**MUHREC Project ID: 21393**

**Project Title: “SWIPE”: A Personalised brain-training app to reduce alcohol cravings and consumption**

*Thank you for choosing to participate in this study of “SWIPE”, a personalised brain-training app which aims to reduce alcohol cravings and consumption. Please read this explanatory statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this study.*

**What is the purpose of this research project?**

This main purpose of this study is to test a new “brain-training” app designed to reduce “auto-pilot” responses to alcohol that lead to drinking when we see things that we typically associate with alcohol. We hope this brain-training app will help anyone in the community looking to reduce their alcohol consumption.

**Who can participate in this research?**  
This study is looking for individuals who meet the following criteria:

* Aged 18 or older
* Own an Android or Apple smart phone with an active Australian phone number
* Drink alcohol at hazardous or harmful levels, as indicated by an online questionnaire
* Are concerned about their drinking and wish to reduce their use of alcohol over the next 4-6 weeks

**What does the research involve?**

Participation in this study involves completing two short online questionnaires and downloading and completing a 4-week “brain-training” program using the “SWIPE” app. The online questionnaires will assess your eligibility to participate in the study, as well as asking questions about your demographic characteristics, alcohol use and cravings, and your thoughts about the app’s usability.

If eligible, you will be able to download the “SWIPE” app from the App Store or Google Play and commence the brain-training within 48 hours from signing up to the study. The app will require you to answer some questions about your alcohol use over the past month and will prompt you to record your alcohol consumption during the training program on a weekly basis. You will also be prompted to upload your own photos of alcoholic beverages you wish to drink less, and positive images representing activities you wish to engage in more (e.g., seeing friends, family, hobbies, pets, favourite places, etc.). You can also select these images from a number of pre-selected options in the app instead.

Using the images you have chosen, you will be required to complete two weekly sessions of a type of cognitive training known as “approach bias modification” for four weeks. Each session will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete, where you will be trained to repeatedly swipe away alcohol-related images whilst swiping positive images towards you. Immediately before and after each session, you will be asked to rate your craving for alcohol. After completing the 4-week training program, you will be notified through the app to complete a short online questionnaire about your experiences with the app, where you will be able to enter into the draw to win one of ten $100 eVouchers. Four weeks after completing this questionnaire, you will also be prompted by the app to complete one final entry of your alcohol consumption over the past month, which will allow us to assess whether “SWIPE” has helped create lasting reductions in your alcohol consumption. Overall, it is expected that the total participation time throughout the program will be 60-80 minutes.

**What are the risks of participating in this study?**

The “SWIPE” brain-training task involves viewing images of alcohol, which may potentially be triggering for some people. However, based on our previous research experience in withdrawal treatment settings, the risk of the training increasing alcohol craving is low. Should you become triggered or experience intense cravings and require further support, you can contact Direct Line or Counselling Online for free, 24/7. There is also an in-built link to Direct Line in the “SWIPE” app if you need to speak with someone urgently.

*Direct Line* – 1800 888 236

*Counselling Online* – [https://www.counsellingonline.org.au/](NULL)

**Withdrawal from the research**  
You may withdraw from the research at any stage. If you would like to also withdraw any of your data, you can contact either of the researchers listed at the bottom of this Explanatory Statement and they will remove your data from the study with no repercussions to you. If you wish to cease the brain-training and no longer receive notifications you can simply delete the app.

**Who is conducting this research?**

This research is conducted by researchers at Monash University and Turning Point who have developed brain-training programs to help people in treatment reduce their alcohol use. Only the “SWIPE” research team will have access to the data collected.

**How will the information you provide be used?**

We anticipate that the brain-training will help people reduce their alcohol use and craving and therefore we need to ask you a number of questions about your alcohol use before, during and after the training. We will use this information to examine whether the app helps people reduce how often they drink, how much they drink and their level of alcohol craving. We will also collect information about your use of the app (e.g., how frequently you engage in the app, how long it takes you to complete a session) as well as user experiences to inform future improvements to the app. We will also ask about your age, gender and postcode so that we can explore whether the app works better for certain populations, or if the app is more popular among certain groups.

**What will happen to the data provided?**

The information you provide in the online surveys will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible by the research team. The information you provide in the “SWIPE” app will be de-identified and anonymised, and will only be accessible by the research team and the app development company (ANT Development Studios) for the duration of the study. Once the study is complete, and the app data has been matched to your survey response (via your phone number), all app data hosted by ANT Development Studios will be deleted and downloaded to a locked excel file which will be stored locally at Turning Point and will only be accessible by members of the “SWIPE” research team. Your phone number will also be deleted from our database.

All participant data will be aggregated, analysed and stored on a secure Australian database (i.e., it will never be sent overseas). Any dissemination of the findings (e.g., written reports and at conferences) will only include numerical data and statistical analyses and will not include descriptions of any individual participant. Seven years after we finish publishing any findings arising from these data, the Chief Investigator or Turning Point management will dispose of all data by deleting computer files (in accordance with Turning Point’s policy on data storage and management).

In accordance with relevant Australian and Victorian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. However, given that all of the identifiable data will be destroyed at the close of the study, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to locate this information for you should you wish to access it.

**Results**

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate findings of this research project, please contact Hugh Piercy via email (contact details listed below).

**Privacy and confidentiality**  
Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential. It will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. Data obtained in this study will only be accessible by the research team involved in the SWIPE study. It should be noted however that ANT Development Studios will be able to view “SWIPE” app data, however this information: a) is fully anonymised, b) cannot be connected to the information you provide in the baseline and post-test online surveys, and c) will be downloaded and deleted from the server (hosted by ANT Development Studios) upon completion of the study, where it will be transferred to a locked file which only the research team can access.

Publicly presented or published data will only include numerical data and statistical analyses. It will not include any information which may identify you. Additionally, the photos that you may upload for the “SWIPE” training program will not be visible or accessible to anyone other than yourself (i.e., they are stored locally on your phone, not “uploaded” to a server that anyone else can access).

**Funding**

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**Complaints**

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

*Executive Officer - Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)  
Room 111, Building 3e  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800*

*Tel: +61 3 9905 2052        Email: muhrec@monash.edu        Fax: +61 3 9905 3831*

**Contact Details**

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**Consenting to participate in the research**

Since participation in this research is voluntary, you do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide you want to take part in this research project, your completion of this online survey will be taken as implied consent. By ticking the box below and consenting, you are telling us that you:

* Understand what you have read
* Consent to take part in the “SWIPE” online surveys
* Consent to download and use the “SWIPE” app
* Consent to the use of your survey responses and “SWIPE” app data as described above

Please tick one of these options:

* I understand what I have read and consent to take part in the research project as described.
* I do not wish to take part in the research project.