UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Medicine
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EPIDEMIOLOGY

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the research study entitled: Impact of curriculum overload on students' mental health using the Curricular Densitometer.

Researcher(s):

Jeremiah Wezenamo Acharibasam, Graduate student, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan, jwa525@usask.ca

Supervisor(s):

Dr Kalyani Premkumar (PI), Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, 306-966-1409, kalyani.premkumar@usask.ca

Dr Ralph Deters, Department of Computer Science, 306-966-2072

Co-Investigator(s)

Dr. Julita Vassileva, Department of Computer Science, 306-966-2073

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

The purpose of the proposed study is to pilot a new mobile-based innovative tool (called Curricular Densitometer- CD) which will measure academic course load distribution in terms of the time students spend on course activity and the stress involved in completing these activities. Ultimately, this tool will produce a visualization of the stress associated with the course workload experienced by students in the BMSC 210.3 academic course.

The objectives of the project:

- To test the feasibility, functionality, and user experience of the CD tool
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tool based on user feedback
- To provide data to instructors and curriculum developers for curricular planning and implementation
- To examine the accuracy of the Curricular Densitometer in monitoring students' stress levels
- To asses connections between academic workload, emotional labour, stress and psychological distress among health sciences students
- To investigate demographic differences in the experience of academic workload, emotional labour, stress, and psychological distress.

Procedures:

If you want to partake in this project you will first need to sign off this consent form to allow you to participate.

- You will be part of a sample of 100 participants in your class who will be required to complete a pre-test survey in January 2020. In the pretest, all participants will be required to complete the Kessler's Psychological Distress Scale (K10), and a demographic survey which asks for your age, sex, year of study, and program of study.
- After completing the pre-test surveys, you will be signed up and privately emailed a download link to install the app and gain access to begin using it on your mobile phone to track your time spent completing your tasks on your class Team Poster Creation Project. The piloting of the CD app will end in March 2020.
- Once piloting is over, you will subsequently be privately emailed a new internet link to access and complete a post-test survey in March 2020. You will be responding to the same questionnaire (the K10).
- In addition, you may choose to participate in a focus groups discussion on the usability, functionality, user experience, and relevance of the CD tool to your curricular activity. Only 8 participants are needed for the focus groups. You will be privately emailed a link to a separate survey where you can leave your contact information if you would like to participate in the focus groups.

The entire project will take place within the University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine, BMSC 210.3 class, and the time commitment required of participants will be the entire duration of your Team Poster Project in the winter 2020 semester. On average, completing the consent form and the K10 questionnaire will take you about 15 – 30 minutes. You will also be expected to use the CD app for approximately 3 months (January to March). For participants who partake in the focus groups, a single session will be held lasting between 1 to 2 hours long. The gathered data will then be subjected to quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

Funded by:

This project is funded by the DH Discretionary Fund from the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology.

Potential Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. However, as the project will examine your emotional health, you may feel a minimal discomfort recollecting potentially negative feelings attached to events that may have occurred in the past few weeks leading up to the day of your participation in the current project.

Risk(s) will be addressed by:

To mitigate the above minimal risk, the researchers have provided you with contact information of available mental health resources on the University of Saskatchewan main campus (i.e. the Student Wellness Center) which you may seek mental health help from. To contact the Student Wellness Center, use the following information: Phone: 1-306-966-5768, Email: student.wellness@usask.ca, physical: Third floor (Rm. 310) and fourth floor, Place Riel Student Centre.

- Also, although it is preferred that responses be given to all items on the questionnaires, you are encouraged to only answer those questions that you are comfortable with.
- The researchers may terminate your participation in the project if you fail to follow the entire project procedure.

Potential Benefits:

- You may not directly benefit from this project personally. However, as the project will examine stress, emotional, and psychological distress linked with curriculum workload, the results may lead to modifications in subsequent BMCS 210.3 curricular that may benefit succeeding student cohorts as a whole in the College of Medicine.

Compensation:

- There will not be any form of compensation for participation in this project.

Confidentiality:

- Although the data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences, the data will be reported in aggregate form, so that it will not be possible to identify your individual identity. Moreover, the Consent Forms will be stored separately from the K10 questionnaire used so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. Please do not put your name or other identifying information on the questionnaires.
- Your username in the CD tool will also be replaced with a random pseudonym in the aggregated data in order to de-identify you from your CD account.
- Before transferring your data from your mobile phone to the application's database on the main server, your personal information will be removed and your data anonymized.
- All survey(s) are hosted by Survey Monkey and the data will be stored in facilities hosted in Canada. Survey Monkey's privacy policy.
- All members of the research team including Dr Kalyani Premkumar, Dr Ralph Deters, Dr Julita Vassileva, and Jeremiah W. Acharibasam will have access to your stored data throughout the duration of the entire research.

Storage of Data:

- All data gathered in this project will be securely stored on two password-protected USB drives (one containing the original data and a second as the backup drive). These USB drives will be maintained under lock and key in Dr Premkumar Kalyani's office at the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. The data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years post-publication per the University of Saskatchewan guidelines.
- A master list containing the random pseudonyms assigned to participants will be used to link your pre-test data to your post-test data for the purpose of data analysis. This master lsit will be stored in a separate secure location, away from the survey data, in Dr. Kalyani Premkumar's office for a minimum of 5 years post-publication per the University of Saskatchewan guidelines.
- When the 5-year data storage duration is over, in order to securely and irreversibly destroy the data, the two USB drives on which the electronic data is stored will be securely and permanently reformatted. The paper master list will also be shredded and cross shredded to prevent any possibility for reconstruction of the information.

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Also, the teachers will not know who participated in the research.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing, access to services] or how you will be treated.
- Should you wish to withdraw, your data (including completed questionnaires and account and data recorded in the CD app) will all be deleted from the research project and destroyed, if you desire.
- Your right to withdraw data from both the CD app and survey(s) will apply until one month (May 2020) after the data collection phase ends when the data has been de-identified and aggregated and results have been disseminated. After this, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.
- All members of the research team including Dr Kalyani Premkumar, Dr Ralph Deters, Dr Julita Vassileva, and Jeremiah W. Acharibasam will have access to any data you may contribute to this project.
- To protect your anonymity and confidentiality on the K10 online survey, your responses will be de-identified by representing your data with random pseudonyms in the aggregated data so that your responses will not be associated with your identity in any manner.
- As the research is a three month project, the researchers will advise you of any new information that could have a bearing on your decision to participate. Should the new information have a bearing on your participation, your participation will be immediately paused, and you will be provided with an updated consent form to study and agree to before you may continue to participate in the study.

Follow up:

- To obtain results from the study, please contact the principal researcher or the supervisors via the given contacts on page 1.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent:

IMPLIED CONSENT FOR SURVEYS

By completing and submitting the questionnaire, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.