Oct. 6, 2020

Reviewer Comment:  
  
*If the project will be conducted via Qualtrics, I'm not certain I understand the onboarding process and why that has to be done in groups (How will PI preserve the privacy and confidentiality of participants in the Zoom onboarding session?)   
  
If the onboarding session is only to provide instructions to potential participants, I recommend PI have 1) individual Zoom sessions or 2) step-by-step instructions in the consent or a separate booklet on what the project entails.*

Response: The purpose of the onboarding process is to facilitate answering questions participants have throughout the consent process. Normally, onboarding would be in person, so that if participants have trouble accessing the surveys, research personnel can walk them through the steps. Accessing the surveys will be made as easy as possible (participants will only have to click on a link provided in the email sent to them every day at 6 pm), but unanticipated technological issues often come up. In past studies, I have found that having an onboarding process addresses issues before they come up later and improves compliance throughout the duration of the study. Additionally, it gives the participants the opportunity to meet the research personnel, which has the effect of personalizing the process and improving compliance.

Regarding the reviewers’ suggestion to do zoom sessions individually, given that we are intending to recruit roughly 100 participants and all of the onboarding sessions will happen within a week, individual sessions are not feasible because of time restrictions. We believe that doing the onboarding in groups does not present a significant risk to participants with regard to privacy and confidentiality, as mere participation in the study does not reveal any personal information about a participant, aside from their racial/ethnic identity, which is not an identity that is closeted and at risk for being “revealed” as sexual orientation might be, for example. Again, the onboarding process would normally be done in person and thus, group zoom sessions provide a similar level of privacy and confidentiality as if they showed up to the lab to participate in the study at the same time (and may actually provide more privacy as participants can choose to turn off their camera during the zoom session). Thus, I believe it is an acceptable constraint to have to do onboarding sessions in groups. For these reasons, I would prefer to conduct the onboarding sessions as initially proposed.

However, to reflect the reviewer’s concerns, we have updated the protocol to include a statement that research team will ask participants at the beginning of the onboarding session to maintain the confidentiality of other participants and keep the content and activities from onboarding sessions confidential. Additionally, in the consent form, we expanded the text concerning privacy and confidentiality to alert participants to these issues.