

### Participant Information Sheet (Patients)

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| <b>Study Title:</b>            | <b>Understanding neck pain care in Aotearoa, New Zealand</b>                   |
| <b>Study Department:</b>       | School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago, Dunedin                          |
| <b>Principal Investigator:</b> | Name: Dr Cathy Chapple      Position: Associate Professor                      |
| <b>Principal Researcher:</b>   | Name: Komal      Position: PhD Candidate<br>Contact Phone Number: 0800 687 489 |

#### Introduction

Thank you for showing interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully. Take time to consider and, if you wish, talk with relatives or friends, before deciding whether or not to participate.

If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you, and we thank you for considering our request.

#### What is the aim of this research project?

We currently have limited understanding of how neck pain is managed within New Zealand's healthcare system and whether existing services meet the needs of those who use and provide them. Therefore, this study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the current management and delivery of neck pain care in New Zealand by exploring how neck pain services are experienced, delivered, and designed across the healthcare system. The findings will help to inform the development of a more coordinated approach for neck pain care, ensuring people receive the right care at the right time.

#### Who will be doing the study?

This study is being conducted by Komal as part of her PhD research at the University of Otago. Komal will conduct the interviews and analyse the information collected. The study is supervised by two supervisors from the School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago, and one supervisor from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia.

#### Who is funding this project?

This study is funded by the School of Physiotherapy PhD fund at the University of Otago. University of Otago Doctoral Scholarship also supports Komal.

#### Who can take part in this study?

We are looking to recruit adults (18 years or older) who have experienced neck pain or neck stiffness and have received care in New Zealand within the past year. Participants must be able to provide informed consent and be able to speak, read, and understand English.

### **What will participants be asked to do?**

If you agree to take part, we will first check that you are eligible for the study and ask you to provide informed consent. You will then be invited to complete a short questionnaire that collects background information, such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, area of residence, and information about your neck pain and the care you have received.

You will then take part in a one- on- one online interview with Komal at a time that suits you. You are welcome to have a support person present during the interview.

The interview will explore your experiences of neck pain care in New Zealand, including your experience of pain, healthcare services, care you received, and any changes you would like to see in the future.

After the interview, as a thank you for your time, you will receive a NZD \$30 voucher for participating in the study.

### **Is there any risk of discomfort or harm from participation?**

We do not expect any physical harm from taking part in the study. However, some questions about your experiences of neck pain or healthcare services may make you feel uncomfortable or emotional. If this happens, you may choose not to answer any question, and you may even ask to pause or stop the interview at any time. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any stage without any disadvantage.

### **What information will be collected, and how will it be used?**

If you take part in this study, we will collect some background information about you, your neck pain, and the care you have received. We will also interview you about including your experience of pain, healthcare services, care you received, and any changes you would like to see in the future.

The information collected will help us better understand current neck pain care in New Zealand and inform the development of a more coordinated approach to care. The findings will be included in Komal's PhD thesis and may be published in journals or presented at conferences. If you are interested in the findings of this study, then we will provide you with a lay summary of findings through e-mail upon completion of the research.

### **What about anonymity and confidentiality?**

Interview recordings and study data will be stored securely on the University of Otago–approved systems and only accessed by authorised members of the research team. Interview transcripts/data will be de-identified by removing identifying details before analysis. We will send you the de-identified transcript before sharing it with the research team, to check if it is sufficiently de-identified. Contact information will be stored separately from research data and will be deleted at the end of the study. De-identified research data, consent forms and questionnaires will be securely retained for at least 10 years in accordance with University of Otago requirements. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy, and you will not be identified in any reports, publications or presentations.

### **What will happen if you do not want to continue in the study?**

You may withdraw from the study at any time up to one month after your interview without giving a reason and without any disadvantage to yourself.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have questions now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

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| Name: Komal<br>Position: PhD Candidate<br>Department: School of Physiotherapy<br>University of Otago, Dunedin                  | Contact Phone Number: 0800 687 489<br><br>Contact email: Komal.komal@postgrad.otago.ac.nz |
| Name: Dr Cathy Chapple<br>Position: Associate Professor<br>Department: School of Physiotherapy<br>University of Otago, Dunedin | Contact Phone Number: 0800 687 489<br><br>Contact email: cathy.chapple@otago.ac.nz        |
| Name: Dr Olivia<br>Position: Senior Lecturer<br>Department: University of the Sunshine<br>Coast, Australia                     | Contact Phone Number: 0800 687 489<br><br>Contact email: ogalea@usc.edu.au                |
| Name: Dr Lizz Carrington<br>Position: Senior Lecturer<br>Department: School of Physiotherapy<br>University of Otago, Dunedin   | Contact Phone Number: 0800 687 489<br><br>Contact email: lizz.carrington@otago.ac.nz      |

*This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Health) - If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (phone +64 3 479 8256 or email [humanethics@otago.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@otago.ac.nz)). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.*