

Participant Information Sheet

PROTECT COVID-19 National Core Study on transmission and environment. Behavioural factors for effective face covering use within retail consulting environments.

Introduction

The Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) is conducting research to understand the practices and influential factors related to effective use of face coverings¹ amongst worker populations and members of the public within the retail sector. The study is specifically focused on service providers and service users of retail consulting rooms, where personalised services are provided away from the busy 'shop floor'.

This document provides a written summary of the study context, objectives and approach to help you make an informed decision on whether you wish to take part.

What prompted the study?

Preventing transmission of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) is one of the biggest public health challenges we have faced recently. Exposure to the virus from aerosol droplets is acknowledged to increase in highly populated areas, areas with poor ventilation and in confined spaces. Whilst face coverings provide a physical barrier to viral transmission and are acknowledged to reduce the spread of COVID-19, their effectiveness can be undermined by user behaviours.

Across the UK, government restrictions for the management of COVID-19 are lifting, however the approach taken has not been consistent across England, Scotland and Wales. At the time of writing (August 2021), face coverings remain mandatory within most indoor public spaces and public transport within Scotland and Wales. In contrast, face coverings are no longer legally required in any setting in England (apart from healthcare settings and care homes and any businesses and travel operators that have set their own rules for customers and passengers (e.g. Transport for London)).

Retail environments offering personal consulting services have high levels of customer throughput with premises often situated within locations with a high-traffic of people. Such retailers provide essential services for health and wellbeing, mood and self-esteem and, like the wider retail sector, have been subject to operating restrictions, changes and challenges over the course of the pandemic. As government restrictions continue to lift, there is increasing reliance on individuals to self-manage behaviours that reduce transmission risk to themselves and others, with the wearing of face coverings now a familiar practice reported to mitigate transmission. There is hence a need to better understand the factors affecting worker and consumer behaviour in this context.

What is the focus of this study?

This research focuses on the behavioural aspects of the use of face coverings amongst both worker and consumer populations. It aims to understand current practices, and influential factors to the effective use of face coverings

¹ "In the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, a face covering is something which securely covers the nose and mouth. There are many types of face coverings available." (GOV UK, 2021).

within the retail sector, with specific focus on those businesses offering personalised services with customers in a private consulting space away from their busy 'shop floor', namely:

- Retailers offering personal health services (e.g. pharmaceutical, optometry or audiology) within one or more consulting rooms
- Retail service businesses offering hair and beauty treatments within one or more consulting rooms.

We aim to identify the factors that affect face covering use with a view to informing sector specific recommendations. These recommendations will help ensure the continued safe operation of retailers making use of retail consulting rooms. Furthermore, we hope that the outcomes of this research are useful to shape effective risk communication strategies and messaging. Through this research, we aim to drive positive behaviours concerning the use of face coverings within retail consulting rooms and similar environments where learning and beneficial practices could usefully be transferred.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been identified as a key person of interest, either:

- a worker supporting service delivery within retail consulting rooms;
- a member of the public/consumer of services delivered within retail consulting rooms

We would very much value your input to understand user behaviours of face coverings within this retail environment of interest.

How do I take part?

There are two opportunities for people to take part in this study.

1. Participation in an interview/focus group

During November and December 2021, we will be conducting interviews and running focus groups with workers and members of the public. Interviews will take approximately 20-30 minutes and will explore:

- Your behaviours concerning face coverings (e.g. type and context of usage, storage and disposal/cleaning),
- Things that might influence your wearing of face coverings (or not), within retail consulting rooms.

If you are interested in taking part in an interview or focus group discussion (by phone or Zoom) please get in contact via **Protect.Facemask-Study@iom-world.org**

2. Completion of an online survey

In January 2022 we will be launching an online survey to understand people's opinions and behaviours concerning the use of face coverings within a retail consulting environment. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and can be completed anonymously online.

The survey link will be shared on the project specific page of the PROTECT NCS website [<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/covid19-national-project/>] and can be sent directly to prospective participants who have expressed an interest in taking part to **Protect.Facemask-Study@iom-world.org**

How will my data be recorded and stored?

Interview responses: With your expressed permission, interviews/focus group discussion will be recorded via the use of video conferencing technology (e.g. Zoom). Audio recordings will only be accessible to the research team at IOM. Some platforms (e.g. Zoom) record both video and audio at the same time, but we will only keep an audio file (any video file will be immediately deleted). You may wish to turn off your video during the interview.

Survey responses: The online survey will be hosted on a secure survey platform, OnlineSurveys, accessible via smartphone, tablet or computer device to enable completion at a time and location convenient for you. You do not need to provide any personally identifiable information in order to complete the online survey. The survey link will be shared on the project specific page of the PROTECT NCS website [] and can be sent directly to prospective participants who have expressed an interest in taking part. Participant responses will remain on the secure OnlineSurveys data platform until the survey is closed, at which point participant responses will be exported and saved onto IOM's secure server for analysis by the research team.

All data will be stored on the IOM secure server, accessible only to project researchers. We are collecting and storing this personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 which legislate to protect your personal information. The legal basis upon which we are using your personal information is a "public interest task". For more information about the way we process your personal information and comply with data protection law please see our [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#).

IOM, as a Data Controller for this project, takes responsibility for the protection of the personally identifiable information collected about you during this study (e.g. name, contact details). In order to comply with the legal obligations to protect your personal data IOM have safeguards in place, including high level information governing policies that include data protection policies and information security policy, and restricted access to project files as a matter of course.

We are also working alongside other research teams in the UK who are specifically looking at other aspects of the wider research programme. We may share the research data with them once it has been anonymised. We would not share any of your personal data with the other research teams. Please let your interviewer know if you are happy for us to share your data in this way.

How will my data be analysed and used?

Written interview transcriptions will be imported into qualitative analysis software (NVivo) to enable analysis of themes by the research team. Survey responses will be analysed, using descriptive statistics, by the research team.

Confidentiality will be carefully protected throughout project delivery and following project completion. We will not share your data with anyone outside of the project team and no reference will be made to you/your organisation by name in any published findings.

Do I have to take part?

No, participation in an interview and completion of the online survey is entirely voluntary.

Interviewees: If you express an interest in taking part in an interview or focus group discussion you will be sent a participant consent form in addition to this participant information sheet for your consideration. You will then be asked for your name and contact details to enable a convenient time for the discussion to be scheduled and conducted. The interviewer will provide you with an opportunity to ask questions and ask you to verbally confirm your informed consent to take part immediately prior to the interview commencing. If at any point prior to or during the interview/focus group discussion you no longer want to take part, that's ok. Just let your interviewer know so that they can cancel/stop the interview.

You are free to withdraw at any point during, and up to two weeks following, participation and you do not need to give a reason for doing so. To withdraw, you should provide a written request to **Protect.Facemask-Study@iom-world.org**, whereby written confirmation will be provided following deletion of your data.

Survey respondents: You are not required to provide any personally identifiable information when completing the online survey to ensure the anonymity of participant responses. Prior to submitting completed survey responses, you will be asked within the online survey to confirm consent for your data to be used as described within this participant information sheet for the purposes of this study. After this point, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the analysis.

Why should I take part – what are the possible benefits?

Your data, along with other participant responses, will help provide insight into the behavioural factors impacting effective use of face coverings within the retail consulting environment. This insight will help to:

- Identify gaps in knowledge and understanding and highlight ineffective practices regarding the use of face coverings as a means of preventing viral transmission, providing an evidence base through which to target educational messaging amongst workers and consumers.
- Inform evidence based behaviour change campaigns that target influential factors affecting worker and consumer behaviours with respect to effective use, storage and cleaning/disposal of face coverings within the retail consulting environment.
- Ensure the continued safe operation of retailers making use of small consulting rooms and other similar environments, within retail and wider sectors, where the study findings and subsequent practice recommendations may be transferable.

You can also consent to be entered into a free prize draw to win £10, £25 or £50 of retail vouchers.

Interviewees: The prize draw will be open to all workers and members of the public who participate in an interview. We aim to conduct interviews with 50 people in total. You will need to express your consent for the researchers to enter your contact email into the draw.

Survey respondents: Following completion of the online survey you will be redirected to a page asking if you would like to be entered to a free prize draw to win £10, £25 or £50 of retail vouchers. If yes, you will need to enter a contact email that will be included in the draw. This will be stored separately to your survey responses and your anonymity is assured for the survey responses you provide. The prize draw will be open to all workers and members of the public who complete the online survey and we aim to secure 200 responses in total.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

Researchers from the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), the University of Manchester and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are involved in this project. You can find out more about how we use your information in the following ways:

- At IOM's [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#)
- by asking one of the research team/your interviewer
- by sending an email to the principal investigator for this study rebecca.canham@iom-world.org
- by sending an email to the project specific email address Protect.Facemask-Study@iom-world.org

Should you wish to receive the results of this study, please indicate to your interviewer that they may retain your contact details in order to provide you with a summary of findings. This will not affect your ability to remain anonymous.

What will happen to the results of this study and will I remain anonymous?

We will use data (in anonymised form) to inform our findings which will be written up in reports (to funders and the public), scientific publications and discussed in presentations and workshops. This may include direct quotations for illustrative purposes but will not identify either you or your organisation. You cannot be identified in any reports or other summaries of the research.

Who has reviewed this study?

All research involving human participants is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Reading Independent Ethics Committee who approved that it is acceptable for us to ask people to take part.

Further information

The COVID-19 at Work Study is one of several projects being conducted within the National Core Study on Transmission and Environment, funded by the UK Government, more details of which can be found here: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/covid19-national-project/>. This project is being overseen by Professor Martie van Tongeren, at The University of Manchester, who is the Theme Three Lead for Sector specific Studies being conducted.

If you would like to discuss the specifics of this project prior to your participation, you can contact the principal investigator of the project (Rebecca Canham) or one of the research team via Protect.Facemask-Study@iom-world.org.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.