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Size-inclusive SCREENING STORIES

Exploring the cervical screening experiences of big-bodied people

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for considering the invitation to take part in this research. Please read this information sheet before you decide if you want to take part. You can discuss the study with whānau, friends, or support people before you decide. Participation is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you.

What is the aim of this research?

This research aims to find out about the cervical screening experiences of big-bodied people. We want to understand factors impacting on the ease and comfort of the screening process, including things like facilities, equipment, interactions and communication with staff. Participants' insights will help identify areas where improvements may be needed to make screening safer and more comfortable.

Who can take part?

We want to talk with people who have recent experience with cervical screening or colposcopy. We are looking for around 70 participants in total.

This research might be for you if **you have had a cervical screening or colposcopy** in the past 3-months, or plan to have one soon, **AND you relate to experiences like these**:

- You rely on specific retailers (including online) or custom-made clothing due to limited sizes ranges in most shops.
- You find yourself thinking ahead or checking when you arrive whether spaces are set up to be safe and comfortable for a range of body sizes (eg. sturdy seating without restrictive arms).
- You've experienced environments where equipment or safety features aren't designed to work for a range of body sizes (eg. hospital gowns, blood pressure cuffs, plane seatbelts).

We welcome participation by gender and sexuality diverse participants who meet study criteria.

What will I be asked to do?

The study involves answering a brief paper questionnaire and talking with one of our interviewers. You will be asked about your recent cervical screening or colposcopy experience, and can choose whether to do this in:

- **An individual interview** (around 1 hour) in person, (Zoom is an option).
- **A focus group discussion** (around 2-3 hours) with a small number of other participants (up to 5) in a private area of a community venue.

  If you are unsure which option you'd prefer, please talk to us and we can help you decide what might work best for you. Note: people who have had a colposcopy would only be given the option of an individual interview.

What sort of questions will I be asked?

A paper questionnaire will be used to ask some background information such as age-band, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, any mobility limitations, languages spoken. We're asking people to share this information if they feel comfortable doing so, because we know that things like age, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity can sometimes affect the experiences people have in health services. Including these questions will help us understand who is taking part and how well the cervical screening needs of all people are being met.

We'll also ask about screening history and some key details about your most recent screen (type of test and where you did it, ease of sample collection, HPV test result and any recommended follow-up). This information will help guide the interviewer, making sure they ask questions relevant to your experience.

To help us understand and report our findings, we would like to describe the range of body sizes within our participant group. Participants can choose not to share any information about body size or weight and still take part. Optional questions will invite you to describe your body size or shape in your own words, and/or share an approximate weight by selecting a 'weight-range' from a list of options provided.

The interview or focus group will ask you to reflect on your cervical screening or colposcopy experience – with questions asking what it was like, how well informed you felt, how easy or comfortable it was, what the staff communication was like, any challenges experienced and how it might be improved in future.

When would the interview or focus group take place?

- If you have ***had*** your cervical screen or colposcopy in the past 3-months, we can talk with you as soon as is convenient for you.
- If you plan to screen soon, our research partners can help you access a screening appointment if needed. We can then arrange to talk with you at a convenient time afterwards.

What are the benefits and risks of taking part?

Possible benefits: Healthcare settings are not always designed with all body sizes in mind, and big-bodied people are often overlooked in health research. Your voice matters – health services should reflect the needs and perspectives of the people who use them. This project provides an opportunity for you to share your experiences and insights to help make screening more inclusive for all body sizes.

A token of appreciation ($50 supermarket or similar) will be offered to participants for sharing their health journey.

Possible risks*:* Some people may find discussing health experiences difficult. Our interviewers are skilled and experienced in this type of research and will do their best to create a safe, respectful, non-judgemental space that is welcoming of all participants. You can skip any questions you don't wish to answer, stop the interview or leave the focus group at any time without penalty.

Support resources will be provided if needed for anyone experiencing distress resulting from discussion about their screening experience.

What happens to the information I share?

Your interview or focus group discussion will be audio-recorded then transcribed (a written account produced). All information used in the analysis phase will be anonymised - no names or other contact details will be included.

The information you and others share will be carefully analysed to understand both common, and unique ideas and patterns across all participants' conversations. This will tell us which parts of the cervical screening pathway work well and not so well.

Study findings will be shared with participants, health providers and stakeholders such as the National Cervical Screening Programme, and screening advocacy groups to help improve screening services for big-bodied people.

How will my privacy be protected?

Consent forms (that include your name) will be securely stored in a locked file drawer at the University of Otago. Information you share in your interview or focus group will not include names or contact details. Data will be stored securely on password protected University of Otago computers and used only for research purposes.

We will keep information collected as part of this research for 10 years which is usual for a project like this one. The findings will be reported in a way that combines insights from many participants. You will not be personally identified in any reports or publications.

Can I find out about the results?

You will be invited to hear about the study results and invited to share any further comments at a participant meeting. You can choose to attend the meeting in person or online. The final report will be shared with you at the end of the study (2028) by email, or can be accessed on our study webpage.

Who do I contact with questions?

You can contact the study lead Dr Lesley Gray on 021 029 39729 or email: cs.stories@otago.ac.nz

Who is funding this project?

The Health Research Council of New Zealand.

Ethics Approval

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Health) -Te Pae Matatika Tangata (Hauora), Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka. Reference H26/0044, 29 May 2026.

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). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.