

Exploring Intimate Wearables for Self-Care and Care of Others

Project information sheet

Teresa Almeida is a PhD Student at Open Lab, Newcastle University, working on human-computer interaction (HCI) with a focus on designing technologies for health and wellbeing. This study is part of her PhD project.

Study Designed for Couples

We have developed a materials kit that aims to support self-knowledge and knowledge of the other: by doing this, we aim to contribute to promote learning between couples regarding the female anatomy and explore female pelvic fitness* in relation to biological (i.e. reproductive system), medical and personal health (i.e. incontinence), positive health and wellbeing (i.e. sexual pleasure). We are asking you if you would like to work with us to help us to evaluate this new tool of wearable and digital technology that will support new perspectives and new ways of thinking about our intimate bodies in a way that will be fun and playful to learn with.

* Although this study design addresses female pelvic fitness only, awareness of pelvic fitness and pelvic health is equally important in both sexes. Nonetheless, our aim with this work is to explore the impact of knowledge (of the self and the other) in practices of intimate care that entail esteem and reliance on the self and each other.

What will I have to do?

We will deliver a materials kit to you. This materials kit will contain the following items: a wearable item (a pair of bespoke female underwear), a recordable voice pad, and a series of clothes tags that will include simple instructions and provide a space for you to write some thoughts. You will also be asked to download a piece of software (application) to your mobile device (iPhone).

This materials kit will be delivered to you by hand or by post. You will then keep it for the duration of a week. During this time, it is up to you when to proceed with the study and according to the instructions included. After that, we invite you to take part in a semi-structured interview. The interview can be held at your workplace, at a place of mutual convenience and suitability, via phone, or via Skype.

We will not ask you difficult questions or ask you to discuss personal issues. We are creating a design kit that we would like to make available to all women, and we will have conversations with you and your partner around how and what you think about it in order to help us develop it further.

What are the benefits of taking part?

You will be directly involved in the first trial of our design of a wearable and digital technology, which we wish to implement for all women. You will be able to test the technology, tell us exactly what you think of it and how well it works. You will help us with making the design better so that in the future women, and women and their partners, will also learn about female anatomy and physiology through playing with this technology. We think that the experience of taking part in the study will be enjoyable and interesting.

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What information will you collect about me?

We would like to make some photographs and sound recordings of the part of the study you will be doing on your own time. Sound will be recorded when you first use the wearable item with the mobile phone, and later on in the same study you will be asked to take a photograph. It is up to you to share this with the researcher, and you will be given the option to do so or not. We do this so that we can go back over your response to the humour in the design and technology, which will help us make this work more meaningful and engaging later on.

What will happen to information you collect about me?

Only the people directly involved in the study will see the information we collect. We will use a code instead of your name on all of the information we take for the study. This will help keep your information safe. We will store the recordings we make for the study and the information we collect at Newcastle University. The recordings and information we collect will not be used for any other reason apart from the study.

Do I have to take part?

No. You do not have to take part in this study. If you currently have any health conditions which might be made worse by participating in this research then you may not wish to participate in the study. Even if you agree to join in at the start, you can change your mind throughout the duration of the study. Should it happen, you do not need to give a reason for it. Should you want to withdraw afterwards (by September 2015), you can also do so by informing the researcher. The researcher contact details are provided with this information sheet. This will not affect you in any way now or in the future.

Thank you very much for reading this information.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact:

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This research project has been approved by the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering Research Ethics Committee, Newcastle University.