

Participant Information Statement



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AUSTRALIA

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Title	Use of Swiss 8 in a contemporary ex-serving Australian Defence Force sample: Evaluating the effectiveness of a new mobile app for managing mental health in the contemporary veteran community.
Short title	Use of Swiss 8 in contemporary ex-serving ADF members
Protocol number	247-20
Principal Investigator(s)	A/Prof Carole James Prof Frances Kay-Lambkin Dr Christopher Oldmeadow Mr. Jake Jubelin

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by The University of Newcastle (UoN) and Swiss 8 to evaluate the effectiveness of the Swiss 8 app in improving the mental health of ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel. This is being conducted by Mr Jake Jubelin as part of his PhD studies under the supervision of A/Prof Carole James and Prof Frances Kay-Lambkin from the Faculty of Health and Medicine at UoN.

Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions or want to know more, please get in contact with us via the contact information provided.

Brief description of the study

Swiss 8 is an online daily routine program incorporating the four core principles of Fitness, Nutrition, Mindfulness and Sleep and aims to enhance quality of life. There is an identified need to support the ex-serving ADF community in the early stages of separating from the ADF. The Swiss 8 app has been designed to help contemporary ex-serving ADF members manage their mental health by establishing positive daily routines to avoid a decline in mental health following separation from the ADF. This research will evaluate the use of the Swiss 8 app as a tool to assist contemporary ex-serving ADF members.

What does participation in this research involve?

Participation in this study involves completing an initial screening for eligibility. If eligible, you should consider all the information in this Participant Information Statement before providing your consent via an online consent form. If you consent to taking part you will be asked to complete the online Pre-Swiss 8 Survey that will ask various demographic and ADF service related information and some self-report questionnaires about your quality of life and psychological distress. This process will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Once the initial screening is complete you will be randomly allocated to one of two research groups. One group will be provided access to the Swiss 8 app, the other group will have access to the Swiss 8 app whilst also receiving fortnightly peer support phone calls from the research team.

You will be invited to use the Swiss 8 app for three months to build a daily routine. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to engage with any or all aspects of the Swiss 8 app as you wish. The Swiss 8 app will provide you with a tool to plan a daily routine around four core principles of Fitness, Nutrition, Mindfulness and Sleep. You will be able to choose from a range of fitness programs and workouts, nutritional plans and recipes, mindfulness and sleep techniques to build into your daily routine.

After three months you will be invited to complete an online Post-Swiss 8 Survey similar to the one you completed at the commencement of the study. This survey will also ask a few questions about your experience using the Swiss 8 app and your perceptions of the quality of the Swiss 8 app. You will also be invited to take part in a Post-Swiss 8 phone interview to discuss your experience whilst using the app. If you wish to take part in the phone interview it will be audio recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

At the completion of the three months, your commitment to the research project has finished but you are still free to use the Swiss 8 app as long as you wish. The information you provided throughout the research project will be analysed by the researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the Swiss 8 app. Whilst your commitment has ended you are still encouraged to contact the research team if you wish to know more about the findings of the research or if you have any questions relating to the project.

Alternatives to participation.

If you do not wish to take part or you are not eligible to take part in the research you are able to download and use the Swiss 8 app independently. If you are seeking help for mental health issues you are encouraged to contact the support hotlines identified at the end of this document.

How will the research be monitored?

The research project will be monitored by the research team from the University of Newcastle who will meet regularly to discuss the research and monitor the progress including registered psychologists and experienced researchers.

Will you be accessing my ADF service or DVA records?

We will not be accessing any data from either the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) or the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Any information we collect will be provided by you personally in your response to surveys. If you do not wish to answer a question or provide a specific piece of information, you are not obliged to do so. **Your answers will be completely confidential and any personal details, which may identify you in any way, will not be passed to the DVA or ADF. Your answers will not in any way affect any pension, benefits or health services which you are entitled to from DVA or to which you may become entitled in the future.**

Will any part of this project be recorded?

Your response to the surveys will be recorded in electronic format on password protected accounts and computers owned by the University of Newcastle. The follow up phone call interview at the end of the three months will be audiorecorded for analysis of content, however you will be asked to provide specific consent for this additional voluntary component and have the option to withdraw without penalty.

Benefits

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research, however you will be given free access to the Swiss 8 app to use as you choose. Potential benefits of maintaining a positive routine around fitness, nutrition, mindfulness and sleep may include increases in your mood, fitness and energy. As a thank you for completing the post Swiss 8 Survey at the end of three months, you will also be offered a free Swiss 8 T-shirt.

The findings of the research will benefit the wider ex-serving ADF community by providing initial evidence for the use of Swiss 8 in decreasing psychological distress in ex-serving ADF personnel. The findings will be used to inform future modifications and developments for use in the ex-serving ADF community.

Risks of participating

There are no foreseeable risks for participation in this research project. By using the Swiss 8 app to build a new daily routine, you may experience changes in exercise, dietary and sleep habits. If you feel that a change in your current psychical activity levels or daily routine may cause an exacerbation of any physical or mental health symptoms you currently experience, you are urged to seek advice from your GP before taking part in this research. You are free to disengage with the research project at any time should these changes become uncomfortable for you. You are also free to cease using the Swiss 8 app without any reason or explanation. Should you experience any negative change in emotions or you feel you need to seek help you are urged to contact the emergency response and crisis situation hotlines provided below. Even if you withdraw from the research project, you are encouraged to contact the research team or the emergency contacts provided if you require support.

Withdrawal from the research

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary; there is no obligation to take part in the study. If you choose to participate you may withdraw from the research at any time without reason or explanation. Even if you withdraw from the research, you are still able to use the Swis 8 app for free as much or as little as you would like.

Privacy and confidentiality

Your survey data will be given a unique code after collection so that only the researchers will be able to re-identify the responses should it be required for legal or organisational policy purposes. You are being asked to consent to your data being used for this research project only. Your data will be stored electronically under password protected files and computers owned by the University of Newcastle. Your answers to questions will be transmitted over a secure connection similar to that used for online banking. Only the identified members of the research team will have access to the data you provide.

Your personal information will be accessed, used and stored in accordance with the NHMRC Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the DDVA HREC Researcher and Administrative Guidelines. Any files stored on computer or digital voice recorder (e.g. consent files) will be deleted permanently at the time of disposal. Paper copies of participant contact details or other information will be shredded and put into a secure disposal unit. All data will be retained for 5 years from the publication date except for electronic interview recordings which will be deleted as soon as they have been transcribed.

Ethics Approval

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs (DDVA) Human Research and Ethics Committee and the University of Newcastle Human Research and Ethics Committee.

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

Dissemination of research findings

The results of this research project will be used to form the PhD thesis undertaken by Mr. Jake Jubelin and supervised by Associate Professor Carole Jame and Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin. As such, the findings of this research will be reviewed for publication in peer reviewed journals and presented at appropriate conferences. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that individual participants cannot be identified. Should you wish to access the research findings you may contact the research team via the contact information provided and a copy will be sent out to you.

Concerns or complaints

Should you have any complaints or concerns about the manner in which this project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers or the DDVA HREC via the contact information below:

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Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being conducted by staff and students at the University of Newcastle. The results of this research will be used by Mr Jake Jubelin to obtain a Doctorate of Philosophy. This research has been funded by The University of Newcastle and the Swiss 8 Charity. Other than their regular salary or wage, no member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement.

Seeking Support

If you are in a crisis situation or need immediate assistance please contact 000 or Lifeline on 131114 or visit their website <http://www.lifeline.org.au/>

If you are concerned about feelings or thoughts of suicide, a 24-hour service is available to help. The website for more information is: <http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/> or Ph: 1300 659 467

Here are some veteran specific organisations that provide services and information regarding the mental health of ADF members both serving, ex-serving and their families.

Overwatch Australia: 1800 MY WATCH (699 2824) <https://overwatchaustralia.org.au/>

Open Arms: 1800 011 046 <https://www.openarms.gov.au/>

Below are some other online resources that you may find helpful:

Headspace: <http://www.headspace.org.au/>

Beyondblue: www.beyondblue.org.au