



MACQUARIE
University

Welcome

You are invited to take part in a study of feelings towards your body following surgery for breast cancer.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to further understand women's experiences with how they feel about themselves and their body, after surgery for breast cancer.

Evidence shows that being able to write about your breast cancer experience may assist women with breast cancer to cope with the changes to their body. Evidence also shows that undertaking regular brief meditation may help women to cope. This study aims to find out whether a writing activity and self-kindness focused meditation can help women cope better with the changes to their body after breast cancer treatment.

Who is conducting the study?

The study is being conducted by Professor Kerry Sherman from the Centre for Emotional Health and Department of Psychology at Macquarie University, Sydney. This research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Masters of Clinical Psychology for two students under the supervision of Prof. Sherman:

Angela Mifsud (Contact: 0410685199 or angela.mifsud@students.mq.edu.au)

Andi Levin (Contact: 0435928069 or andi.g.levin@gmail.com)

What does the study involve?

This study has two parts.

Part 1 is an online questionnaire to be completed when you sign up for the study. You will be asked about some background information and your contact details (name, phone, email address) as well as questions about your current feelings and the impact of cancer treatment upon your body. It is expected that you will need no more than 30 minutes to complete this online questionnaire.

Part 2 involves doing a writing activity (in your language of choosing). Immediately after completing the initial online questionnaire you will be:

- allocated to 1 of 3 groups and asked to complete a writing exercise online,
- asked to write about your feelings and experiences during treatment for your breast cancer as well as its impact upon your body, and
- The writing activity is completely anonymous, your writing will not be saved, and it cannot be accessed by anyone. It is expected that this part will take about 30 minutes of your time.

After completing the writing activity, some women may be additionally asked to listen to a short 5-minute meditation, daily for 3 weeks. Daily SMS (text) reminders will be sent to participants undertaking the meditations.

All participants will then be asked to complete follow-up online questionnaires at:

- 1-month – including a short version of the writing activity
- 3-months, and
- 6-months

after completing the initial questionnaire. We will use your contact details to send reminders and web links so that you can complete questionnaires on the three follow up occasions. It is expected that you will need no more than 30 minutes to complete each online questionnaire.

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary; you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Also, if you feel uncomfortable about any of the questions you can choose not to answer those questions.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of this study are confidential. All results will be presented in a way that no person can be identified. Only researchers directly involved with the study will have access to the data. De-identified data may be made available to other researchers in the future for further analysis. A summary of the results of the data can be made to you on request by contacting the primary investigator whose details are on the bottom of this page.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research; however, the writing activities from this study may provide some benefits in terms of how you cope with changes to your body.

What can I do if I would like to speak more about my feelings?

If you would like to receive emotional support or further discuss your experiences of cancer treatment, the NSW Cancer Council Helpline (phone number 131120) or Lifeline Counselling Services (phone number 13 11 14) can provide more help. These services are provided free of charge.

How can I get more information?

You may contact the primary investigator Prof. Kerry Sherman, or the student researchers Angela Mifsud or Andi Levin, if you have any questions regarding this research. They can all be contacted via email mychangedbody@mq.edu.au.

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I understand the nature of this research and have voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. I have read and understand the information above and any questions I have

asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without any consequence. I have printed a copy of the participant information sheet to keep.

Please tick the box below if you would like to take part in this study and commence the questionnaire

- YES
- NO