

Study title: *Lifestyle Influences of Military & Veteran Partners: A Qualitative Study (LIFE-Q)*

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

MODREC Application No: 2218/MODREC/23

Introduction

We would like to invite you to take part in a study that explores the alcohol use and lifestyle behaviours of spouses and partners of those who are or were in the UK Armed Forces (Royal Navy, Army, or Royal Air Force).

We are interested in learning about **alcohol use**, but we also want to know about broader lifestyle behaviours, like exercise, dietary habits and smoking/vaping.

If you would like to take part, we will ask you to fill in four weekly online diaries. You may also wish to take part in a one-to-one telephone/ online interview to provide more detail about your experiences after you have completed your diaries.

Please read the following information sheet so you are able to make an informed decision about taking part. Feel free discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of the research?

This study focuses on understanding military and veteran spouses/partners' alcohol use, as well as other lifestyle behaviours like exercise, dietary habits, smoking/vaping, and socialising. Having a partner who is or was in the military may impact some of these behaviours but this has received limited attention.

The findings might help organisations such as the National Health Service (NHS), Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Office for Veterans' Affairs, the UK Armed Forces, the Naval, Army and Royal Air Force Family Federations, and military family charities to support the partners of Army, Royal Navy/Royal Marine and Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel. We can also use the findings to identify, inform, and adapt supports that can help spouses/partners should they require it.

Who is doing this research?

This independent research will be conducted by the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR), an academic research team based at King's College London. KCMHR has been conducting research into issues relevant to current and former members of the UK Armed Forces and their families since 1996. KCMHR is independent of the Ministry of Defence. No information provided will be shared with the military, including your partner's Chain of Command or employer. This study is funded by the Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT).

Why have I been invited to take part?

We would like to speak to spouses/partners of UK military personnel of **any gender**, including those in **same-sex** relationships. You can take part if you are the spouse/partner of:

- A currently serving regular (full-time) member of the UK Armed Forces (Royal Navy/British Army/Royal Air Force) *OR*
- A former serving regular (full-time) member of the UK Armed Forces who left in the past 5 years **and** you were in a relationship with them while they were serving
- **And** if you are currently living in the UK.

You will **not** be able to take part in the diary or interview study if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. As pregnancy and breastfeeding impact people's usual ways of life, we have decided **not** to recruit participants who are in this phase of life in the current study. Other studies conducted by KCMHR are, however, looking into pre- and post-natal experiences.

What will I be asked to do?

Part 1: A weekly diary

The first part of the study involves you completing a weekly online diary entry for approximately one month (max. of 4 entries) to ask you about your lifestyle behaviours for that week. This period may be longer if participants complete weekly entries toward the end of a week. We will ask about drinking, key life events, exercise, dietary habits, smoking, vaping, physical and mental health, socialising and family life. Each diary entry will take approximately 20 minutes and you can write as much or as little as you want. We will send you a diary entry link each week via email.

Part 2: A telephone interview

The second part of this study is an interview study. During the diary study, we will ask if you are interested in taking part in a one-to-one telephone interview to discuss your alcohol use and lifestyle behaviours. We will refer to your diary entries in the interview and ask further questions to better understand your experience. You **do not** have to take part in the interview if you do not want to. You can let the research team know you are interested by emailing us directly or by ticking the box when you fill out your first diary entry.

What will happen after the study?

All participants' diary entries and interviews will be analysed to write reports and research papers. We will also write blogs and articles and present findings to national and international organisations interested in military and veteran families. We may use brief phrases or sections of quotes as part of our findings but we will not use your name or any information that will identify you or your family. We will remove identifiable details and we will use a fake name to ensure your identity remains anonymous.

If you are interested in the findings, we can send you a summary once we have finished – just tick the box or let our research team know.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can take part in the diary study if you wish to and there is no need to take part in the interview unless you want to.

Are there any benefits of taking part?

Many military and veteran spouses/partners who have taken part in our previous studies have appreciated having the opportunity to talk about their experiences. By taking part, you will help us to better understand the lifestyle behaviours of military and veteran spouses/partners and what influences these. This information may help develop services and programmes that support military and veteran spouses/partners health and well-being.

What are the possible disadvantages (or risks) of taking part?

It is unlikely that taking part in the study will be harmful to you. You do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. Some topics may feel sensitive to talk about but it is entirely up to you whether you want to bring them up.

Can I withdraw from the research and what will happen if I withdraw?

You can stop taking part in the study at any point without giving a reason, and without consequences. You can do this by simply by exiting and not completing the diary. You do not have to notify the study team, but you can let us know if you would like us not to make further contact with you so we do not send you reminders. If you would like to remove your data even after you have completed your diary entries, please contact the research team using the contact details below within 30 days of completing your diary.

Will I receive any expenses or payments?

Participants who complete at least one diary entry will have the chance to receive one of four £50 Love to Shop vouchers. For every additional diary entry completed, you will receive an extra chance to win (e.g., two completed diaries = two entries into the draw). All participants who take part in the interview study will be given a £20 Love to Shop voucher to thank you for your time.

What happens if I suffer any harm?

We are not anticipating that anyone will be negatively impacted by taking part in this research study. If you suffer any harm as a direct result of taking part in this study, you can apply for compensation under the MOD's No-Fault Compensation Scheme [*signpost to details*].

What if I need support?

As a research team, we cannot provide clinical treatments or care, however we have included a list of possible support services that you might find helpful. During the diary study, we will **not** be monitoring your responses until the data collection is completed so please speak to your GP or friends and family if you are worried about any of your responses. During the interview, we may ask if you would like to speak to a clinical member of the team if there are concerns raised about your wellbeing. We may also suggest some of the services in the signposting booklet.

Data handling and confidentiality

Your data will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (2018). All your information from the diaries and

interviews is strictly confidential and will be stored securely. Personal information such as names and contact details will be deleted once the study is finished. Your personal details will be securely stored and kept separate from your diary data. The study team will only contact you 1) to send you your weekly diary entry links; 2) to remind you to continue taking part in the diary entries; 3) if you expressed interest in taking part in the interview; 4) if you want to find out more about future research at KCMHR, 5) to send you a voucher if you win the prize draw and 6) to send you a copy of the final report if you are interested.

Your data will not be shared with any other parties, unless you share that you or someone else is at risk. In these cases, we would be legally obliged to tell the appropriate authorities. We will therefore have to break confidentiality if we believe that there is a risk to yourself or others, or if you disclose a previously unreported crime. We would endeavour to contact you first to discuss this.

Data protection statement

The sponsor of this project is the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the data controller for this project is King's College London (KCL). The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined within this information sheet. Your information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes. The legal basis for processing your personal data for research purposes under GDPR is a 'task in the public interest'. You can provide ethical consent for the use of your personal data in this study by completing the consent form in your first diary entry.

To find out more about how the College deals with personal information, including your rights and who to contact if you have a concern, please see the College's core privacy notice at: www.kcl.ac.uk/terms/privacy.aspx

If you would like more information about how your research data will be processed by us under the terms of UK data protection laws, please visit this link: www.kcl.ac.uk/research/support/research-ethics/kings-college-london-statement-on-use-of-personal-data-in-research

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If you have questions about the research, you can contact the study team directly on the contact details below. If this project has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a

complaint about the conduct of the project you can contact **Dr. Rachael Gribble**, the study's Principal Investigator on rachael.gribble@kcl.ac.uk.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC) (reference 2218/MODREC/23).

Compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki

This study will be conducted in accordance with the principles defined in the Declaration of Helsinki ¹ as adopted at the 64th WMA General Assembly at Fortaleza, Brazil in October 2013.

What will I have to do if I have any questions or decide to take part?

If you have any questions or would like to take part, please contact the research team, otherwise we will follow-up with you in approximately one week.

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Thank you for taking the time to read this.

¹ World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki [revised October 2013].
Recommendations Guiding Medical Doctors in Biomedical Research Involving Human
Subjects. 64th WMA General Assembly, Fortaleza (Brazil).