction, you should contact the Head of the Psychology Department, who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If you have a complaint relating to how the participants' personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice:

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the department of Psychology.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. You may keep this information sheet.

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